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Culture and Legacy of the Russian Revolution

Rhetoric and Performance – Religious Semantics – Impact on Asia

Christopher Balme / Burcu Dogramaci /
Christoph Hilgert / Riccardo Nicolosi /
Andreas Renner (eds.)

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DigiOst

Herausgegeben für

Collegium Carolinum – Forschungsinstitut für die Geschichte Tschechiens und der Slowakei, München

Herder-Institut für historische Ostmitteleuropaforschung – Institut der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft, Marburg

Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung, Regensburg

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Band 9

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Frank & Timme
Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur

Umschlagabbildung: Montage eines Plakats via Wikimedia Commons von
Holger W. John, Regensburg

Satz: Arpine Maniero, München

DigiOst – Band 9

Herausgegeben vom
Collegium Carolinum
Forschungsinstitut für die Geschichte Tschechiens und der Slowakei
Hochstraße 8
D–81669 München
► www. collegium-carolinum.de
im Auftrag des Fachrepositoriums für Osteuropastudien OstDok
► www.ostdok.de

Bereitgestellt und langzeitarchiviert durch die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

DOI: 10.23665/DigiOst/CC-9

Christopher Balme / Burcu Dogramaci / Christoph Hilgert / Riccardo Nicolosi / Andreas Renner (eds.): Culture and Legacy of the Russian Revolution. Rhetoric and Performance – Religious Semantics – Impact on Asia. Berlin 2021.
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.23665/DigiOst/CC-9

ISBN 978-3-7329-0662-8
ISBN E-Book 978-3-7329-9317-8
ISSN 2513-0927

Herstellung durch Frank & Timme GmbH,
Wittelsbacherstraße 27a, 10707 Berlin.
Printed in Germany.
Gedruckt auf säurefreiem, alterungsbeständigem Papier.

www.frank-timme.de

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Introduction

Culture and Legacy of the Russian Revolution: Rhetoric and Performance – Religious Semantics – Impact on Asia

Until the late 1980s, the October Revolution of 1917 served as the undisputed focal point for historical research on Russia and the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union on the one hand and the rise of cultural history as historiographical approach on the other hand, the political and social significance of the caesura has been questioned while later periods have attracted considerably more attention. Yet, for scholars no other event has gained the paramount significance the 1917 revolution had. What is the meaning of this event in history hundred years later? And how have the historiographical debates of recent years led to a reevaluation of the events leading to and triggered by the Revolution?

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 was an event of global significance. Despite this fact, public attention and even research literature mostly focused on Russia and the other states that became part of USSR for many decades. The impact of these dramatic events on other parts of the world was neglected or not systematically explored until recently. And in analyzing the events, political history still dominates the field.

This volume wants to add to this image some valuable perspectives by exploring the culture as well as the political and cultural legacy of the Russian Revolution. Three focal points are taken here, which are blind spots in most historical inspections of the Russian Revolution so far: the revolution's rhetoric and performance, its religious semantics, and its impact on Asia.

Rhetoric and Performance

The first section of articles deals with Rhetoric and Performance. The Russian Revolution saw a comprehensive attempt to restructure the arts (theatre, cinema, visual arts, literature) and even daily life according to new precepts and concepts. Performances intending to strengthen the identification of audiences with the ideas of the Russian Revolution in media

like theatre and film are explored. Different facets of the rhetoric of revolution and its interconnections with aesthetic phenomena are investigated, including Lenin's language and formalist poetics as well as the rhythms of revolution as an aesthetic principle.

Laurence Senelick offers an intriguing analysis of the first steps of the transformation from imperial upper-class theatre to a Bolshevik and Proletarian Theatre. The theatre, of all the arts the one that speaks most immediately to the public, therefore required intense supervision and direction. Senelick investigates the unique role of the newly appointed Commissar of Enlightenment, Anatoly Lunacharsky, who granted autonomy to artistic institutions and announced that the former Imperial theatres were henceforth to serve the Soviet cause. The theatre was supposed to uplift the intellectual and ideological status of the masses and indoctrinate them in the new political realities. However, the concept that the Russian Revolution would free artists to create new forms for a new society and the concept that the Revolution was meant to promote a socialist world-order were set on a collision course.

Ada Raev explores the theatricality of the Russian Revolution and the boom of theatrical actions for its celebratory commemoration in post-revolutionary Russia. Propagandistic actions moved away from the stages to the streets – in fact, the revolution was staged. Identifying both traditional an innovative performance practices in amateur as well as professional theatre helping to implement the ideas of social and cultural revolution, Raev can trace the importance of avant-garde artists on the stages of revolution. For a short time, Raev explores, revolution in the arts and political revolution went on hand in hand.

Georg Witte investigates the rhythm of revolution, highlighting the significance of rhythm as historical future tense. Referring, amongst others, to Osip Mandelstam's essay "Government and Rhythm" from 1920 and to Sergei Eisenstein's cinematographic art, Witte explores revolutionary bodies and revolutionary languages between organization and ecstasy and the relevance of universal, rhythmical acts for the creation of future history as a driving force in the Russian Revolution.

Natascha Drubek looks closer into the cinematic representation of revolution in Sergei Eisenstein's film *Oktyabr' / October*. This film, she ar-

gues, had a decisive impact on the revolutionary development of film history and theory. For Eisenstein, revolution on film was never merely the screen narrative of the historical event, more importantly, it was a philosophical concept, Drubek argues. In her paper, she explores how revolution can be re-enacted and shown in the medium of cinema, and how this medium is capable of not only staging or even falsifying history in a pseudo-documentary form, but also retain the dialectical gist of the philosophy behind the political revolution. The motifs she draws upon for her analysis are sculptures and monuments.

Religious Semantics

Religious semantics of revolutionary discourse and practices in the Russian Revolution as well as revolutionary semantics of religious beliefs in this period of time are studied in the second set of articles of this volume. These contributions underscore the interdependencies of religion and revolution, which not by random both seem to address a promise of salvation and the willingness to make sacrifices.

Franziska Davies provides new perspectives on the 19th century origins of Muslim revolutionary politics in Russia. The Russian Empire's Muslim subjects were a culturally and ethnically heterogeneous group and while they shared the experience of Tsarist rule, their relationship to the imperial center was shaped by diverging historical experiences and these differences were mirrored in the ways in which the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 played out in the Crimea, the Southern Caucasus, the Volga-Ural Region and Central Asia. In 1917 the breakdown of Tsarist rule soon transformed into an inner-Muslim struggle between the reformists known as the Jadidists and the more conservative and traditional ulema over moral authority and power, before turning into a "Central Asian Civil War."

Even though Jews and individuals with Jewish background played a crucial role in the Russian revolutionary movement, so far no concentrated research has been devoted to the question of religious semantics in the revolutionary rhetoric of Jewish socialists. In his paper, *Tobias Grill*

discusses the questions why a remarkable number of Jews joined the revolutionary movement in the Russian Empire from the 1890s to the 1920s, what attitude towards religion they harbored, and the significance of religious motifs and imagery in their propaganda.

Vitalij Fastovskij explores how the Russian Narodniki in the 1860s and 1870s reflected upon their approaching deaths and to define the role that Christian-Jewish perceptions played in this regard. What meaning did the Narodniki give to their lives and what role did death play in the conception of what a good and fulfilling life might be? And what were the political consequences of such evaluations? To answer these questions, Fastovskij explores the terms these people wrote about life and death. He shows that most propagandistic leaflets and writings dedicated to the memory of the fallen comrades utilized the notion of "martyrdom" in one form or another. The Narodniki forged a powerful model that was later utilized by especially the Socialist revolutionary parties of the 20th century.

Between 1917 and 1929, Soviet Russia saw plenty of public discussions on religion. *Johannes Gleixner* examines this peculiar phenomenon that seems to contradict the common perception of Soviet antireligious policy: why did this avowed "atheist" country allow religious speech while effectively shutting down other venues of public discourse? As Gleixner demonstrates, there existed an interdependence between religious radicals and Bolshevik ideology. Despite its seemingly ideological foundations, the Soviet state had difficulty drawing a line between providing a discursive frame of reference, on one hand, and being a part of an ideological discourse on the other hand, thus mirroring a general problem of modern polities.

Impact on Asia

The third section of articles deals with Impact on Asia. So far, the cataclysmic events 1917 have mainly been studied in their consequences for the West. However, the breakup of the 19th-century order begun in the East: with the Chinese Revolution of 1911. And spreading the revolution to Asia was on the Bolsheviks' agenda until the early 1920s.

Martin Aust's paper elaborates on the task – and actually the challenge – to write a general account of the Russian Revolution on the occasion of the centenary of 1917. He sketches out the state of the art of political and social history accounts of the revolution and then brings in the far too often neglected dimensions and insights of imperial and global history. Aust argues that globalizing the history of the Russian Revolution recommends for a shift in the focus from the center in Moscow and the Bolsheviks to actors in other world regions. This plea is heard and further explored with regard to Asia in the following articles of this volume.

Gerhard Grüßhaber traces the astonishing military career of the German Officer Hans Tröbst after the First World War. First, Tröbst served as Freikorps soldier with the Grenzschutz Ost in Poland, the "Iron Division" in the Baltics and then participated in the March 1920 Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch in Berlin. As he had to give up his initial plans to join the White army operating in southern Russia, Tröbst decided to apply for the Turkish nationalist forces under General Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] in the war against the Greek invasion of Western Anatolia. Later, he returned to Germany and eventually supported the early National Socialists. As Grüßhaber shows, Tröbst's political ideas were especially shaped during the Russian Civil War.

Russian Revolution took a distinctive character in the non-European world: it not only merged socialism and revolution, but also anti-capitalist with anti-imperialist struggles. The history of the Russian Revolution therefore, *Tatiana Linkhoeva* argues in her paper focusing on Imperial Japan, necessarily includes the story of how, in the process of regaining its geopolitical pre-eminence in Europe and Asia, Soviet Russia transformed the meaning of Marxism and communism for people inhabiting those territories. The Japanese were less concerned with how communism would affect the Japanese nation, but rather with how anti-imperialist struggle of imperial subjects could destabilize their empire and thwart their plans for Manchuria. Much of anti-Bolshevik or anti-communist rhetoric was a convenient way for the Japanese imperial government and the army to gain public support for the imperial project on the continent, to justify their actions, and to gain support of the foreign powers.

Yoshiro Ikeda adds to this picture the perspective of Japanese intellectuals who felt that the Russian Revolution in general and the Bolshevik

Revolution in particular were quite attractive. The escalating concept of timeline propagated by the Comintern found resonance among many Japanese leftists in the early 1920s, as it provided them with an authoritative roadmap towards a social revolution. Here, Ikeda traces the basic development of interrelations between Soviet Russia and the Comintern on the one hand, and leftist intellectuals of Japan on the other, with special attention paid to the role played by the Bolshevik concept of world history.

Irina Morozova takes a look at Mongolia, which usually appears peripheral in Western and Eastern historiographical traditions. The modern idea of the nation state was brought into Mongolian valleys and steppes by the Bolsheviks and the agents of the Third Communist International, the Comintern, in the situation of the civil war in the Russian Far East at the end 1910s-beginning 1920s. Moreover, Mongolian revolutionaries, upon the advice of the Comintern, came to power and establish their rule in alliance with Buddhist elites. The revolutionaries in their social campaigns had to make lots of amendments to the symbolism of Buddhism, in the forms it was practiced by the Mongols that time.

This volume is largely based on papers presented at the third annual conference of the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies. The Graduate School is a joint and interdisciplinary doctoral program by the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and the Universität Regensburg. The international third annual conference, which brought together both emerging and well-established scholars from different fields of research, took place in Munich in 2016. Some additional papers were exclusively invited to this book afterwards. Unfortunately, the editorial process faced some unexpected challenges and delay, which demanded patience from the authors as well as from the editors. Besides the relaunch of the DigiOst book series with a new publishing house, this was – not least and most unpleasant in itself – due to the end of original funding of the Graduate School in the excellence initiative in late 2019. This caesura resulted in severe cuts in financing and administrative personnel. But, finally, here we go. The editors would like to express their cordial gratitude to Carolin Piorun, Drivalda Delia, Megan Barry, Dannie Snyder, Anke Oehler, Tabea Roschka, Dr Felix Jeschke and Dr Arpine Maniero,

who all strongly contributed to the editing of this book during the publication process and who made possible to have the important contributions following published now.

Please note: The transcription of names and other mentioned words from languages using non-Latin alphabets is mostly based on the BGN/PCGN (United States Board on Geographic Names/Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use) Romanization system. For pragmatical reasons, some names may differ from this way of transliteration, when another spelling is already well-established.

Christoph Hilgert

Rhetoric and Performance

Laurence Senelick

Order out of Chaos: First Steps in Creating a Bolshevik and Proletarian Theatre

Historians customarily cite 24/25 October (Nov. 7 n.s.) 1917 as the official opening date of the Bolshevik *coup d'état*. For theatre historians the emblematic advent of the new order comes somewhat earlier, on 25 February 1917. That was when the fur-swaddled audience leaving the opulent Alexandrinsky Theatre heard gunfire in the bitterly cold streets. The police were firing on a mob at the Nikolaev railroad station. The outbreak of the February Revolution had a symbolic meaning for the theatre world.

Vsevolod Meyerhold, the most prominent stage director in Russia, had rehearsed Lermontov's romantic verse melodrama *Masquerade* for seven years; all the resources of the imperial theatres had been put at his disposal. Everything that appeared on stage, from hundreds of costumes to tea services, had been especially designed and constructed for this production. Its sumptuousness marked the climax of both Meyerhold's work with traditional forms of romantic theatre and the open-handed patronage of the court. This opening night served, however, as a requiem for the society of bejewelled aristocrats and war profiteers who filled the stalls. This, the last production at the Alexandrinsky as an imperial playhouse, burst like a show of royal fireworks answered by the gunshots of the impending regime.[1]

Chaos and Confusion

Overnight, a major cultural institution lost its bearings. The bureaucracy that ran the imperial theatres had been equivalent almost to a state ministry; the private theatres were dependent on millionaire patrons and stockholders. Companies that relied on the box-office saw empty houses due to unsafe streets and devaluation of currency. The paralysis of artists and intellectuals during this so-called "period of freedom" bemused cultural

1 Yur'ev: Zapiski, 232-235.

commentators. "The talented remain silent, disturbed and frightened by the terrible dregs, the confusion, and the disorder that our revolution has harboured," wrote the novelist Nikonov, "Can songs of beauty and light conceivably be sung when the spectacle of a shameful struggle against our country is going on?"[2] The poet Alexander Blok insisted that the Provisional Government continue to support state theatre, because it was the only agency capable of allowing autonomy and independence to artistic institutions without compromise. He parroted the Russian belief that the theatre was a mighty force for education, necessary to train the new citizens who were bound to arise.[3] Another observer, struck by queues at the cinemas as long as bread lines, argued that, instead of insipid slapstick, an amusement-hungry public should be introduced to Shakespeare and the Russian classics.[4]

For many in the theatre, narrowly focused on their rehearsals, this was all white noise. At the Moscow Art Theatre's first studio, working on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, a young actress later recalled:

> The October Revolution also took us completely by surprise. No one, including Stanislavsky, was prepared for it or could make sense of it. We considered that something extraordinary and meaningful had happened, but we had no direct relationship to it.[5]

News of the Petrograd events burst upon the Moscow theatre world in fits and starts. A performance of a Knut Hamsun play at the Art Theatre on October 24 had audience members rushing to the telephones in the intermissions to get the latest news. The Chief of the Moscow police, informed that Petrograd was in the hands of the Soviets, borrowed a workman's outfit from the theatre's wardrobe, while a dresser put his uniform in mothballs.[6]

2 Nikonov: Obozrenie teatrov (7 iyul' 1917, 23 avgust 1917). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
3 Blok: Pis'mo o teatre, 392-394.
4 Vodin: Rayonnye teatry, 4-5.
5 Giatsintova: S pamyat'yu naedine, 164-165.
6 Boleslavsky / Woodward: Lances Down, 72-74.

Box-office receipts had already fallen precipitously in both capitals on October 15; by the 23rd the drop had become serious and by October 25 catastrophic. Some theatres carried on, others did not. Actors failed to show up, often owing to the raising of bridges. Many theatres lacked electricity during the day and had to call off rehearsals. Oddly enough, premieres could still attract full houses and at least fifteen to twenty spectators showed up at most performances even on Sundays. The only Petrograd playhouses to continue performing throughout this period and make money were the Nevsky and the Troitsky, which both specialized in bedroom farce.

On October 27, notices were posted all over Petrograd to announce the deposition of the Provisional Government. When it became known that the Bolsheviks now had the upper hand, members of the Theatre Commission of the Executive Committee of the Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies turned to Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933), head of the Cultural-Enlightenment Department, to take measures to protect the theatres; he immediately ordered the Military-Revolutionary Committee of Petrograd to appoint a commissar over all the State and private theatres – Mikhail P. Murav'ëv, former stage manager of the theatre run by the millionaire publisher and monarchist Suvorin.

Murav'ëv issued an appeal, in which he directed all the actors and theatrical staff to remain at their posts. Anyone who refused to carry out his duties would be subject to punishment, as hostile to the new regime. At the *Mariinsky* theatre, the director Bespalov began to campaign vociferously for the Bolsheviks, much to the contempt of the union of soloists who wished to be distinguished from choristers and instrumentalists. Bespalov's supporters included the senior stage hands, the house proletariat, and, more surprisingly, the eminent director Meyerhold, who had a penchant for leaping on bandwagons. He had long propagandized for the idea that art and revolution were bound by family ties, and paid lip-service to the revolutionary ideals.[7]

Amid the growing ferment, on the day after the proclamation, the artists of the Russian Dramatic Troupe of the State Petrograd Theatres held a general meeting at which they repudiated Mur'avëv's authority, deeming

7 Bertenson: Vokrug iskusstva, 236-237.

him an impostor unrecognized by Russia as a whole. They declared their continued loyalty to the Provisional Government, and, in protest, planned to suspend performances.[8] Although the Alexandrinsky went on strike, workers at other theatres refused to join, and, on October 31, proclaimed their reasons:

> 1. In view of our political immaturity, and not having a clear idea of the revolution that has taken place, we, the workers in the state theatres, cannot officially attach ourselves to any existing political party.
> 2. And as we are materially dependent upon each working day, we resolve with real commitment to fulfill to the letter the obligations of our service. And that is why we cannot bear responsibility for the cessation of performances in the theatres.[9]

Meanwhile, the Theatre Commission worked out lists of theatres and the nearby military units that might undertake their protection. With great difficulty, Murav'ëv and his colleagues visited the major theatres in the city by automobile, only to discover that there was no soldier on guard anywhere, leaving the buildings undefended. Murav'ëv issued another "impassioned appeal to all theatrical workers: do not drag the theatres into the political struggle but protect them from destruction by the benighted masses of brutalized people [...]."[10]

Trying to Proceed as Normal

Given the dire conditions, the question arose as to whether the theatres should remain open. In Moscow the Council of the Professional Actors Union convened an extraordinary meeting at which it affirmed that the

8 Frame: The St. Petersburg Imperial Theatres, 157-158.

9 Resolution of the Union of Workers of the Petrograd State Theatres in regard to the proposed strike, 31 oktyabr' 1917. Quoted after Frame: Vokrug iskusstva, 158-159.

10 Murav'ëv: Zashchishchat' teatrov! (Pis'mo k redaktsiyu).

tens of thousands of workers in the theatre had an elemental and inalienable right as citizens to a living. Moreover, "in these troubled times of our social degeneracy the theatre, whatever its forms, plays an exceptional role, as a factor in social unity grounded in artistic enjoyment and spiritual refreshment."[11] Not only does the theatre act as "beneficial stimulation" of society, but it pays tens of millions of rubles in taxes to the government. Costs of fuel and lighting are immaterial, since the use of electricity in the theatre comprises only two per cent of general usage in Moscow. A specially appointed delegation of seven deputies of the Moscow actors union, including Stanislavsky, was appointed to serve as the voice of "generally accepted cultural and creative and social forces" to put their case before the public.[12]

Armed resistance in Moscow was sporadic. No newspapers or bread was available, outgoing phone calls could not be made, trams had stopped running, although water and light were still to be had. Holed up in their apartments in the dark, actors and audiences alike had no idea how life was to carry on.[13]

To take a single day, October 28, when the theatres in Petrograd were debating a strike, in Moscow box-office attendants were in place at the Art Theatre by 11:40 a.m. and the public was milling about in the lobby, even though machine-guns were rattling in the street. Throughout the day the wounded were transported on stretchers, motor-cars and in people's arms, to a makeshift military hospital across the way. There was no panic, although the evening performance was cancelled. At one o'clock a request came from the Belostok hospital to allow a detachment of orderlies into the theatre – for rest and re-organization. The public prosecutor Aleksey Staal' arrived from the Palace of Justice, unable to proceed with a meeting of the City Council. He reported that forces were being transferred from the front to defend the Provisional Government. However, rumors ran that 56 Bolshevik regiments had settled in at the National Hotel and were firing explosive bullets. It was decided to keep four watchmen on day duty, with pay beyond their board. The gunfire continued along Dmitrovskiy

11 Teatr i Iskusstvo 43 (22 oktyabr' 1917), 743.
12 Teatr i Iskusstvo 43 (22 oktyabr' 1917), 743.
13 Vakhtangov: Zapiski, 271-272.

Boulevard, all the way to the Hotel Continental, and at the corner a boy of ten was killed as he tried to run across the street.[14]

With the exception of a few cabarets, all Moscow theatres remained inactive from October 28 to November 7. The Bolshoi was severely damaged by missiles which fell on the roof and the scene shop; although the auditorium and stage remained untouched, the windows in lobbies and dressing-rooms were shattered, and costumes and properties plundered. The Maly Theatre was riddled with bullets, but suffered most from a gang of factory workers who broke in and vandalized the site; they made off with all the best costumes and the actors' civilian clothes from the dressing-rooms. The losses amounted to hundreds of thousands of rubles, and the so-called House of Ostrovsky was left a pigsty. Stanislavsky was so appalled that he wrote: "It is as though they had raped my mother."[15] Troops arrived a week later and managed to arrest the ring-leaders. Later, it was learned out that Red Army soldiers had also taken part in the vandalism.

A general meeting of the theatre workers of Moscow passed the following resolution: "To declare Tuesday November 7 a day of mourning for the theatre as a token of grief and sorrow over the spilling of blood and the cruel acts of destruction, on that day no performances or shows will be given."[16] The following day a general meeting of all the staff and workers of the former imperial theatres was called to clarify the further work in their damaged premises. An editorial in *Teatr i Iskusstvo,* dated November 12, rebuked the theatre's inactivity at this time as "a double sin and a double apostasy;" even if it abstained from the political controversies, it had the duty of comforting the losers and urging the winners to contemplation. "The inactivity of the theatre will be the *coup de grâce* to the chaos and spiritual oppression we are undergoing at the moment."[17]

Moscow resistance devolved into a small band of military cadets trying to defend the Kremlin, before they were overpowered and slaughtered between November 12 and 14. A council of the Russian Theatrical Society made an appeal not to perform on November 13 as a token of mourning

14 Moskvin: Dnevnoy doklad, 353-354.
15 Stanislavsky to A. I. Yuzhin (8 noyabr' 1917).
16 Teatral'naya gazeta (3 noyabr' 1917).
17 Teatr i Iskusstvo 44-46 (12 noyabr' 1917), 762-764.

for those slain by the Bolsheviks. After the managers of private theatres in Moscow announced that salaries would be paid to staff members, all playhouses re-opened, except for the Art Theatre which did not resume performances until November 21, when elections were held at the Constituent Assembly, ostensibly without force or coercion.

The Art Theatre's daily Performance Journal chronicles increasing deterioration, absences of actors and staff, dereliction of duty by caretakers and watchmen, unrest in the audience. Rats ran wild. Yet, despite trams not running beyond 9 p.m. and ongoing unrest, tickets were sold out for the pre-Revolutionary productions of *The Blue Bird* and *Three Sisters*. The matinee audiences resembled the normal gathering of intelligentsia, whereas the evening spectators comprised shop clerks and provincial intelligentsia; there was a noticeable absence of workers and soldiers.[18]

Lunacharsky Takes Control

Normal conditions had to be established. On 9 (22) November 1917, a fortnight after it seized power, the Soviet of the People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) passed a decree placing the theatres under the authority of the arts sector of the brand-new State Commission for Enlightenment, which was to become the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment (Narkompros).[19] On December 12 the newly-appointed Commissar of Enlightenment, Lunacharsky, announced that the former imperial theatres were henceforth to serve the Soviet cause. In his address to the staff of the Petrograd state theatres he explained his rationale:

> It goes without saying that the new government does not demand of works in any field whatever, least of all theatre, a specific political credo.
>
> We exact from you no oaths of allegiance, no declarations of loyalty and obedience. The disgraceful times, when you were in a position

18 Nemirovich-Danchenko: Dnevnoy doklad, 249.

19 The word *Prosveshchenie* was chosen instead of that for Education or Instruction, in line with the concept of the masses as *chernyy* or "benighted."

> of servitude to the Tsar's court, have passed, never to return. You are free citizens, free artists, and no one will encroach upon your freedom.
>
> But there is a new master in this land – the common working man. The land is going through an extremely critical moment. Therefore it is no longer so easy for the new master to dispense the people's money. The working man cannot support the State theatres, unless he is convinced that they exist not for the entertainment of aristocrats, but to satisfy the deep cultural needs of the working class. Democracy, the public, must come to an agreement with the actors. This agreement is in the highest degree possible. Its preliminary condition is the mutual understanding between me, the individual empowered to act for the workers' democracy in this area, and representatives of all the companies and groups of the State theatres.[20]

Lunacharsky confirmed the theatres' autonomy, continued their subsidies and transferred the functions of the existing bureaucracy to a yet-to-be created Theatre Council (Teatral'nyy sovet) with representatives from each of the troupes, including the technical staff. Every theatre was to have a Khudrepkom (Artistic Repertoire Committee) answerable to the Council. The purpose was to simplify contact between the individual theatres and the Council with a minimum of red tape. They were never actually realized, however, being rendered superfluous by the creation of the Theatre Division (Teatral'nyy Otdel, TEO) of Narkompros on 18 February 1918. This was tasked with running the theatre as a branch of the government and to give the provinces directives of general character concerning the management of theatrical activity, with the intention of unifying it. Cooperation had been superseded by co-optation.

The question arises as to why, in the midst of cataclysm, the Bolshevik leadership should concern itself with the theatre. Only in societies where art and literature are taken seriously are they regarded as potent and dangerous. The Bolshevik concern was a natural extension of the deeply-rooted belief among most educated Russians that theatre had to be more than mere entertainment. Even if it did not deal in crude messages, its

20 Lunacharskiy: Obrashchenie … k artistam i rabotnikami gosudarstvennykh teatrov Petrograd.

sophistication, polish and high level of artistry were supposed to edify and improve the spectator. One was to leave the playhouse spiritually elevated and morally improved. This tradition fit neatly within the scheme for the arts promoted by the Communist Party and the Soviet state. Inspired by socialism, the theatre would uplift the intellectual and ideological status of the masses and indoctrinate them in the new political realities. The conviction that culture matters was evident in the attention paid to even minor details of theatrical activity by the highest levels of the state bureaucracy. It would serve to advance socialism.

Subsuming all artistic endeavor into one giant purpose had been stipulated in one of Lenin's statements:

> In the Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Republic, every educational endeavor, both in politics and in education generally – and in art particularly – must be permeated with the spirit of the proletariat's class struggle for successful accomplishing the aims of its dictatorship.[21]

The theatre, of all the arts the one that speaks most immediately to the public, therefore required intense supervision and direction. The reactions of spectators had to be foreseen and regimented, so that the correct political lesson could be learned. Every action in the Russian theatre between 1917 and 1992, whether traditional or experimental, Party-dictated or dissenting, amateur or professional, was taken in reaction to a political event, decree or atmosphere. Unlike a painter who might hide his most personal creations in the cellar, showing them only to trustworthy visitors, the theatre artist had to work out in the open. That so many extraordinary accomplishments saw the light of day is all the more surprising, given the obstacle course set in their path.

Recognizing that artists could have an immense influence on public awareness, the Bolsheviks set out to attract writers, philosophers, artists, composers and theatre people to their cause. In line with this idea, the leadership of the TEO sector was entrusted to theatrical veterans.[22] Although the first administrator was Trotsky's wife Ol'ga Kameneva, she was

21 Lenin: Draft of resolution "O proletarskoy kul'ture."

22 Lunacharskiy / Kameneva: Polozhenie o TEO Narkomprosa (29 iyun' 1918).

teamed with the prominent director Vsevolod Meyerhold, who was to succeed her in August 1920, after having run the Petrograd section of TEO. From March 1918 to February 1919 the brilliant poet Alexander Blok directed the repertory sector and was instrumental in the founding of the Bolshoi Dramatic Theatre in Petrograd. Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Stanislavsky's favorite student, took on the management of the Moscow directing sector in 1919. The TEO was not allowed control over the State Theatres, which irritated the maximalists like Kameneva and Meyerhold, who wanted to appropriate the former imperial playhouses.[23]

Throughout this period, Lunacharsky was the pivotal figure. An old-fashioned *intelligent* down to his pince-nez and rolled r's, he was renowned as a public speaker and had impeccable credentials as a Marxist from his teens and a card-carrying Bolshevik from 1903. Lunacharsky saw his task as reconciling the aims of the Revolution with the needs of the artistic community, and, ideally, merging the two. He proved for at least a decade to be an effective mediator. Through his efforts the best theatres of the Tsarist era were preserved from destruction, radical artists were given latitude for their experiments, and the attempts of governmental agencies to interfere with creative activities were closely monitored and, occasionally, chastised.[24]

Despite a straitened budget, Lunacharsky argued that funds and resources had to be allotted to the maintenance of both old and new theatres.[25] He explained to the theatres resisting the new guidelines that if the government were to finance them, "it has the right to regulate their life."[26] Since salaries could be paid only sporadically, actors went free-lance. A neologism, "khaltura," entered the language. A calque of "kultura," "culture," it was the sarcastic response of artists to the call to pitch their crea-

23 Meyerchol'd: O rabote i otdykhe (7 avgust 1918).

24 For a more negative view of Lunacharsky as a dreamer and windbag and of his earliest projects for the theatre, see Benua: Moy dnevnik 1916-1917-1918, 406-408.

25 Lunacharskiy: Puti razvitiya teatra, 30.

26 Lunacharskiy: Iz protokola zasedaniy osobogo soveshchaniya po teatral'nomu voprosu (10 dekabr' 1918).

tivity to the level of the proletarian audience. The verb "khalturit'" combined the idea of moonlighting with that of hackwork. Lunacharsky, aware that it betrayed the highest ideals of art, nevertheless welcomed it as a resource for unpaid actors and a slaking of the masses' thirst for rational entertainment.[27]

The Dawning of a Soviet Theatre

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven." Wordsworth's response to the outbreak of the French Revolution may be applied to the Russian Revolution only with provisos. The instability of daily life, the privations, the terror unleashed by the Bolsheviks in their own insecurity prevented even true believers from being wholly elated by the turn of events. Even so, many artists, among them Meyerhold and Vakhtangov, greeted the Revolution enthusiastically and believed in its utopian aims; they seized on the opportunity to introduce previously sidelined or experimental styles to the public. In the early absence of censorship, anything went.

Although Marxism was anti-religion, the millennial atmosphere churned up a remarkable number of works on Biblical or mystical themes, variegated manifestations of this impulse to clothe apocalyptic events in traditional religious imagery. Typical was *Mystery Bouffe* by the cubo-futurist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. He had enthusiastically welcomed the events of October 1917 as "my revolution." That November he attended a meeting of writers, artists and stage directors convened by Lunacharsky at the Smolnyy Institute to advance future cooperation between artists and the Bolshevik regime. As early as August 1917, he had conceived of a revolutionary play that would link the genres of *mysterium* or religious enactment and farcical comedy. *Mystery Bouffe* was an extravagant rewrite of Genesis, with the bourgeois Clean and the proletarian Unclean seeking salvation each in his own way. He proposed it as a celebration of the first anniversary of the Revolution. The production opened at the Theatre of

27 Lunacharskiy: Teatr i revolyutsiya.

Musical Drama in Petrograd on 7 November 1918, co-directed by Mayakovsky and Meyerhold, with designs by the painter Kazimir Malevich.[28]

Emboldened by the enthusiastic reception awarded the play by the Communist press, Mayakovsky adopted an even more extreme position regarding art in the new society. In an "Open Letter to the Workers" he proclaimed that "[o]nly the eruption of the Spirit of Revolution will rid us of the rags of antiquated art." Interrupting a debate on "The Proletariat and Art" (22 and 29 December 1918), he turned his back on the intelligentsia and addressing the workers in the audience, he insisted that:

> On the left are we, who portray the new; on the right are those who regard art as a means of all manner of acquisition. This is perfectly understood by the workers, who have joyously accepted our manifestations. There is no classless art. Only the proletariat will create the new, and only we, the futurists, are travelling the same road as the proletariat.[29]

Many Russian artists shared this typically avant-garde belief that humanity is heading towards a supreme change for the better. They discarded the past as irrelevant and embraced all the outward tokens of modernism – machinery, speed and efficiency, rejection of tradition – while folding in the communist insistence on the primacy of the proletariat. At the same time, they could not abandon their own individual visions and extreme forms of expression, often butting their heads against the need for comprehension and acceptance by the masses.

In accordance with Marxist principles, the workers and peasants were to be treated to the fruits of civilization, a legacy from which they had previously been debarred. Theatres were to be made accessible to a proletariat unaccustomed to the etiquette and decorum that had once reigned in these palaces of culture. There are many descriptions of the semi-literate, benefitting from tickets distributed through organizations, sitting stolidly

28 See Derzhavin: Fevral' i oktyabr v teatre; Katanyan: Mayakovskiy. Literaturnaya khronika; Fevral'skiy: Pervaya sovetskaya p'esa.

29 Mayakovskiy: Interventsiya v sporach.

in now filthy and dilapidated auditoriums, eating out of paper bags and talking through the performance.[30]

The Proletarian Cultural and Educational Organization (Proletkul't, for short) was sponsored with alacrity by Lunacharsky. The basic concept was not simply to educate the proletariat in pre-existing culture, but to foster an exclusively proletarian culture that would eventually supplant the bourgeois brand. Art and thought were to be used to organize the proletariat in the social struggle. A conference on the educational goals of such a movement prescribed a theatre that would "carol constructive labor of the creative human being as one of his wonderful capabilities" and thereby "evoke, arouse, modulate in the masses a stalwart and joyous will to labor."[31] The most perfervid proponents of proletarian culture were, however, too impatient to wait for the organic dissolution of bourgeois art, but called for the burning of museums and the impeccably working-class origins of anyone who took part in the movement.

Almost immediately, conflicts arose concerning the appropriate path for Soviet culture. Once all the theatres were put under Meyerhold's supervision, he called for extreme reforms, a renunciation of the culture of the past and a repudiation of those who thought differently in the fields of ideology, art and literature. Left-wing radicals, working through the Proletkul't, urged the new state to reject the historical legacy of world culture which they declared was elitist. In the name of socialism and a new proletarian culture, Mayakovsky and Meyerhold called for eradicating everything that came before and completing the social revolution by "an October 25 in the realm of art."

Questions of Repertory

What was the appropriate repertory? The Proletkul't conference advised that "the repertoire of a people's theatre […] must be as far as possible

30 See, for instance, Nelidov: Teatral'naya Moskva, 34-35.

31 Bartinskiy / Ignatov: Iz materialov pervoy moskovskoy obshchegorodskoy koferentsii Proletkul'ta.

classical, artistic, serious, and with close ties to a systematic cycle of lectures on history, chiefly the history of Russian and foreign literatures and art" in order to "evoke, arouse, temper in the masses a stalwart, unyielding and joyous will to labor."[32] Conversely, Maksim Gorky demanded high-flown heroic drama equal to the Revolution, while the young director Sergey Radlov called (in 1921) for a drama born of "the storm and terror of our impetuous days"; not so much a political medium, but one consistent with electricity, airplanes, vaudeville and radio, in short twentieth century "progress."[33]

The problem in realizing any agenda was the lack of material and ideological resources. There were no individuals of impeccable proletarian origin capable of leading such organizations, so directors and actors had to be recruited from veterans of bourgeois or even aristocratic background. The party leaders, among them Lenin, Lunacharsky, Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin, were conservative in their tastes and cleaved to the traditional touchstones of the pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia. They declared the country to be heir to all that was best in world culture. Marx had held that in the communist utopia artists as a separate caste would cease to exist. Conditions would be such that everyone would be free to be an artist: it was a world in which all workers were Sunday painters, poets, actors. Lenin, more pragmatically and, perhaps, more cynically, did not trust to the organic evolution of this condition. The proletariat needed guidance by an intellectual elite. As early as in his pamphlet *Chto delat'? (What Is To Be Done?)* (1902), he had stated that the economic struggle can generate only a trade-union consciousness in reforming existing society. To radicalize the movement and to provide a "revolutionary consciousness" that could create a new society, there needed to be a "vanguard party" of full-time "professionals" "from without" who would lead the proletariat to this end. True revolution required the "profound scientific knowledge … born in the brains" of Marxists sprung from the "*bourgeois intelligentsia*" (Lenin's emphasis).

32 Bartinskiy / Ignatov: Iz materialov pervoy moskovskoy obshchegorodskoy koferentsii Proletkul'ta.

33 Radlov: Desyat' let v teatre, 53-60.

Lunacharsky's first major project had been to rescue the theatres from indigence and disorganization; his next was to bring them under State control. On 11 March 1918 a Charter of Autonomous State Theatres (Ustav avtonomnykh gosudarstvennykh teatrov) was agreed upon by representatives of the State Theatres and the government. A Soviet of State Theatres was created to regulate relations between state and autonomous troupes, although it was quickly eclipsed by the Narkompros Division of State Theatres, with Lunacharsky at its helm. All non-academic mass education, including theatre, "must promote Communist propaganda."[34]

On 26 August 1919, the Soviet government adopted the decree "On the unification of theatrical activity" which rounded out the earlier measures. This decree, signed by Lenin and Lunacharsky, turned out to be the constitutive charter of the Soviet theatre. It declared as national possessions "all theatrical property (buildings, properties), in view of their cultural value" and centralized the entire economy of the theatre under a Central Theatrical Committee ("Tsentroteatr") answering to the Narkompros. It also instituted a censorship by calling for an official inspection of the repertoire to make sure it served socialist ideals. However, to adopt a phrase of George Orwell's, some theatres were more equal than others. The decree distinguished theatres "recognized as useful and artistic" (themselves divided into several categories, all subsidized by the State) and theatres "managed by entrepreneurs or private organizations which do not guarantee a superior cultural level".[35]

In the face of Meyerhold's call for the extermination of all theatres that pre-existed the Revolution, Lunacharsky took under his protection the former imperial playhouses and the Moscow Art Theatre and reclassified them as "academic theatres," cultural treasures to serve as living museums. On the first anniversary of the Revolution, the Maly was playing Griboedov's classic satire *Woe from Wit*, the Art Theatre Goldoni's eighteenth-century comedy *The Mistress of the Inn*, the Bolshoi Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov*, and the former Private Opera *Lohengrin*.[36]

34 VKP (b) v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TSK., I, 313.

35 Dekret soveta narodnykh komissarov ob ob"edinenii teatral'nogo dela.

36 Nelidov: Teatral'naya Moskva, 347.

Lenin was irritated by theater that seemed to shirk its civic responsibility; he blamed both the bourgeois Art Theater for wasting its talents on such sentimental trash as Dickens's *Cricket on the Hearth* and the futurists for perversion and obscurantism (he referred to them as cockroaches). Such "deviations" had to be brought into line.[37] The 1919 decree to unite the theatrical profession was part of a general trend to centralize, indeed to over-centralize, every aspect of society, including the realms of art and culture. Although Lunacharsky denied that political ideology was the touchstone of worthiness, this became *de facto* the case. He told the Art Theatre that "bourgeois individualism which divided people is over forever… the task of art is to illumine the new path."[38] Artists were reconceived as "cultural workers" with individuals subordinated to the collective. Companies were given more importance than stars, and the greatest merit was attached to works that furthered the social struggle. Ideology trumped aesthetics in matters of art.

So, from the very outset, the concept that the Revolution would free artists to create new forms for a new society and the concept that the Revolution was meant to promote a socialist world-order were set on a collision course. Expediency and maximalism were at loggerheads. Neither side had a clear victory, although the compromise of the New Economic Policy in the wake of the Civil War allowed for a period of relatively unregulated artistic experimentation. However, by the time Stalin eliminated that stalwart of the utopian position the Proletkul't and repudiated the policy of "proletarization," he was calling for writers to be "engineers of the soul" by submerging individual expression in service to a greater cause. Both the bourgeois intellectual and the proletarian amateur were transformed into cogs in the machine for perfecting socialism. Creativity, to be acceptable, had to contribute to building that movement; the most viable way to take part in the struggle was to join the Communist Party and promote its policies.

37 Lenin: Pis'mo CK RKP(b) "O Proletkul'te".

38 Massalitinov: Moi vospominanya.

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Ada Raev

Russian Avant-garde Artists on the Stages of Revolution

Theatricality in Russian culture

In the history of Russian culture, one can find a significant number of phenomena with a theatrical touch and a high level of visual attraction in both sacred and secular spheres. Therefore, it is no accident that Russian poets, theater activists and authors of the early 20th century – like Vyacheslav Ivanov, Nikolai Evreinov or Vsevolod Gerngross – declared theatricality to be a constant human factor and stressed its significance in the Russian past and present. Since the late 19th century, renowned artists had enthusiastically devoted themselves to set and costume design and had portrayed dozens of people connected with the world of theater.[1] However, Evreinov's notion of theatricality, in particular, is not restricted to the theater in such a narrow sense.[2] For him, theatricality means any action with a gesture of showing *(monstratio)*.[3] In his understanding, theatricality includes, for example, processions with icons or coronation festivities, celebrated in Russia with extraordinary glamour. In short, for Evreinov, all of life was a perpetual sequence of theatrical events, full of symbolic meanings and offering the potential to form identities. In this sense, he introduced and used the neologism *teatrocratia*. He was convinced of the constant exchanging of roles between actors and audience, which in reality became a union of both positions. For Evreinov, even advertising and the rituals of political uprisings like the French Revolution[4] belong to the field of theatricality.

1 Boult: Sobranie Nikity i Niny Lobanovykh-Rostovskikh; Spielmann (ed.): Die russische Avantgarde und die Bühne 1890-1930.

2 Evreinov: Teatr kak takovoy; Lukanitschewa: Das Theatralitätskonzept von Nikolai Evreinov.

3 Kalisch: Teatral'nost' als kulturanthropologische Kategorie, 143.

4 Kalisch: Teatral'nost' als kulturanthropologische Kategorie, 153.

The Bolshevists and Theatrical Actions

The true boom of theatrical actions in post-revolutionary Russia led historian Malte Rolf to characterize the early Soviet Union as a "staging dictatorship".[5] The bolshevist rulers used theatrical actions with different dramaturgical and artistic orientation to bring the new political ideas and utopias closer to the uneducated masses in a vivid and impressive way, with the goal of strengthening the collective spirit and reinforcing their own ambitions of political leadership and power.[6] Grigori Goldstein's photo "Lenin addressing a crowd" showing him on the Theater Square (from 1919 to 1991 Sverdlov Square) in Moscow on 5 May, 1920, is a well-known example of this practice.

In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, new forms of representation and new theatrical practices involving public space were approved with great enthusiasm.[7] At the time, amateur and professional theaters coexisted.[8] Many avant-garde artists found a fruitful and conceptual field of work that guaranteed them an adequate income. Some of them had experience with public actions in the context of the Russian futurism or had worked as stage designers. Others, like Alexander Rodchenko, experimented with these new spheres of activity for the first time. For Rodchenko, however, this step seemed to be almost organic, as his father had worked as a prop man.[9] Among others, he designed kiosks, a specific manifestation of early soviet agitation culture having theatrical qualities.[10] Their task was to create a public space for the advertisement of the new society using posters and slogans. Moreover, they served as a platform for speakers with propagandistic messages.

From 1918 on the bolshevist government decreed a "red calendar" with feast days devoted to the revolution. The International Worker's Day

5 Rolf: Soviet Mass Festivals, 1.
6 Geldern: Bolshevik Festivals.
7 Tolstoi / Bibikova / Cooke: Street Art of the Revolution.
8 Senelick / Ostrovsky: The Soviet Theatre.
9 Aleksandr Rodchenko. Varvara Stepanova. Budushchee – edinstvennaya nasha cel'…, 33.
10 See Rodchenko: Project for a kiosk.

(May Day) and the anniversary of the October Revolution were important public holidays that called for big state-organized celebrations. Such a practice went back to the French revolution. By the initiative of Anatoly Lunacharsky, this tradition was refreshed with the aim of mobilizing the masses and instilling in them the values of the new society to be built, like collectivism, proletarian class consciousness, equality for women and so on.[11] Not only in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but all over the country, artists received commissions for festive decorations.[12] These decorations aimed to give the demonstrations a symbolic, propagandistic touch and to temporarily change the gloomy ambience of the towns – or their "historical connotations"– in an optimistic, future orientated manner. To achieve the desired effect, the artists used different iconographical and stylistic strategies. Some of them worked with geometrical abstraction and non-objective forms; others created allegorical figures and appropriated the vitality and curiosity of the Lubok, the Russian popular woodcut. They used signal-color Red, a color deep-seated in Russian culture, particularly in icon painting. Red had come to symbolize the revolutionary character of the pictures or certain details.[13] The red flag and the red star became badges of the Soviet power and state.

Kazimir Malevich was skeptical about the utilitarian use of his suprematist vocabulary, i.e. basic geometric forms, painted in a limited range of colors on a plane ground, even though he had designed the stage and costumes of the futuristic opera Victory over the sun (1913) using such non-objective forms.[14] However, his colleagues and pupils in Vitebsk, where Malevich directed an art school from 1919 to 1921, designed with enthusiasm decorations for different events and purposes.[15] For example, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the October revolution, the artists of the group UNOVIS (Champions of the New Art) decorated Vitebsk with suprematist motives and propagandistic slogans. This intervention in the

11 Schlögel: Petersburg. Laboratorium der Moderne, 488-491.

12 See Altman: Design of the festive decoration for the Uritsky square in front of the Winter Palace.

13 Brugger (ed.): Rot in der russischen Kunst.

14 Bauermeister: Sieg über die Sonne.

15 Shatskikh: Vitebsk. Zhizn' iskusstva; Shatskikh: Vitebsk. The Life of Art.

traditional cityscape provoked different reactions. While the inhabitants and public authorities bristled at the strange festive decorations, the future film director Sergei Eisenstein found them inspiring:

> A strange provincial city. Like many of the border towns of Western Russia, it's built of red brik. […] Here the red brik streets are covered with white paint, and green circles are scattered across this white background. There are orange squares. Blue rectangles. This is Vitebsk in 1920. Its brick walls have met the brush of Kazimir Malevich. And from these walls you can hear: 'The streets are our palette!'[16]

Indeed, the propagandistic actions moved away from the stage to the streets. Many left wing avant-garde artists participated in decorating so-called agit-trains, agit-ships and agit-trams, which spread revolutionary messages. These mobile stages, equipped with modern technical capabilities proclaimed with their mere appearance the revolutionary spirit while sharing information on the ongoing Civil war.[17] The character of the pictures on these means of transport changed between pathos, satire and a more or less abstract symbolism. Moreover, the railway-cars were used as places for producing films as well as performing them. Sergei Eisenstein, Eduard Tissé and Dziga Vertov, among others, travelled through the country on agit-trains and shot films, which were immediately screened. All of the above made their way to film through theater.

Puppet Theater Reloaded

During this period, the traditional Puppet theater achieved new prestige as well.[18] Since the early 1900s, the puppet theater was very popular in Russian symbolist circles as an alternative to the psychological theater. But Moscow painter Nina Simonovich-Efimova and her husband, the sculptor

16 Eyzenshteyn: [O Mayakovskom], 432. English translation in: Shatskikh: Vitebsk. The Life of Art, 118.

17 Kenez: The Birth of the Propaganda Streets.

18 Kelly: Petrushka; Goldovskiy: Istoriya dramaturgii teatra kukol.

Boris Efimov, pursued a more popular approach. Referring to the tradition of the Russian carnival theater, the balagan, they founded the puppet- and shadow-theater "Petrushka" in 1918. By 1941, they had given more than 1,500 performances, not only in and around Moscow, but also in towns along the rivers Volga and Kama, and even in Bashkirian Autonomous Soviet Republic.[19] Doing so, the couple followed the thread of Russian intelligentsia's social engagement with recourse to an old European popular art tradition. The couple designed and produced the puppets themselves, acted as directors and puppet players and often improvised. The repertoire united world literature from Shakespeare to Molière with Russian fairy tales and fables by Ivan Krylov. Considering the puppet a "moving sculpture", Simonovich-Efimova strengthened the visual component of theater play.[20]

Mass Theater and Agit-cabaret

Platon Kerzhentsev declared in his book "Revolution and Theater" that mass theater is a basic need of the people. Kerzhentsev was a journalist and theoretician of the influential mass organization "Proletkult", which was founded in spring of 1917 and expanded to 400,000 members in subsequent years. To support his argument, he referred to a long line of traditions, from ancient theater through medieval folk plays, through the Commedia dell'arte and the French Revolution to the theater theories of Richard Wagner. In addition, the concept of public festivals, developed by Adolphe Appia and Georg Fuchs, and the mass plays staged by Max Reinhardt awakened his interest.[21] Two years later, Anatoly Lunacharsky, Commissar for Peoples Education, emphasized the necessity of mass festivals to educate and discipline the masses.[22]

19 Smirnova: Sovetskiy teatr kukol.

20 Posener: Life-Death and Disobedient Obedience, 351. See also: Efimova: Adventures of a Russian puppet theatre.

21 Kerzhentsev: Revolyutsia i teatr.

22 Lunacharsky: On the People's Festivals.

In 1920, five mass festivities took place in Petrograd. These very expensive spectacles reached a dimension only comparable to the festivities organized on the 300th anniversary of the accession to the throne of the Romanov-Dynasty in 1913.

On November 7, 1920 *The Storming of the Winter Palace* was performed in the Palace Square with several thousand participants and an orchestra of 500 men.[23] The initiative for this "mass action" most likely came from Anatoly Lunacharsky himself. The spectacle aimed at elevating the real historical event of 25th October, 1917 in the Julian calendar – which had gone practically unnoticed in the city as it occurred – to a mythological level. With the help of an overreaching re-enactment, the historical event was to be indelibly inscribed into the collective memory. However, only Sergei Eisenstein's film *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (1927) provided the images that, even today, remain icons of the Russian revolution. Nonetheless, the show was successful in reinterpreting the role of the masses as a politically relevant force rather than a potential danger. Nikolai Evreinov succeeded to stage the play in a manner that allowed the professional actors, the countless amateur actors and the audience to interact, and in doing so, to feel heroized.

From a bird's eye view, Yury Annenkov's set design displayed the vast Uritsky Place (now known as Palace Square), filled with a split crowd in front of the building of the General staff.[24] The two parts of the building, connected by a representative arch, were used to install two scenes with a bridge between them. Their colors correlated with the symbols of the fighting between the political opponents during the Revolution. On the right side was a white stage, where a kind of a comedy took place: the tsarist court, with all its dignitaries, met its victims – invalids and prisoners – in a throne room. On the left side was a red stage, upon which a heroic drama took its course: the masses gathered in the middle of a huge factory square. The real urban situation, with its architectural backdrop and the

23 Rudnitzky: Russian and Soviet Theatre, 69; Geldern: Bolshevik Festivals; Kleberg: Theatre as Action; Bowlt: The Construction of Caprice, 61.

24 Annenkov: Set design for the Uritsky square in Petrograd for Mass Festival *The Storming of the Winter Palace*.

amateur actors, counteracted the artificiality of the theater and enhanced the identification level.

The production plan of the mass festival revealed the simultaneity of the event and its components – eventually even military trucks, machine guns and artillery had been brought into action. Fighting scenes inside the buildings were seen like shadows in the illuminated windows. Finally, an airplane hauling a red flag took the spotlight and flew over the square as a sign of victory, its five red stars flashed up, and, after fireworks, the victorious soldiers arrayed for a parade. In this manner, well known elements from theater history and representation culture enhanced the show-effect ("zrelishchnost") of the staging. Yury Annenkov, who also took part in theoretical discussions, gave following key statements in his tract *The Theatre of Pure Method* (1921) concerning the essence of theater and the needs of the day:

> The theatre is not an independent, self-sufficient, pure form of art, but merely a treaty drawn up by a bunch of different arts […]. Basically, theatre is dynamic. […] There is no place in the theatre for dead pictures, for all is in movement.[25]

With regard to what happened in diverse forms of theater during this time, it seems to be clear that many theater activists would have agreed on these keywords.

The journalist Boris Juzhanin, for example, founded his agitprop theater "Blue Blouse" – a kind of soviet cabaret – in 1923.[26] Nina Aizenberg, one of the many women artists who took advantage of new opportunities in scenography, became a member of the troupe in 1926.[27] The company, which gave performances abroad as well, created sketches which used politics and everyday life in the young Soviet Union as their main focus. A central aspect of the sketches concerned the shaping of the "new man". The simply-cut costumes, designed by Nina Aizenberg, could be worn on

25 Annenkov: The Theatre of Pure Method, manuscript, quoted after Boult: Sobranie Nikity i Niny Lobanovykh-Rostovskikh, 72.

26 Mally: Revolutionary Acts; Leach: Revolutionary Theatre, 168-173.

27 Aizenberg: Transformations.

both sides. They had several elements, such as pockets, possible to unbutton and remove, that allowed them to be modified directly on stage. Thus, they enabled a varied, but at the same time visually coherent performance. In her costume sketches, Aizenberg sometimes allowed more than one figure to act in a type of synchronized choreography, which strengthened the idea of the collective as the quintessence of the performance.[28] The satirical character of her drawings led one to assume that they portrayed critical notes.

Constructivst theater

Vsevolod Meyerhold was a successful director who worked with famous artists even before the revolution. In contrast to others, he was also strongly engaged with the new circumstances.[29] On 1 August, 1920, he became the leader of the theater section in the People's Committee of Enlightenment. Soon after, he declared the theater-October and opened the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic Theater No. 1 in November of the same year. Under the control of the powerful cultural organization "Proletkult" and its leader Alexander Bogdanov[30], it became the nucleus of constructivism in theater. Meyerhold then proclaimed that the usual separation between scene and auditorium, between actors and audience, had been overcome with the aim of elevating the role of the theater in educating the "new men". A first step towards this was the performance of *Mystery-Bouffe* by Vladimir Mayakovsky in 1921, for which Anton Lavinsky moved the scene into the auditorium.

At the same time, in the Moscow Institute for Artistic Culture (InKhUK), left wing artists argued about the new challenges of art; some of them developed the concept of so-called production art. In connection with two exhibitions under the title "5 x 5 = 25", Alexandra Exter, Lyubov Popova, Varvara Stepanova, Alexander Vesnin and Alexander Rodchenko declared that they would give up painting and devote themselves

28 Aizenberg: Marksman-Chastushkas for "Blue Blouse."
29 Leach: Meyerhold.
30 Mally: Culture of the Future.

to other art forms with social orientations.[31] Ideally, they wanted to reach a synthesis between art and industry, an aspect which is similar to the ideas of Bauhaus in Germany. In the soviet context, theater was not only related to production art, but proved to be a steppingstone for entering other spheres of production; the artists began to call themselves "constructors."[32]

In 1922, Meyerhold invited Lyubov Popova und Varvara Stepanova, as two main representatives of constructivism, to cooperate with him.[33] They shared the idea of Osip Brik and Boris Arvatov that, in the process of the build-up of a socialist society, theater might take over the role of a laboratory. Under the influence of Taylorism in the context of NEP (the new economic politics), the economy of resources and principal rationalism defined all levels of making constructivist theater. The play *The Magnanimous Cuckold*, by the Flemish poet Fernand Crommelynck, does not deal with revolution; it is an absurd story about the consequences of jealousy in a village. However, the whole character of the staging was indeed revolutionary. As early as 1920, Meyerhold had remarked that he would prefer to play in factories and big machine halls or to create a similar environment in the theater.

Popova's concept for the stage as a kinetic machine – without any outer boundaries and naturalistic details[34] – has been appropriated to accentuate the bio-mechanical sequences of movements Meyerhold created to free the actors from any superfluous aspects common for the traditional theater.[35] In this manner, the functioning of a society was to be shown as a fully controlled process of industrial production. Meyerhold was proud to declare that the new developments would shorten the duration of plays drastically, e.g. to half an hour from a formerly four-hour play. Popova had to navigate the ideal that the actor should embody the designer as well as the designed at the same time. That's why she called

31 Milner: The Exhibition 5 x 5 = 25.

32 Lodder: Constructivism.

33 Raev: Russische Künstlerinnen der Moderne, 363-377.

34 Popova: Set design for *The Magnanimous Cuckold* by Fernand Crommelynck.

35 Bochow: Das Theater Meyerholds.

her uncommon innovative costumes for *The Magnanimous Cuckold* "Prozodezhda" ("Production-clothing"). The emphasis thereby moved away from characterizing every person in the play through an everyday costume. The task of Popova was to provide the actors with clothes that, on the one hand, gave them enough room to move as required by Meyerhold's bio-mechanic motion sequences and, on the other hand, would fit into the set as a whole. In view of the semantic similarity of the set with a factory work floor, with stairs, skids and moving constructions, it is no surprise that the costumes of the actors resembled worker overalls.[36] Nevertheless, different types of costumes – female characters with skirts, male characters with coats or capes – communicated their respective positions in the social hierarchy. The inclusion of letters of different size, color and type into the set and costume design not only reflected the interests of Popova and other constructivist artists in typography, but also indicates the principal crossover of different modern media in soviet constructivist theater.

Conclusion

Avant-garde artists contributed with their innovative performative practices in multifarious ways to implement the ideas of social and cultural revolution in post-revolutionary Russia and the early Soviet Union, and to boost their reputations abroad. By doing this, they found important impulses both in the history of theater and in their own neo-primitivist, futurist or non-objective art before the revolution. Turning to theater, shaping public spaces and participating in political and social life the avant-garde artists redeemed their own demand to connect art and life and to create models of a new society. For a short time revolution in the arts and political revolution went on hand in hand and acted on common stages.

36 Dabrowski (ed.): Ljubow Popowa, 143-145, fig. 110-113.

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Georg Witte

"Drumming Preparation:" Poetics and Politics of Rhythm in the Soviet Avant-Garde

Rhythm is Historical Future Tense

Osip Mandelstam's essay "Government and Rhythm" from 1920 was probably written in connection with a plan by NARKOMPROS (the People's Commissariat of Education) to establish an institute of rhythmic education. The author – who certainly cannot be said to have been particularly enthusiastic about collectivism – elevates rhythm to the status of a driving force in the revolution:

> The new society is held together by solidarity and rhythm. Solidarity means concord of goals. Concord of action is also essential. Concord of action in itself is already rhythm. The revolution was victorious because of its rhythm. Rhythm descended onto its head like a fiery tongue. It must be secured forever. Solidarity and rhythm are the quantity and quality of social energy. The masses have solidarity. Only the collective can have rhythm. And is not that conception of the masses, that purely quantitative measurement of social energy, already obsolete? Is it not merely a vestige from the lost paradise of ballot counters?[1]

Mandelstam conceives of rhythm as a means to access the seemingly lost humanistic heritage. The epoch of revolution – although it is "anti-philological" – restores man himself to us: "man in space and time, rhythmical, expressive man."[2]

Two aspects deserve particular attention:

1) The inflaming element, the spiritual and physical energy of a *rhythmic force*, on the one hand, and the organizing and shape-forming principle of a *rhythmic order*, on the other – they both meet in an ideal synthesis.

1 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 109-110.
2 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 109-110.

We could also say: in rhythm, Mandelstam reconciles the Dionysian with the Apollonian element. Rhythm is more than an effect of mere psycho-physiological resonance, more than a generator of ecstatic collective bodies, "twitching masses" ("zuckende Masse," Elias Canetti), mobs that get excited stamping their feet on the ground together.[3] It lends form and structure to amorphous masses.

2) However emphatic his rhetoric, Mandelstam refuses to grant this effect of rhythm its manifestation in the present. He describes it as a *potential*, as an effect to be anticipated, still to be brought about. According to one hypothesis of this paper, the whole semantic basis of the rhythm discourse of time should be analyzed with regard to a *forward*-pointing vector – much more than has been done so far. Rhythm *paves the way*. It does not immediately translate into action, as regards the dimension of historical agency, but creates a potential of revolutionary action. It paves the way for the creation of a revolutionary collective subject. After the revolution, it paves the way for a new quality in the configuration of the socialist collective. Mandelstam writes:

> If rhythmic education is to become nationally accepted, a miracle must occur that transforms the abstract system into the people's flesh. Where yesterday there was only a blue-print, tomorrow the dancers' costumes will flash colorfully and song will resound. School precedes life. School sculpts life in its own image and likeness. The rhythm of the academic year will be determined by accents that fall on the holidays of the school Olympic games: rhythm will be the instigator and organizer of those games. On such holidays we shall see a new, rhythmically educated generation freely proclaiming its will, its joys and sorrows.[4]

The point to be made here is nothing less than the significance of "universal, rhythmical acts […] for the creation of future history."[5] Rhythm is *historical future tense*.

3 Canetti: Masse und Macht, 28-30.
4 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 110.
5 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 110.

Mandelstam, however, conceives of rhythm as historical future tense in an even more radical sense: not only does rhythm prepare the people for their history-making action, but the people themselves have to prepare *for* rhythm. With this final turn of his essay, Mandelstam subverts a utilitarian reduction of rhythmical education to "hygiene," "gymnastics," "physical education," "psychology," and "labor."[6] To regain the original syncretism – a "synthesis of work and play"[7] of which rhythm was born – would be possible only in future:

> Our body, our labor and our science are not yet ready to accept rhythm unreservedly. We must still prepare for its acceptance. But at least let rhythm occupy that intermediate, independent position which is suitable for a social force that has just awakened from prolonged lethargy and that has not yet realized all its possibilities.[8]

"The Rhythmic Drum:" Progressive-Regressive

The notion of rhythmic "preparation" does not only refer to the macro-dimension of historical action; it also becomes a topos of an aesthetics of effect, i.e. of a maximal affective impact. This relates, first of all, to the micro-dimension of the individual aesthetic event, the mental and physical effects produced by the reception of works of art. In "The rhythmic drum" (written in the late 1930s), Sergei Eisenstein describes rhythm as the "original phenomenon" of the cinema.[9] He regards it as the quintessence of the rhythmic foundation of any artistic practice. What is more, he defines rhythm as that "organic" element which makes all forms of life resound in unison.[10]

To Eisenstein, the "rhythmic drum" of the cinema is a means of "working on" the audience to help them reach a mental state of liminality.[11] The

6 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 110.
7 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 110.
8 Mandelstam: Government and Rhythm, 110-111.
9 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 241.
10 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 241.
11 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 236.

state of liminality consists of that "sensuous thinking," the highest intensity of which is achieved in magical and ritual practices.[12] Support for this thesis is provided in a lengthy digression relating to rhythmically organized meditation practices as well as voodoo cultures and other rhythmic ecstasy techniques (such as those shown by the "dansantes" in Mexico, the "whirling dervishes" of Northern Africa, the shamans of Siberia, in the contemporary "dancings" in Harlem and the mass ecstasies of religious worshippers).[13] The underlying principle, according to Eisenstein, is the fundamental rhythmicity of our organic and homeostatic processes: heartbeat, breathing, gut peristalsis, cell division. (Eisenstein refers to a chapter about vegetative rhythms in Ernst Kretschmer's "Medizinische Psychologie" from 1922.) A pertinent note states that the "final goal" is to become one with the rhythm.[14] This inclination is reflected by the great interest that Eisenstein, Man Ray, Bunuel, and other avant-garde artists showed for the microscope-film documentations of the rhythms created by organic and amphibian movement (Jean Painlevé).

The audience – exposed to the fundamental technical rhythm of cinematic production, a "drum" of 24 frames per second – is "prepared" (to use Eisenstein's frequent expression) for the "activation" of "sensuous thinking" and the desensitization of those layers of consciousness that are phylo- and ontogenetically younger (i.e., layers of logical and conceptual thinking).[15] Eisenstein highlights the "regressive" and "archaic" character of this kind of thinking. He emphasizes its syncretistic qualities, referring to the contemporary ethnological concepts of "primitive" thinking (Lévy-Bruhl, Cushing, Frazer, Tylor, and others), on the one hand, and to psychoanalytic regression theories, on the other. It is the kind of thinking in which "everything links up with everything."[16]

Yet, Eisenstein is particularly interested in the dialectics of regression and progression, and he believes that, here, rhythm is of special relevance.

12 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 236.
13 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 237.
14 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 238.
15 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 236.
16 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 239.

With regard to a psychology of reception, this already concerns the premise of what we today would call a "fictional license" – a license that is conceded by the more highly developed consciousness, *knowing about* and *consciously accepting* the effect produced by filmic immersion. We have, here, a precondition for the regressing effect of rhythm:

> On the one hand, what comes into play, here, is, of course, an internal 'agreement' that those aspects which are contingent upon art should be regarded as reality within certain limits.
>
> The not unknown case of Natasha Rostova in the theatre (Tolstoy's 'War and Peace') shows that, without this 'agreement', the theatre cannot exert such influence. Without the 'abduction' process from the 'concreteness' of the green-painted canvas to other modes of perception, this canvas cannot pretend to represent a landscape.
>
> Yet, far more than mere habituation does the process of 'working on' someone play an immediate role, the process of working on a man who is 'bound' to join in the circle of sensuous thinking. This is where he no longer notices the difference between subject and object, where his ability to perceive the whole through one part of it (pars pro toto) becomes more pronounced, where the colors begin to sing for him and the sounds seem to assume a shape (synaesthesia), where the suggestive word causes him to respond as if the fact denoted by the word had actually happened (hypnotic behavior), where … etc.
>
> The means by which such a process of working on someone can be accomplished might be referred to as 'rhythmic drum'.[17]

Rhythm causes an alternating change between mental regression and progression. The early phylo- and ontogenetic stages of semiogenesis are revitalized as rhythmic "workings" to bring about the cognitive feat of figurative speaking and figurative understanding. "Sensuous thinking," then, exceeds conceptual logic rather than regressing behind it. According to Eisenstein, the *intellectual montage* repeats the basic effect of rhythm "at a higher level". The audience "would swallow" even the most staggering

17 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 236. Own translation.

montage experiments due to the increased intensity of the "mental drum".[18] Eisenstein explicates:

> Yet, each montage-like 'poetic expression' calls for the corresponding 'drumming' preparation ['barabannaya' podgotovka] through an intensified rhythm. Otherwise, the montage-like poetic expression will sound just silly and embarrassing – like a particularly figurative phrase in the context of a speech that is presented in colloquial language rather than with pathos.
>
> For instance, the marble lion's 'leaping up' on the stairs of Odessa ('Battleship Potemkin') can only be emotionally convincing, because it is preceded by a drumming rhythm which has become increasingly intense with the emotionally heated plot and which turns the attention of the spectator into a state of sensuous thinking, i.e., a state in which it is perfectly natural to speak in metaphors and to accept them as real fact without taking exception to the absurdity of a marble lion leaping up![19]

"Moving" Rhythm: Conditioning or Activation?

Rhythm depends on body movement and affect movement. Eisenstein equates the effect that the cinema ("that least physical and tactile form of art")[20] has on the mind with practices of immediate physical excitation – in particular, the ecstasies of dancing. To him and other avant-garde artists, the actual substratum of rhythm is movement, and the key medium of movement is the body's motor activity and kinetics. This has to be understood in the larger context of a rhythm boom in the early twentieth century and in the period after the revolution, which manifests in the dance and sport movements, the Dalcroze movement, rhythmic gymnastics, and the "rhythmist" studios.[21]

18 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 240.
19 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 243. Own translation.
20 Eisenstein: Die rhythmische Trommel, 244.
21 Cf. Sirotkina: Svobodnoe dvizhenie.

Theoreticians of literature, music and film are interested in how perception is psycho-physiologically dependent on rhythms of bodily movement. Kinaesthesia becomes the "sixth sense" of the avant-garde.[22] In the case of the film, the kinaesthetic effect is reinforced by the bodily movement depicted in the actual cinematic image. However, the verse theoretician Osip Brik also defines rhythm as the "specific shaping of motor-activity processes".[23] Research in poetic declamation at the "Institute of the living word" ("Institut zhivogo slova") deals with the connection between "dynamic" emotional values (tension/solution) and ideas of movement triggered by the rhythm of verse.[24] Sergei Bernstein refers to the poem's "movement image" ("obraz dvizheniya").[25] Sof'ya Vysheslavtseva examines the correlation between motor muscle innervations and verse-rhythmic impulses.[26] That motor associations are triggered in the process of declaiming, and listening to poetry is psycho-physiologically explained by an acoustic-motor neuronal resonance system.[27] Verse theoretician Andrei Bely is interested in similar phenomena.[28] Music-psychological research at the "State Academy of the Sciences of Art"/GAKhN (Belyaeva-Ekzemplyarskaya)[29] and empirical-psychological narratology also look at such connections between bodily movement and the perception of artistic rhythm[30].

22 Cf. Sirotkina: Shestoe chuvstvo avangarda.

23 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 162.

24 Cf. Sirotkina (ed.): Zhivoe slovo.

25 Bernstein: Esteticheskie predposylki deklamatsii, 364.

26 Vysheslavtseva: O motornykh impul'sakh stikha.

27 Cf. the contemporary German studies (Edith Hülse et al.) on correlations between dance and phonation movements, particularly Rieger: Die Individualität der Medien, 97-98 and Rieger: Die Ästhetik des Menschen.

28 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika; Bely: Glossolaliya.

29 Belyaeva-Ekzemplyarskaya: Vospriyatie melodicheskogo dvizheniya; Belyaeva-Ekzemplyarskaya: O psikhologii vospriyatiya muzyki.

30 On connections between breathing rhythms and compositional rhythms, regarding the structure of a narrative plot, cf. Vygotskiy: Psikhologiya iskusstva.

The dimension of rhythm relating to the aesthetics of effect, however, is not confined to the singular perception of works of art. In a more fundamental way, it is about a political potential of rhythm: about its mobilizing potential, its influence on the movements and constellations of bodies, on orders of perception, and on the organization and distribution of speech.

The "moving" effect of rhythm is twofold. As a "drum," rhythm excites, makes enthusiastic, and synchronizes individual bodies with the movement of collective bodies. It generates a field of interaction for kinetic resonance. However, on its own, this picture would be incomplete. Rhythm is powerful not just because of its exciting effect, but at least equally because of its organizing impact. Rhythm gives measure, regularity and routine to the movement of social configurations and its individual members. It is an instrument of discipline or, more emphatically (as in the above-quoted text by Mandelstam), of structuring amorphous masses to become a structured collective.

The early writings of Sergei Eisenstein on film theory were already illuminating in this respect. In "The Montage of Film Attractions" (1924), Eisenstein likens the process of "working on" the audience through the film to a "series of blows."[31] It is not the individual blow but the rhythmic "series of shocks" that produces the "general projected emotional effect."[32] Here, Eisenstein, it is true, still thinks in the narrow, manipulative terms of physiologically conditioning the audience, which is due to the strong influence of reflex psychology. Yet, it is precisely this reflex-psychological reasoning that leads Eisenstein, in his reflection of the potential effect of rhythm in the cinema, to emphasize more the movement-regulating, "training" effect rather than the affectively exciting effect. The "breakdown of movement" into its "primary component elements" should enable the production of imitation primitives for the audience. Actors and audience are trained by a "system of shocks, rises, falls, spins, pirouettes."[33]

Thus, the film's ability to infect the audience with motor activity and association implies both effects from the start: excitation and discipline.

31 Eisenstein: The Montage of Film Attractions, 39.
32 Eisenstein: The Montage of Film Attractions, 46.
33 Eisenstein: The Montage of Film Attractions, 50.

Eisenstein explicitly links this to training systems of the labor movement.[34] The concept of "expressive movement" – which has been discussed in detail by Eisenstein, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Nikolai Evreinov, and many other theatre and film theoreticians of the time – is already characterized here by the combination of both aspects. "Expressive movement," to Eisenstein, is both the purposefully structured movement (of the worker, the athlete, etc.) and the movement characterized by conflict between an emotionally instinctive intention to move and "conscious volitional retardation."[35]

Only if we take this double effect into account can we understand Eisenstein's radical rethinking of mimesis – from a *mimesis of depiction* to a *mimesis of movement*. On the one hand, when comparing the refinement of "the ability to imitate" brought about by the cinema with dancing rituals from the Stone Age, he claims that this mimetic training of instinctive movements is designed to create a maximum emotional effect with the audience. At the same time, however, he points out that these events have a training effect which educates the kinetic reflexes.

Apart from the rhythmic effect on the *bodies* of the revolution, a similar double determination is also discussed in connection with the *language* of the revolution. In 1924, the "LEF" (Levyj front of the arts) magazine published a special issue in which several prominent representatives of Russian Formalism come to grips with the rhetoric of Lenin. These analyses highlight how Lenin's rhetoric differs from an enthralling rhetoric aiming at affective mobilization. Boris Kazansky identifies repetition as the key effect-producing factor in Lenin's speech. The repetition does not strike at the spectator "as with the first stick that comes along," but creates a "geometric style:"

> […] direct like a graphic making the most economic use of its means, like a drawing without colour, without a shade that would blur and

34 Eisenstein: The Montage of Film Attractions, 51.

35 Eisenstein: The Montage of Film Attractions, 52.

> obscure the clear lines. Lenin does not address feeling, nor the imagination. [...] Lenin turns to the decision of the will that is necessary to follow a certain path.[36]

Yet, at the same time, emphasis is placed on intensities and energetic "discharges" as effects of this speech. Lev Yakubinsky looks at the "lexical discharges" in the context of the serial effect brought about by rhythm.[37] Boris Eichenbaum refers to "periodical hammer blows"[38] – a genuinely rhythmic quality.

The training of rhythmic movement becomes a stage for the politics of rhythm in industrial modernism. "Taylorisation" (USA), "psychotechnics" (Germany), and "scientific work organization" (Soviet Union) are aiming for the optimization and automatization of movement by means of rhythmic habituation – whether it is the movement of actors, of workers, of soldiers, or of children. Rhythm is power; it structures the orders of perception and movement.

A politics of rhythm would not be properly understood, however, if it were regarded as a one-way street of impacting a person's mind and body. Rhythm is political inasmuch as it brings about activation. Its 'impacts' cannot be divided from the empowerment of the subjects, experiencing rhythmic stimulation. Rhythm as activation implies a difference between *one's own* and *foreign* rhythms, the redistribution of forces between individual and collective agents. Rhythmic activation has a transgressive moment. It results in shifts and variants, transfers and rejections of routines. It subverts orders of speech, of images, of movement. Rhythmic practice is explosive. It is an enabling condition of wild speech and action.

Rhythmic activation is, at the same time, an enabling condition of *self-observation* of the rhythmically "forming" subject. It creates modes of flexibility; it enables the rhythmic subject not only to vary given patterns, but to play through alternative scripts. Here, the rhythmically organized work training at the Soviet Central Institute of Labor headed by Aleksei Gastev is significant. The optimization of the work processes in terms of rhythmic

36 Kasanskiy: Rech' Lenina, 118.

37 Yakubinsky: O snizhenii vysokogo stilya u Lenina, 75.

38 Eichenbaum: Osnovnye stilevye tendentsii v rechi Lenina, 64.

movement, the "resonance" of body and mind of the "new man of speed," aligned as it should be with the rhythms of technology, the "soaking up of the logic of the movements of the workbench like a sponge" – all this is closely linked with the self-observation of the exercising people.[39] These should – at any moment – relate to their work place as to a "research workshop."[40] Rhythmic work organization is based on timing and schematizable routines only to a certain degree. It calls for an integration of situational attention, quickness of response, and self-observing control, on the one hand, with the ability to anticipate and the designing of "new combinations", on the other. To Gastev, the new man is, first of all, a "man of opportunities."[41]

Interruption: Preparation of the Form

The future, preparing element of rhythm has an additional aspect: the dynamics of the reception of rhythmic series immanent in structure itself. Apart from the aspect of aesthetic effect discussed above, this concerns the cognitive aspect of form-building. The issue is most discriminately reflected in the verse poetics of the Russian formalists.

This discussion has to be seen in the context of a competition between models of rhythm: *flow models* and *interruption models*. The vitalistic thinking of the time postulates an "organic" and "natural" rhythm of a flowing quality. Ludwig Klages and others support this idea by etymologically tracing rhythm back to Greek "rheein" / "flow." As a "steadiness undivided by boundaries" ("unzergrenzte Stetigkeit") or a "polarized steadiness" ("polarisierte Stetigkeit"), and depicted as a sequence of waves, rhythm, here, stands firmly *against* the "structured series" of rule and

39 Gastev: Trudovye ustanovki, 283.

40 Gastev: Trudovye ustanovki, 283.

41 Gastev: Trudovye ustanovki, 282. Cf. Nikolay Bernshteyn's research on physiology of movement as well as the "activity theory" (Aleksey Leont'ev) in the broader context of the so-called cultural history school of Soviet psychology. For more, see the Kracauer: Das Ornament der Masse and Giese: Girlkultur.

measure.[42] Rhythm – as a domain of "unconscious experience" – is set up dualistically against measure and meter as a domain of attentive awareness of "interruption."[43]

Interruption models, by contrast, regard rhythm as artificial sequencing. The Russian verse theoretician Osip Brik refers to intensity and interruption as the two central parameters of rhythm.[44] It is this fundamental double determination that produces the intrinsic tension of any rhythm: these two parameters – intensity and interruption – constantly produce shifting patterns of congruence and incongruence. Even if just one single rhythmic series is isolated in an experiment, let alone the real overlap of several such series in our body and speech movements, we process ever new "combinations of intensity and interruption."[45]

Rhythm as interruption relates to the problem of *attention to form* from an aesthetic-theory and psychology angle. Here, too, we should point out a dynamic of preparation. Rhythm is a *potential form*, or should we better say a *form of potentiality*, not only in terms of the above-sketched transaesthetic activation, but also in terms of its ability to make form possible. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht condensed this into a formulation of rhythm as the "successful realization of form under the (complicating)

42 Klages: Vom Wesen des Rhythmus, 17.

43 Klages: Vom Wesen des Rhythmus, 44. Emile Benveniste ("Der Begriff des 'Rhythmus'") shows that this etymological derivation is wrong and reconstructs the meaning of the Old Greek ritmos as "distinctive form". Ritmos, according to Benveniste, was originally a "technical term" for the distinction of bodies. Rhythm, to follow Benveniste's main argument, is a "distinctive form" and "proportional figure" (367, 369), not a wave. Benveniste elaborates the differentiation of the concept of form in pre-Socratic philosophy (schema, morphe, eidos, rithmos) and determines rithmos (as opposed to schema) as "the form at the moment in which it is assumed by what is movable, moving, liquid" (370-371). This form is an "improvised, momentary, changeable form" (371). Rithmos indicates "dispositions" or forms "without firmness or natural necessity, results of an ever-changing arrangement" (371).

44 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 168.

45 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 170.

condition of temporality."[46] In rhythm, one might say, a fundamental tension is acted out that is constitutive of aesthetic experience, a tension between effects of relief governed by the economy of perception and action (concerning cognitive and motor relief and the smooth running of processes), on the one hand, and effects of the cognitively "complicating" attention to form (including the pleasure derived from such an experience of form), on the other. In rhythm, two effects coincide that are often considered antagonistic from an aesthetic-theory point of view: automation and defamiliarization.[47]

In empirical-psychological and formalistic rhythm research, three key factors of rhythmically induced attention to form can be identified. First, there are the *sensations of contrast*: they constitute the fundamental condition for the identification of rhythmic units (high vs. low significance, strong vs. weak intensity of an element). In this context, the theses of Gestalt psychology relating to "contradiction" as a temporal Gestalt quality are of particular interest.[48] Second, the *multiple determination* of verse rhythm concentrates and increases the attention to the form-building processes: "two rhythms are in some manner running at once" (Gerard Manley Hopkins).[49] Differences of tempo, sequence shifts ("sdvigi") and other asynchronies between the – far more than two – different rhythmic series are characteristic of this cognitive event of attention to form.

Third, and this is most important to our argumentation, a preparatory attitude is also of utmost significance if rhythm is viewed from a form-receptive angle. It is the attitude of *expectation*. This aspect of creating

46 Gumbrecht: Rhythmus und Sinn, 717.

47 It is no coincidence that Friedrich Nietzsche quotes in his early fragment "Über den Rhythmus" (1875) a programmatic passage by Arthur Schopenhauer ("Welt als Wille und Vorstellung"). Rhythm becomes a "binder" of our attention and results in a blind "tuning" into the presented, whereby it contains "a certain emphatic and independent from reason power of persuasion" (Nietzsche: Über den Rhythmus, 474). Regarding the 'relieving' function of rhythm, see also Karl Bücher's influential study "Arbeit und Rhythmus" (1896).

48 Ehrenfels: Über Gestaltqualitäten, 276-277.

49 Hopkins: Author's Preface, quoted after: Jakobson: Linguistics and Poetics, 366.

rhythmic tension between expectation and realization is described in detail by Yuri Tynyanov in "The Problem of Verse Language" (1924). The metrical organization of verse rhythm thrives on the tension between "preparation" by dint of individual metrical units ("progressive element") and "execution" as the combination of units into larger groups ("regressive element").[50] A dialectic between the forces of regression and progression is, thus, also effective from within the structure of verse.

Rhetoric research similarly recognizes the tension between propulsion and repulsion as a fundamental dynamism of the rhythm of oration. Boris Kazanskiy describes, in his above-mentioned contribution to Lenin's rhetoric, a dynamic of repetition that is "propelling" and "pushing forward" as well as "stopping." He refers to a genuine dynamics of rhythm: the "dam" that rhythmic preparation builds through "expectation," the "shifting of the main emphasis to the end," and, on the other hand, the possibility of stopping the movement, of forming "stationary water swirls" functioning as "funnels" that "suck in and swallow" attention.[51]

Pulse

Yet, a reception-aesthetic point of view alone would not be able to capture rhythm as a form of potentiality, as a perceptive and actional moment of experiencing potentiality. Expectation of form is certainly a decisive moment. It can be understood in two different ways, though. The expectation can be based on the presupposition of a sequential structure that, in respect of its status *as form*, has already been secured or established (regardless of the degree of invariability or variability of this structure). Reception-aesthetic approaches are not always free from such a reduced perspective of expectation. In the worst case, they lead to schematic models that distinguish merely between variants and invariants ("metrical" system as invariant plus enlivening "rhythmic" variants by means of performance and agogics).

50 Tynyanov: Problema stichotvornogo jazyka, 40.

51 Kazanskiy: Rech' Lenina, 124.

From this formative expectation, a transformative expectation has to be distinguished. Given such a perspective, rhythm is a force *before* the form. It is more of an event than a form, or, more precisely, as an event, it is the condition of becoming form. This aspect has to do with the distinction between movement and the result of a movement. As Osip Brik writes, very much to the point, in "Rhythm and Syntax:"

> When someone crosses a swamp, leaving footprints, then the sequence of these footprints does not constitute rhythm, however regular it may be. Only the process of walking is rhythmical, and the corresponding footprints are mere data that can be used to assess this process. A statement that the footprints are rhythmically distributed cannot be scientifically justified.[52]

We find similar thoughts in Gestalt psychology. Christian von Ehrenfels writes in his fundamental 1890 essay, where he famously argues for the existence of "Zeitgestalten:"

> We are able to sense, i.e. to see in the strict sense of the word, only the present, only a singular position of legs. Where we believe to see movement, our memory is already at play.[53]

It is in the "pulse" that this transformative movement materializes. Osip Brik remarks on the pulse of rhythm in verse: "The rhythmic movement exists prior to the verse."[54] Here, he stipulates the primacy of an underlying rhythmic formula with which the verses become in tune, so to speak, and whose sequence of words may as well be rhythmized differently if the "pulse" is different. The ubiquitous comparison with dance makes this clear: it would make no sense to try to explain the "material result" of the

52 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 164. Cf. Ehrenfels: Über Gestaltqualitäten, 270-271 on the "striding man." There is only *one* step which is in the present: "Where we think we see movement, our memory is already at play" (Ehrenfels: Über Gestaltqualitäten, 271). Cf. Brüstle / Ghattas / Risi / Schouten: Zur Einleitung.

53 Ehrenfels: Über Gestaltqualitäten, 270-271.

54 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 164.

rhythmic pulse of a dance as a combination of certain regulated movements. There would only be a "primary rhythmic formula that is used to bring about the various kinetic results."[55] Metricized verse, the regulated dance figure – these are nothing but "materializations" of the rhythmic pulse.[56]

Pulse theory, however, must not be confused with organicistic notions of an elementary rhythmic flow that wafts and billows through the world and through our bodies. On the contrary, it clearly sides with a cultural-technical concept of rhythm as an artificial achievement. At the beginning of his study, Brik introduces a methodologically strict distinction when he points out the difference between rhythm as the "intended/conditional forming of motor processes" ("oformlenie uslovnoe") and the "natural sequence" ("estestvennoe cheredovanie") of astronomical, biological and mechanical movements.[57] The "pulse" is regarded from a more technical point of view, it is not an unconscious urging. We are not dealing with a drive theory of rhythm.

The pulse, most importantly, is based on an energy of *transfer* – a transfer from social rhythms to artistic rhythms and vice versa. That is true, in particular, of revolutionary situations in which new political orders, new regimes of movement and new forms of art are implemented. We will demonstrate this with an example from Andrei Bely's verse theory.

Rhythm as a "transformative" force constitutes the key idea of Andrei Bely's verse theory, particularly, in his late essay "Rhythm as Dialectics" (1929). Bely polemicizes against a static verse theory focused on meter that looks at "line atoms, verse foot atoms, syllable atoms" in isolation, beyond their "organized wholeness" ("tsel'nost' organizatsii").[58]

Lines of verse, according to Bely, are rhythmically induced generic processes. Bely repeatedly refers to rhythm and meter as different "phases" of verse-formation, as formations of "species" from "genera" (here regarded in the biological understanding of *genus* and *species*). In

55 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 167.
56 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 171.
57 Brik: Ritm i sintaksis, 163.
58 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika, 18-19.

terms of biological evolution – the earlier stage being the more open, more fluid one (compared by Bely to the relation between cartilage and bone). The genesis of poetry "as form" is a movement from "pre-poetry" ("do-poeziya").[59] Rhythm is the "intonation in us that precedes the choice of words and lines."[60] Here, too, a dynamics of preparation is dominant. Rhythm prepares meter. Yet, Bely does not conceive of this preparation teleologically: "Intonation, or rhythm, often knows nothing of meter, just as the *genus* does not know the *species* before the latter has become stable in its specialness."[61] The constant alternating change between intonation and verse is the very core of this "transformative" process. Its venue, if we may use this term, is not the single line of verse but the escalation and de-escalation of the differences between successive lines. Bely's statistical calculations, therefore, focus on the emergence of tensions and modifications in the process of line accumulation as the decisive rhythm-generating quantity. What is calculated is the changing ratio of "correspondences" and "contrasts" between subsequent line patterns.

Most importantly, however, this generic process of preparation must not be considered confined to the poetic system. The "pulse" and "rhythmic intonation" (Bely uses the two expressions almost synonymously) are transfers not only at the moment of their transformation into metrical verse. They are also transfers on the other side, on the side that touches upon the rhythms of life and speech *before* literature. A "social order" materializes in rhythm as transfer. Artistic "inspiration" and enthusiasm of the process of creation are nothing but the "acceptance of the social order intonated in the sound," its "mandate" and "directive."[62] They transfer this order to the poetic image. The poet is a medium of intonation; thanks to his more wide-ranging and acute hearing, he becomes the "megaphone" of the "napev" (the melodious intonation) and condenses into the "wave of the sound that hits him from life's meeting."[63] Bely has a rich repertory

59 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika, 21.
60 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika, 22-23.
61 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika, 39.
62 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika, 29-30.
63 Belyy: Ritm kak dialektika, 31.

of technical-media images for this model of transfer. He refers to the emblematic poet of the revolution, Mayakovsky. That poet is said to receive rhythmic pulses like a telegrapher receiving telegrams.

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Natascha Drubek

Exegi Monumentum Revolutionis – On Eisenstein's *October* (1927)

My essay will look into the cinematic representation of revolution in Sergei Eisenstein's film *Oktyabr'* / *October*, a film which not only was commissioned by the Party Anniversary Commission[1] to celebrate the decennial of the October Revolution but also had a decisive impact on the revolutionary development of film history and theory. I will explore how revolution can be re-enacted and shown in the medium of cinema, and how this medium is capable of not only staging or even falsifying history in a pseudo-documentary form, but also retain the dialectical gist of the philosophy behind the political revolution. The motifs I will draw upon for my analysis will be sculptures and monuments.

For Eisenstein, revolution on film was never merely the screen narrative of the historical event, more importantly, it was a philosophical concept confronting him with the challenge of its representation – bearing in mind his particular Soviet audience that in significant parts then was still illiterate. It was this kind of viewer he wanted to introduce to philosophical thinking in a visual form, to teach him and her the dialectics of Marxism using a montage sequence intelligible to everybody. *October* introduces a new system of visual argumentation which Eisenstein in his influential article "The Dramaturgy of Film Form," written for the 1929 "Kinofot" exhibition in Stuttgart,[2] described as "film language." In close connection with the metaphor of individual film shots as parts of a syntactical continuum we find in Eisenstein's theoretical works several attempts to underline the ability of cinema to replace verbal language and

1 The "October Anniversary Commission of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR" was headed by the Bolshevik N. Podvoyskiy who also plays in the film.

2 In the German original, "Dramaturgie der Filmform," the Russian title is "Dramaturgiya kinoformy." The essay was later revised and published in English in *Film Form*, where it had the alternative title "The Dialectical Approach of Film Form."

transcend conventional types of writing. In order to fully understand Eisenstein's treatment of revolution in the medium of film, we need to recall the meaning of his term "intellectual montage."

"Intellectual Montage" in *October*

Figure 1. The Gods of *October*. (Source: V.V. Ivanov: Ocherki po istorii semiotiki v SSSR (1976). http://philologos.narod.ru/semiotics/ivanov_gl2.htm)

According to Eisenstein film montage can perform dialectics through the combination of unrelated (often colliding) images creating a synthetical 'third' through the editing of shots:

> The combination of two 'representable' objects achieves a representation of something that cannot be graphically represented. For example, the representation of water and an eye signifies 'to weep'; a representation of an ear next to a door means 'to listen'; a dog and a mouth mean 'to bark'; […] a knife and a heart mean 'sorrow', and so on. But this is montage! It is precisely what we do in cinema. Juxtaposing representational shots […].[3]

This newly created 'third' in itself is often invisible (an abstract concept such as "sorrow") or cannot be represented for reasons of decorum or censorship. "Intellectual montage" stimulates and creates the dialectical process of juxtaposing two unrelated images to produce a thought in the viewer's mind.

A challenging abstract idea would certainly be "revolution" which in *October* is created over and over again by different juxtapositions many of which draw upon cultural erudition. One example from the beginning of the film is the colliding montage of the statue of Emperor Alexander III intercut with the raised scythes carried by the masses; together they form a cinematic ideogram of the lethal aspect of the October Revolution based of the personification of Death, the Grim Reaper.[4]

However, the "most famous example of 'intellectual montage' in the history of cinema"[5] is *October*'s sequence of the gods. Yuri Tsivian describes Eisenstein's intention as follows: "a sudden cut from the round face of a Japanese deity to a shot dominated by rays spreading from the Baroque statue of Christ was meant to create a kinesthetic sensation of an exploding bomb."[6] The director believed that the rapid alternation of

3 Eisenstein: Beyond the Shot, 139.

4 For a different interpretation of the scythes, cf. Tsivian: Hyperkino Commentary for "October," Footnote 3. Here, Tsivian links them to the strong peasant element in the army and Eisenstein's film *The General Line*. A combination of both, the agricultural tool as a metonymy of the peasant uprisings and the scythe as a personification of Death would most fully describe the impression of this "intellectual" game Eisenstein plays.

5 Tsivian: Hyperkino Commentary for "October," Footnote 19.

6 Tsivian: Hyperkino Commentary for "October," Footnote 19.

these two figures representing divinities has an optical effect in the perception of the viewer. Here, the tertium quid emerging from the montage is a reference object which is difficult to obtain or costly and dangerous to produce in this case.

Eisenstein's montage of similar and antithetic iconic features (round vs. rectangular) is shaped by the dialectical process of identifying all sacred figures as one. The anti-religious "series" of idols, gods and the Christian Son of God constituted a breach of pre-revolutionary censorship, and was most probably, even in the 1920s, perceived as blasphemous by the audiences. The message of the divinity montages would be: the figure of Christ despite its gilded aureole is a thing no different from the wooden idols, multiple-armed Shiva or the smiling porcelain Buddhas. The figures and idols do not add up to a synthetical concept of God but rather delete or neutralize each other in a negation of a constructive dialectics.

Viktor Shklovsky in his 1928 analysis of the film explains the reduction of different godlike figures to one paradigm, enabling Eisenstein to connect the anti-religious parade of the gods to a political topic, expressed in another "series" of representations – the sculptures in *October*. The director in the opening shots of *October* confronts us with a massive monument to imperial power, followed by sculptures on a much smaller scale depicting rulers of the past and present, such as Napoleon Bonaparte, and by analogy the current head of the Provisional government, Kerensky, accompanied by his double, the general Kornilov.

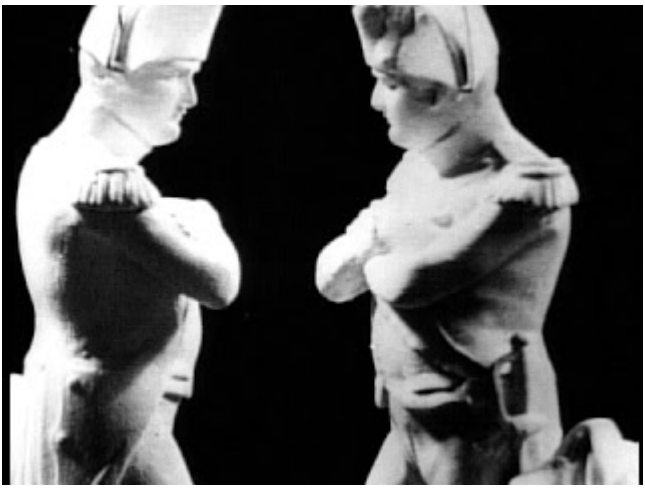

Figure 2. "Two Bonapartes" / "Dva Bonaparta."
(Source: Film still of Eisenstein's *October*, 1927).

These "two Bonapartes," as they are called in a film intertitle, in Russian history are figureheads of Restoration:

> He arranges things into series, transitioning, for instance, from god to god until he reaches a phallic African idol, and through this idol – the idea of the "statue," which is in turn associated with Napoleon and further with Kerensky, via a certain deflation. All these items resemble each other only in one aspect – they all represent divinity – but they differ from each other in their semantic timbre.[7]

Shklovsky sees the divinity sequence directly related to the "idea of the statue," which takes us to our next chapter analyzing the shapes and functions of sculptures in *October* in relation to the history of the 1917 revolution(s).

7 Brik / Pertsov / Shklovskiy: Ring LEFa, 35.

Figure 3. Poster for *October* by Voronov & Evstaf'ev, 1927.
(Source: http://ljrate.ru/post/206/1106949).

1917 in Petrograd and the "idea of the statue" in *October*

Revolution in 1917 began on International Woman's Day 1917 (8 March [February 23]) in Petrograd with strikes and bread riots as a protest against the government's food rationing. Women of all classes played an important part in the uprising, recruiting female and male workers for the strike[8]; the February Revolution led to the abdication of the last Tsar, Nicholas II on 15 [2] March 1917.

The film *October* not only omits this story of the abdication as an outcome of the February events but rather concentrates on the role women played later in the year of 1917. Women revolutionaries and the female

8 Engel: Women in Russia, 130.

"Death Battalion" from the Bolshevik perspective were part of the Bourgeoisie.

The film introduces the fall of imperial rule in highly symbolic sequences showing the dismembering of a sculpture, as parts of its 'body' crumble. In the film, this attack on a symbol of imperial rule is carried out by the People, among them a peasant woman, pulling down a monument to Alexander III, the father of Nicholas II.

Apart from the fact that the toppling of this particular monument happened no earlier than May 1918, it had nothing to do with any of the revolutionary activities in Petrograd: the monument was, after all, standing in Moscow. Women, on the other hand, do play a role in *October*, albeit a negative one, representing mainly the Bourgeois element, a reference to those middle-class feminists who mobilized working-class women to demonstrate for women's suffrage. Additionally, women are ridiculed in the Death Battalion sequences, dressed in their underwear, protecting the Provisional government at the Winter Palace.

Figure 4: "Women Volunteers in Front of the Winter Palace" (1917). (Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2nd_Moscow_Women_Death_Corp_Defending_Winter_Palace._St.Petersburg_November_1917.jpg).

Eisenstein seems neither interested in the geographical authenticity of events nor in chronology or historical accuracy. Instead he chooses freely those motifs which promise to have the strongest visual impact and symbolic value.

However, why does *October* bother to show the assault on a sculpture in Moscow if it could have re-enacted the removal of the last Emperor from the capital Petrograd and his arrival in the Urals as shown in this 1927 painting:

Figure 5. "Handing over of the Romanov Family to Uralsovet." Painting by V.N. Pchelin, 1927
(Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Romanovs_family_are_taken_by_Uralsovet_by_V.N._Pchelin_(1927).jpg).

We will return to this question later since the answers can be found in political circumstances on the one hand and artistic prefigurations of the substitution of real people by sculptures on the other.

What is striking in Eisenstein's film on rebellion, upheaval, and revolution is the central position monuments and sculptures inhabit. The quintessence of a sculptural work is its immobility as well as by representational capacities allowing a realistic mimesis of the object or person referenced. Often this representation is connected with a larger-than life augmentation as was the case with both statues of Alexander III erected by his son in Moscow and the capital. The lack of movement of a statue perfectly embodied the gravitas of the Emperor of "all the Russias."

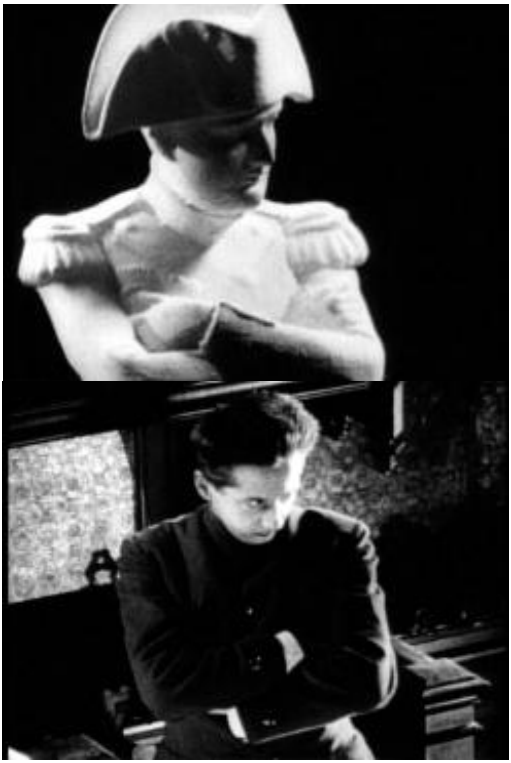

Figure 6. Statue of Napoleon and Kerensky imitating the napoleonic pose. (Source: Film still of Eisenstein's *October*, 1927).

Sculpture as an artistic form shows a certain propensity to serve most readily the despot who wishes to legitimize their rule by erecting statues to commemorate and celebrate either their predecessors (Louis XVI, Nicholas I and II) or themselves (Napoleon). When it comes to material and media properties, statues seem to be very far removed from moving images. Eisenstein's choice of a giant pre-revolutionary sculpture (the statue of a seated Alexander) and a multitude of statues showing post-revolutionary restorers (white statuettes of Napoleon) as material for his film on the Bolshevik Revolution is contradictory and even provocative.

Figure 7. Postcard of the monument to Alexander III as seen from the embankment of the Moskva with the Cathedral on the left. (Source: Wikipedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monument_to_Alexander_III._Moscow_1.jpg).

Of interest will be two monuments which Nicholas II had erected in honor of his father and predecessor on the throne, Alexander III. One was unveiled in 1909 in St. Petersburg, the other three years later; both occasions were recorded on film for the Court chronicles to which Eisenstein had access. In *October*, as I already pointed out, the main iconoclastic activity revolves around the latter monument in Moscow, even though the revolution took place in Petrograd.

The large sculpture by A.M. Opekushin (also responsible for the Pushkin statue in Moscow) was placed on an extraordinarily steep pedestal between the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Moskva river and unveiled on 30 May 1912.[9] However, its lifetime was short, only four years.

9 For the precise location and a description of the monument's fate between 1912 and 1918, cf. http://wikimapia.org/10212648/ru/Здесь-находился-памятник-Александру-III-1912-1918-гг (07.02.2019).

The pedestal survived until 1931 when it was removed in connection with the demolishment of the Cathedral. It had to cede to the preparation for the foundation pit of a building for the Palace of the Soviets (Dvorets Sovetov) for which the planning began as early as 1922.

Figure 8. Postcard of the Moscow monument during the day of unveiling, May 1912. (Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AA_m.jpg).

It was the large Moscow monument to Alexander III which was bound with ropes and dismantled in the presence of a cheering crowd in 1918, following a "Decree on the Monuments of the Republic"[10] from 12 April 1918. The removal of the imperial statue was followed by the liquidation of the current Emperor. In July 1918 the last Romanov Tsar together with his family and entourage were secretly murdered in Ekaterinburg.[11] When

10 The decree – Dekret o pamyatnikakh Respubliki, 12 aprelya 1918 g (95) – was signed by Lenin, Stalin, Lunacharsky, and Gorbunov. http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/18-04-12.htm.

11 Slater: The Many Deaths of Tsar Nicholas II, 153.

Eisenstein wanted to film the falling apart of imperial power in 1927 he had "a papier-mâché replica" of the monument erected.[12]

One answer to the initial question "Why does *October* attack a Moscow sculpture?" lies in the history of the performing arts in Imperial Russia and the monitoring of Court chronicles by a strict censorship which did not allow professional actors to impersonate divine rulers, either on the theatrical stage or for a film. This ban on representation applied to all Russian tsars going back to and including Alexander I., whom we will discuss later in connection with Pushkin's aversion to imperial and military monuments.

Just as on the theatrical stage, it was forbidden for an actor to impersonate the Emperor on film. When the Romanov dynasty in 1913 wished to celebrate their tercentenary, the Drankov film studio was at odds with how to comply with the rules and deliver a celebration of the rulers at the same time. The experienced theatre set designer Evgeniy Bauer was entrusted with this problem which lead to his first engagement in cinema.[13]

For the film *Trëkhsotletie tsarstvovaniya doma Romanovykh* / *The Tercentenary of the Rule of the Romanov Dynasty* (1913, directed by A. Uralskiy and N. Larin) Bauer used busts and sculptures, transferring a stage tradition to the cinema in order to circumvent censorship limitations when portraying Royalty.

In this film Alexander III is represented both by a framed photograph and another monument, this time on horseback, sculpted by Paolo Troubetskoy, shown in the documentary shots of its unveiling in St. Petersburg filmed in 1909. In the panegyric film by the Drankov studio he was the first Emperor who was introduced neither through impersonation (as the

12 Tsivian: Hyperkino Commentary for "October," Footnote 1. The 1912 clip is included into this Footnote 1.

13 Bauer (1865-1917) was a pre-revolutionary film director who not only transferred Russian symbolism to the screen but also introduced several aesthetic and technological advances during his short career between 1913 and 1917 (Drubek: Russisches Licht). Bauer had studied at the Moscow Academy of Art with the Art Nouveau architect Franz (Fedor) Shekhtel, who had designed the plinth for the St. Petersburg monument to Alexander III which measured more than 3 m (see below).

old Tsars) nor a bust – as had been the case with the preceding 19th century rulers. Alexander III was thus presented twofold through modern camera media: in a 1909 film of the unveiling of his equestrian sculpture and an authentic photograph. In this cinematic celebration of the Romanovs, Nicholas II is the first Emperor to be seen in authentic moving images, which drew upon the French film material of his coronation festivities from May 1896.

Even though the unveiling of the seated Alexander in Moscow had been filmed in 1912 by Pathé as well, Eisenstein did not use any of this authentic chronicle material, and *October* does not seem to be inspired by it. The inspiration comes from the substitution of a person with a sculpture in the Russian film made by the Drankov studio and having to deal with the specific regulations of Court Censorship. Thus, in his monumental "intellectual montage" Eisenstein quotes former cinematic practices of using statues and genres connected to monuments.

Eisenstein's film about the Russian Revolution does not start with the fall of the Tsar himself, instead with an attack on one of the most iconic representations of imperial rule, originally standing not far from the Kremlin, the old center of power, renewed in the USSR.

In 1927, when choosing historical monuments as a backdrop, motif and object for his film *October*, Eisenstein was not interested in the Petrograd equestrian statue even though it could have referred visually to the small-scale sculpture of Napoleon on a horse shown later and other targets of the iconoclasm of the French Revolution.

Figure 9. The St. Petersburg monument to Alexander III.
(Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marble_Palace_(oriental_frontage).jpg).

Instead, his production puts enormous effort in recreating and rebuilding[14] an already destroyed Moscow monument to Alexander III for the purposes of the film. Thus, Eisenstein transfers and applies his visual dialectics to the then capital of the Soviet Union, Moscow, as well. In *October*, when Eisenstein addresses the theme of revolution, it is therefore never purely historical. Neither does it update itself through the choice of time and place of the revolutionary enactment of a Moscow uprising, which had never happened in this form. Through this shift towards Moscow and the period after the revolution, *October* seems to be referring to both 1917/18 and to 1927, to history as well as present time.

14 In the 19th century, the space in front of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was designed as a memorial to the victory over Napoleon.

Dismantling Royal Monuments in the Historical Perspective

Notable cases of iconoclastic attacks on Royal statues in modern history happened in the American and in the French Revolutions. In Manhattan the statue of George III was removed as a symbolic act of dissolving all connection with the British Empire. Inspired by George Washington's Declaration of Independence on July 9, 1776, citizens of New York City marched down Broadway to Bowling Green and pulled down the larger than life equestrian statue of George. Lieutenant Isaac Bangs wrote in the *Pennsylvania Journal and the Weekly Advertiser*, July 17, 1776:

> Last night the Statue on the Bowling Green representing George Ghewelph alias George Rex was pulled down by the populace. In it were 4,000 pounds of Lead and a Man undertook to take off 10 oz. of gold from the Superficies, as both Man and Horse were covered with Gold leaf. The Lead we hear is to be run up into musket balls for the use of the Yankees, when it is hoped that the emanations of the Leaden George will make as deep impressions in the Bodies of some of his red coated and Tone Subjects.[15]

The mention of the "run up" lead being used as "musket balls for the use of the Yankees" who were striving to free America from the British establishes a material nexus between the dismemberment and melt-down of the metal sculpture transforming it into ammunition of the revolutionaries: bullets, projectiles, and bombs. After all, most revolutionaries had no access to arms and matériel.

The destruction of George's leaden statue the metals of which later were recycled in different ways, was achieved with ropes – just as in *October* – as one can see in this contemporary illustration:

15 This act was reported by Bangs under date of July 10, 1776. The source can be found here: https://archive.org/stream/equestrianstatue01wall/equestrianstatue01wall_djvu.txt (07.02.2019).

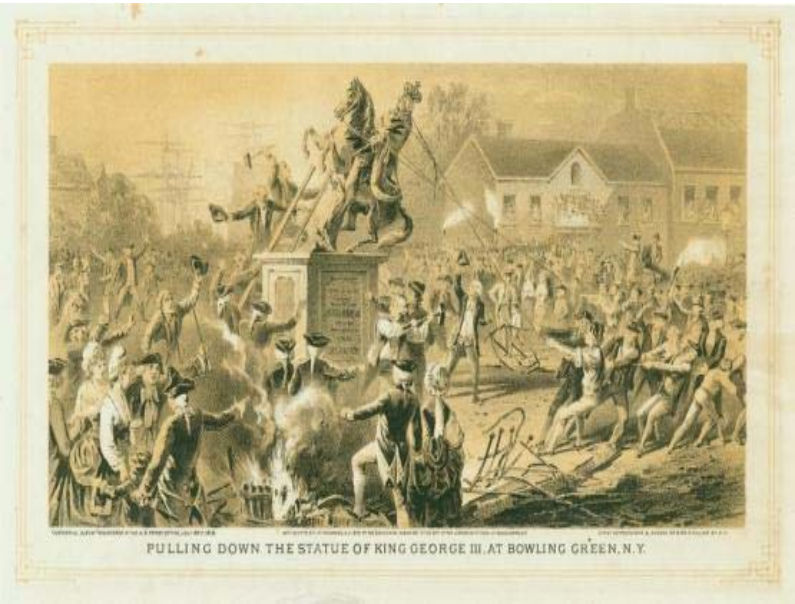

Figure 10. Ropes used for the "Pulling down the statue of King George III. at Bowling Green N.Y." (1776).
(Source: http://www.boweryboyshistory.com/).

In France many churches and statues were destroyed during the revolution by the revolutionary crowd. As a forerunner to *October* the most striking space formerly adorned by a Royal sculpture was the Place Louis XV, renamed Place de la Révolution where the guillotine was erected. In his phantasy Eisenstein joined the topographies of Paris and Moscow when he wrote: "How many times, upon passing the Monument to Alexander III, did I imagine 'la veuve' – Dr. Guillotin's machine – on its granite pedestal."[16]

16 Cf. Tsivian: Hyperkino Commentary for "October," Footnote 1. Eisenstein's quote continues: "One desperately desires to be part of history! Now, what sort of history can make do without a guillotine?" See also Eisenstein: Izbrannye sochineniya v shesti tomakh, 273. The director's interest in the Place de

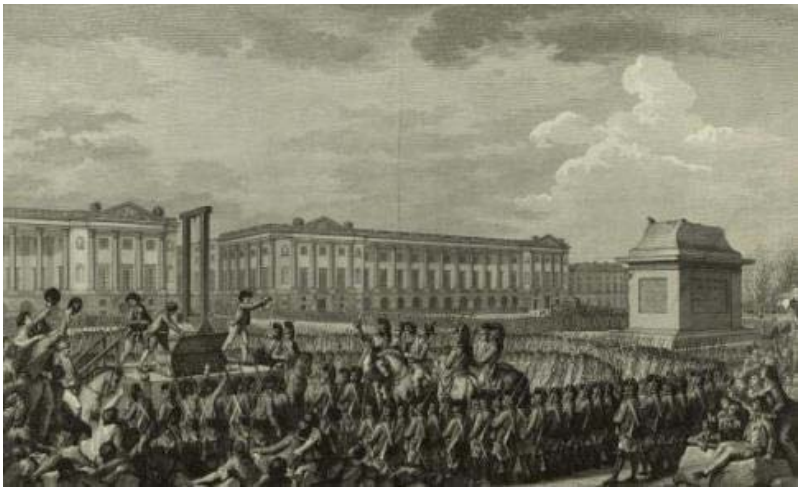

Figure 11. Journée du 21 janvier 1793 la mort de Louis Capet sur la place de la Révolution: présentée à la Convention nationale le 30 germinal par Helman. Engraving by Isidore Stanislas Helman. (Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Execution_of_Louis_XVI.jpg).wp-content/uploads/2015/03/114.jpg).

The empty pedestal facing the guillotine had sparked Eisenstein's imagination. In August 1792 on the Place de la Révolution the first step towards the abolition of the monarchy was the removal and melt-down of the metal sculpture of Louis XV upon his horse. This symbolic execution was followed by the real severance of the head of his grandson and successor, Louis XVI, several months later, in January 1793. The revolutionary guillotine was erected opposite the empty pedestal which once had supported the equestrian statue of his grandfather Louis XV creating a symbolic space of the rituals of the revolution which later was called Place de la Concorde.

la Révolution betrays his knowledge of contemporary representtations such as the Helman engraving shown above.

These instances of iconoclasm can be traced back to the Roman practice of obliteration of the memory of an individual, the damnatio memoriae. However, there is an indigenous Russian tradition of ridiculing and attacking idols, statues and representations of worldly power. As reported in the Primary Chronicle (Povest' vremennykh let), the wooden statue of thunder god Perun formerly set up by Prince Vladimir, in 988 at the occasion of his Christianization of the Rus' was publicly derided and thrown into the Dnepr river:

> When the prince arrived at his capital [Kiev], he directed that the idols should be overthrown and that some should be cut to pieces and others burned with fire. He thus ordered that Perun should be bound to a horse's tail and dragged along Borichev to the river. He appointed twelve men to beat the idol with sticks, not because he thought the wood was sensitive, but to affront the demon who had deceived man in this guise, that he might receive chastisement at the hands of men. Great art thou, O Lord, and marvelous are thy works! Yesterday he was honored of men, but today held in derision. While the idol was being dragged along the stream to the Dnepr, the unbelievers wept over it, for they had not yet received holy baptism. After they had thus dragged the idol along, they cast it into the Dnepr. […] Having spoken thus, he ordained that churches should be built and established where pagan idols had previously stood. He thus founded the Church of St. Basil on the hill where the idol of Perun and the other images had been set, and where the prince and the people had offered their sacrifices.[17]

Mocking the sculpture of a former god who now is called a mere idol does not exclude the erection of new monuments to the current gods.

Why is the topic of religious sculpture so prominent in this film on revolution, even though it was of little importance in the Soviet revolutionary situation? Religious beliefs in 1927 still were strong. Soviet anti-religious campaigns had not succeeded in eradicating the magical belief in the material representations of deities and revered leaders, i.e. different types of religious sculptures, idols, or relics. Apart from the fact that the

17 See The Russian Primary Chronicles.

film *October* seems to reflect more upon idolatry as a universal phenomenon than on anti-religious and esp. anti-Christian propaganda, the aforementioned failure virtually explodes into the repetitive use of sculptures throughout the film. The Tsarist sculpture becomes an idol: sitting Alexander, the gods (standing, seated and equestrian), and the Napoleon statues (standing and equestrian). Using the same art form to represent the political leader and God, the idols reveal that Eisenstein not only understood the meaning of the representation of the Russian Emperor but also of the Soviet Autocrat. Examples of the latter include Lenin's embalmed body in 1927 lying on the Red Square,[18] now transformed into a replacement figure for a Saint, the emerging Lenin statues all over the Soviet Union in the 1920s, and Stalin whose cult of personality started forming in the wake of a lavish celebration of his 50th birthday in 1928.

It should be mentioned that in Russian traditional religious art three-dimensionality is an exception. The suspicion towards idols and sculptures lived on until the 20th century, when the lorry driver Nikandrov who played Lenin is criticized for looking like the statues of Lenin:

> It is disgusting to watch, when a person strikes Lenin-like poses and makes similar gestures – for all the outward similarity, there is no hiding the inner emptiness. How right the comrade was who said that Nikandrov doesn't resemble Lenin, rather all of Lenin's statues.[19]

Alexander I – Pushkin's "Sculptural Myth" – "Bonapartism"

A dislike for imperial monuments on the part of the Russian intellectual elite is analyzed by Roman Jakobson in his article "Puškin and His Sculptural Myth" (1937). Jakobson describes how poet Alexander Pushkin,

18 On the cinematic support for the utopian ideas of reviving Lenin, cf. Drubek: Das zweite Leben des Leichnams.

19 "Отвратительно видеть, когда человек принимает похожие на Ленина позы и делает похожие телодвижения – и за этой внешностью чувствуется полная пустота, полное отсутствие мысли. Совершенно правильно сказал один товарищ, что Никандров похож не на Ленина, а на все статуи с него." (Mayakovskiy: O kino, 42).

"sworn enemy"[20] of Alexander I, intentionally absented himself from the capital during the unveiling of the monument to the Tsar:

> At the end of August 1834 Puškin left Petersburg so that he would not be forced to participate in the unveiling of Alexander's column […]. He notes this in his diary on November 28, and his aversion to the monument to Alexander I still reverberates a few lines later in the same note in his annoyed remark about the superfluousness and pointlessness of another, similar kind of monument, a column with an eagle, erected by Count S. P. Rumjancev at Tarutino in honor of the victory over Napoleon in the War of 1812.[21]

Later one can read in the poem "Exegi monumentum" (1836) Pushkin's dismissive lines on the column:

> I've reared a monument not built by human hands.
> The public path to it cannot be overgrown.
> With insubmissive head far loftier it stands
> Than Alexander's columned stone.[22]

"Alexander's columned stone" (in Russian: Aleksandriyskiy stolp) refers to a 25 meter high quarried granite column, which was erected in St. Petersburg in 1834 as a monument to the Emperor Alexander I by his younger brother Nicholas I who, after the failed Decembrist revolt, became one of the most reactionary rulers of Russia. At the time, it was considered the highest building in Europe, surmounting the bronze Colonne Vendôme in Paris, measuring 44.3 m – erected by Napoleon in his own honor for the defeat of Russia in Austerlitz in 1805.

The monument to Alexander (with the column measuring approximately 25.5 m) was 47.5 m high and it commemorated the Patriotic War of 1812 won against Napoleon's army which had invaded Russia. The face

20 Jakobson: The Statue in Puškin's Poetic Mythology, 335.

21 Jakobson: The Statue in Puškin's Poetic Mythology, 336.

22 Translated into English by A. Z. Foreman at http://poemsintranslation.blogspot.de/2013/10/pushkin-exegi-monumentum-from-russian.html (07.02.2019).

of the angel statue on the column is said to bear similarity to the features of Emperor Alexander I. who is obliquely mentioned in Pushkin's poem where the monument is a symbolical representation of autocratic power.[23] Pushkin's poem "Exegi monumentum" is anti-panegyrical and an ode to poetry as a superior instrument of memory, surpassing a monument cast out of metal. Pushkin quotes Horace's ode "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" which predicts the poet's, instead of the Emperor's, fame: "I have raised a monument more permanent than bronze."

In fact, it was Pushkin, who first conjured an "image of a moving crowd" around the monument, and with the lines "From step to step fly the idols" and "From the toppled columns the idols fall"[24] seems to have started writing a script for Eisenstein's divinity sequence as part of the Russian Revolution toppling monuments.

As we can see, it is already in the treatment of monuments by Pushkin that the decisive topics and ideas come together in the motif of the sculpture – forming an overarching theme, which Jakobson called the "sculptural myth." The sculptural theme is intimately connected to the questioning of autocratic and despotic power by the ideas of revolution[25] which in Europe, at that time were represented by the French Revolution. The development of the young republic, established by the revolution, had been halted, if not reversed by Napoleon Bonaparte who in 1804 had become the first Emperor of the French. Thus, we have a multiple designation of the Napoleon sculptures in *October*. The historical ones are connected to the sculptural motifs: Napoleon and Alexander I are adversaries in the "Patriotic War of 1812," and the 19th century patriotic memorial on the Moscow embankment in front of the Cathedral was dedicated to the memory of the defeat of France, still the revered nation of La Révolution.

23 Cf. Jakobson's enumeration of military monuments in 18th and 19th century Russia that Pushkin's writings refer to, such as the Chesma and Morea columns (Jakobson: The Statue in Puškin's Poetic Mythology, 336).

24 The Pushkin quotes are from 1833-1834, found in Jakobson: The Statue in Puškin's Poetic Mythology, 349.

25 In his youth, Pushkin wrote a poem "To V.L Davydov/ V.L Davydovu" where the lines "we shall commune with the bloody chalice" refer to a Russian revolution ("krovavoy chashey prichastimsya"). Cf. Jakobson: The Statue in Puškin's Poetic Mythology, 332.

The name Napoleon stands for the beginning of "Bonapartism"[26] in a post-revolutionary situation, which in the USSR would be increasingly identified by Stalin's adversaries as his methods. Leon Trotsky named "Soviet Bonapartism," owing "its birth to the belatedness of the world revolution," as the reason for the "betrayal of the Revolution:"

> Caesarism, or its bourgeois form, Bonapartism, enters the scene in those moments of history when the sharp struggle of two camps raises the state power, so to speak, above the nation, and guarantees it, in appearance, a complete independence of classes in reality, only the freedom necessary for a defense of the privileged. The Stalin regime, rising above a politically atomized society, resting upon a police and officers' corps, and allowing of no control whatever, is obviously a variation of Bonapartism – a Bonapartism of a new type not before seen in history.[27]

It is no coincidence that the film *October* was one of the early victims of the rise of Stalinist censorship. Stalinism meant a return to an authoritarian state and a conservative culture. Stalin at that time was trying to get rid not only of Leon Trotsky, but also the "trotzkyite" opposition, and Eisenstein's "intellectual" experiments seemed to wholeheartedly support a Permanent Revolution (the title of one of Trotsky's books).

Censorship 1913 and 1927: Monuments as Substitutions

The revolution shown in Eisenstein's film reminds us of the fact that *revolutio* means "eternal recurrence" which Hannah Arendt in her book *On Revolution* (1963) called "the ancient cycle of sempiternal recurrences […]

26 Cf. Trotsky: The Revolution Betrayed, chapter 11. In Stalinist restoration, Trotsky sees Bonapartism – referring to Karl Marx's use of the term. The book advocates another political revolution, comparing Stalin with the French dictator Napoleon Bonaparte and his capture of the French state after the revolution.

27 Trotsky: The Revolution Betrayed, 277-278. Quoted after https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1936/revbet/ch11.htm (07.02.2019).

based upon an assumedly 'natural' distinction of rich and poor."[28] Revolution as the "same irresistible force which makes the stars follow their pre-ordained paths in the skies"[29] originally meant cyclical return to a former state applying not only to the post-revolutionary Bonaparte (Kerensky or general Kornilov) but also Stalin. According to the memoirs of Eisenstein's co-director Grigoriy Aleksandrov he came to the editing room himself:

> In the morning of November, 7 we were busy polishing up the final cut of the film. *October* was to premiere in the evening of that day at a special ceremony in the Bolshoi Theater. […] At 4:00 pm, the door to our editing room opened, and there came in Joseph Stalin. Having greeted us in a familiar way, as if he had already known us, Stalin asked: 'Do you have Trotsky in your film?' 'We do,' said Eisenstein. 'Show me the footage,' Stalin demanded. Not predisposed for further conversation, Stalin went straight to the screening hall, with a stern, pensive air around him. Projectionists were absent. I myself went to the booth and began screening the reels that contained Trotsky. Eisenstein sat in the hall with Stalin. After watching the reels, Stalin informed us about the political actions of the Trotskyite opposition, who had launched an open campaign against the Bolshevik party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the end, he said: 'The film with Trotsky can not be shown today.' We managed to cut out three scenes with Trotsky. Two more episodes, from which we could not edit Trotsky out using the simple editor's scissors, had to be left out all together – we re-edited them later, during November and December.[30]

The appearance of Trotsky (played by an actor) was one of the reasons why Eisenstein's film could not be screened at the Bolshoi Theatre on November 7, 1927. First, Stalin had censored *October* ordering changes and to have Trotsky excised from the 1928 premiere version and in 1933 his

28 Arendt: On Revolution, 23.

29 Arendt: On Revolution, 42.

30 Aleksandrov: Epokha i kino, 104-105. Also see Tsivian: Hyperkino Commentary for "October," Footnotes 24 and 30 (with a still from an excised Trotskii scene).

censorship apparatus made sure that *October* was withdrawn from public distribution.[31]

The history of the October Revolution had to be re-written because of Trotsky's decisive role as President of the Petrograd Soviet. Trotsky had been excluded from the Central Committee of the Communist Party in October and expelled from the Party in November 1927; like Nicholas Romanov, he was exiled. Trotsky had to leave for Kazakhstan at the end of January 1928. His expulsion from the USSR in 1929 was followed by his assassination by a NKVD agent in 1940.[32]

We have seen how the sculptural motif in Eisenstein's "intellectual montage"[33] draws upon literary sculptures, only to ironically inscribe itself into the system of preceding Russian cultural cinematic conventions which were the response to then defunct Censorship regulations: *October*, after all, in 1927 could have shown the arrest or even the murder of the current Tsar – instead of substituting the man for a statue, exactly as Evgeniy Bauer had done in 1913.

Following the logic of French revolutionary iconography of the decapitation of the French king under the name of "Louis Capet" described above, Eisenstein, as director of the film *October,* must have taken into consideration a depiction of the execution of "Nicholas Romanov" which indeed was demanded by different groups in 1917 while the Provisional Government attempted to protect the Royal family. There is no historical footage of the shooting of Nicholas II and his family. Unlike Louis' XV, these executions were not in a public space opposite monuments, which were later derided or destroyed in lieu of witnessing the end of the Emperor himself. The Bolshevik murders were committed out of sight, in remote Ekaterinburg, approximately 2000 km away from both, the equestrian and the seated monuments to Nicholas' predecessor. The fact that

31 Cf. Romanova: Eisenstein's "October."

32 Volkogonov: Trotsky, 466.

33 To understand all of these "intellectual" references of Eisenstein's in *October,* one needs considerable erudition and historical knowledge, as Victor Shklovskiy noted in his article "Oshibki i izobreteniya (Diskussionno)," criticizing Eisenstein's "nadumannost." Cf. Shklovskiy: Oshibki i izobreteniya, 29-33.

Eisenstein resorts to substituting the end of the last monarch of Russia by a rhetorical shift to the monuments of his father, shows the difficulties his anniversary film was facing. To show the history of revolution would and did result in a conflict with Soviet censorship.

Instead of re-enacting the end of the Romanovs, Eisenstein shows the destruction of a sculpture, as a megalomaniac personification of the Romanov dynasty – but still only a personification. This "intellectual" transfer from the real Romanov in Ekaterinburg to a statue of a Romanov, and finally its cardboard replica contains several cultural motifs from literary history: The reversal of the Don Juan motif which Pushkin used in his tragedy *Kamenniy gost' / Stone guest* (1830) where borders between the dead and the living are torn down when the statue of the murdered takes the murderer's (Don Juan) hand. Another reference is Pushkin's poem *Medniy vsadnik / Bronze Horseman* (1833) in which the equestrian statue of Peter the Great comes alive and pursues the doomed protagonist. While in Pushkin's texts the statues kill, in Eisenstein's *October* it is the statues which fall, attacked by the people and decapitated, just as it happened in the cities of the former Russian Empire in the thralls of revolution.

In addition, *October* revives the genre of anniversary films which usually celebrate current rulers and their dynasties. In certain respects *October* could be called a pastiche, or even a parody of *Tercentenary of the Rule of the Romanov Dynasty* and similar manifestations of Royal eulogies.[34] Eisenstein's *October* topples the 1913 cinematic monument to the Romanovs just as the real monument to Alexander was toppled by the revolution.[35]

34 There are more parallels between Eisenstein's production of *October* and other pre-revolutionary films such as Russia's first feature length film, *Oborona Sevastopolya / The Defence of Sebastopol* (1911), directed by Vasily Goncharov and Aleksandr Khanzhonkov. This film was facilitated by the Emperor, an early fan of cinematography, by allowing the film studio to use the Imperial Army and Navy for the military scenes. Eisenstein was able to enlist the Red Army, as well, and to use the Winter Palace for his enacting and staging revolutionary events. Cf. Drubek: Rozhdenie kino v Rossiyskoy imperii i kinotsenzura.

35 In the late 1930s and 1940s Eisenstein successfully returned to this genre in his historical biopics on Alexander Nevsky and Ivan the Terrible.

Figure 12. Photo: Alexander's III severed head in Moscow (1918). (Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Снятие_памятника_Александру_III_в_Москве._1918_г..png)

Conclusion

The film *October* succeeded in cementing visually several Bolshevik myths concerning the revolutionary year 1917, one of them the storming of the Winter Palace or the terror of the women battalion defending the Provisional Government. The depiction of Leon Trotsky's historical role as the organizer of the uprising fell victim to the censor's scissors. Other significant omissions relate to aspects of revolutionary terror as shown in the contemporary French film *Napoleon* (1927) by Abel Gance in great detail, thus highlighting the plight of the victims of all revolutions.

Through the use of monuments in the film *October*, Eisenstein reminds the viewer of the literary genre of the panegyric praise of the absolutist ruler. This cultural reference to a genre seems to be an "intellectual" one, but can still be read as a political warning. After all, the praise of the ruler in the Russian past was hardly ever absolute. As I have shown in a comparison of Pushkin's and Eisenstein's "sculptural myths," the director's primary reference in a historical perspective of cultural critique of Russian autocracy was Pushkin's anti-panegyric "Exegi monumentum" which at the same time extolls poetry, or more broadly, art as the only legitimate and permanent monument deserving to enter the Memory of the Nation.

With his film, Eisenstein, was aiming at something similar: erecting a cinematic monument to the memory of the revolution and thus to his own, rather complex understanding of true revolution, which must overcome the never-ending cycles of the ancient *revolutions* of world history.

Eisenstein illustrates in visual form how easily the course of revolution is reversed. In a later sequence of *October* the director returns to the statue of Alexander III and magically reassembles the monument with a film trick: the toppled throne jumps back to the pedestal, limbs fly back and reattach to the torso, the severed crowned head takes its old place. If the pulling down with ropes had provided the revolutionaries and the viewer with a certain amount of shared delight in destruction, the reverse done by the film trick yields pure comic pleasure – but only for the audience. The reinstatement of the dismantled sculpture and with it autocracy, symbolizes the perils of the post-revolutionary situation and the establishment of a new autocracy.

Perhaps Eisenstein's *October* even was reminding his contemporaries that the process of revolution cannot be artificially halted and a new revolution might raise its head again, this time in Moscow where – while Eisenstein was making his film on the October Revolution – from the ruins of the empire a new autocracy was forming itself on the old pedestal.

The research for this article has been made possible by a Heisenberg Grant from the DFG (DR 376/6).

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Religious Semantics

Franziska Davies

"Citizens-Muslims, organize!" Russia's Muslims in the Age of Transformation and Revolution

Literature review: New perspectives on the 19th century origins of Muslim revolutionary politics in Russia

In April 1917 the Provisional Central Bureau of Russian Muslims published an appeal addressed to "all of Russia's Muslims." In this appeal the bureau welcomed the downfall of Tsarism with enthusiasm as the dawn of a new era. A dark past had been left behind in which injustices had been suffered "as subjects of the Tsar and as Muslims." Ahead of all the peoples of Russia lay a bright future as "free citizens of a free country." However, this promise of a new future came with enormous challenges. The task of building a new state according to the principles of "freedom, equality, and the brotherhood of peoples" had to be tackled. For the Muslims of Russia this entailed particular trials. According to the authors they lacked a high degree of social stratification, with only a small number of capitalists and landowners and a working class which was only just taking form. This was simultaneously an advantage and a disadvantage since social divisions brought forth a political life and at the same time weakened a people. Additionally, the Muslims lacked a strong political body and accordingly their voice could not be heard in the country in spite of the fact that they constituted a population several million strong. Therefore it was vital for Muslims to rally under the banner of democracy and establish representative bodies throughout Russia. In an invocation reminiscent of the Marxist slogan "Workers of the world, unite!" (*rabochie mira, obediniaites'!*), the bureau declared "Citizens-Muslims, organize!" (*grazhdane-musul'mane, organizyuites'*!).[1]

The Provisional Central Bureau of Russian Muslims had been established on the initiative of the Muslim fraction in the State Duma and its bureau. Despite its claim to be speaking in the name of the entire Muslim population of the Russian Empire, the bureau as well as the Muslim Duma

1 Izvestiia vremennago tsentral'nago Biuro rossiikikh musul'man, 2.

parliament group were actually dominated by men from the Volga-Ural region.[2] The Russian Empire's Muslim subjects were a culturally and ethnically heterogeneous group and while they shared the experience of Tsarist rule, their relationship to the imperial center was shaped by diverging historical experiences and these differences were mirrored in the ways in which the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 played out in the Crimea, the Southern Caucasus, the Volga-Ural Region and Central Asia. Muslim politics in central Russia during the revolutionary period between 1905 and 1907 took place without much participation of the Muslims of Central Asia whose integration into the Russian Empire was a lot weaker.[3] In 1917 the breakdown of Tsarist rule soon transformed into an inner-Muslim struggle between the reformists known as the Jadidists and the more conservative and traditional ulema over moral authority and power, before turning into a "Central Asian Civil War." Here the rural uprising of the Basmachi was a response to Soviet violence, urban and Russian colonial settler policies, but also against Muslim urban elites and their idea of modernity which points to the specific divisions within Central Asia society in this period.[4] In the Transcaucasus the year 1905 witnessed violent interethnic clashes between Armenians and Muslims particularly in the city of Baku and its surroundings.[5] More than a decade later the revolution of 1917 took place in the context of the rivalry between the Ottoman Empire

2 For the activities of the Muslim Duma deputies, see: Usmanova: Musul'manskie predstaviteli v rossiskoi parlamente; Usmanova: Musul'manskaia fraktsiia i problemy "svobody sovesti." The severe restriction of voting rights after the coup against the Duma by Prime Minister Petr Stolypin had practically disenfranchised the Muslim peoples of Central Asia and severely reduced the number of deputies from the Muslim Caucasus and the Volga-Ural region, see: Noack: Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich, 351-352.

3 Khalid: The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 231-232.

4 Khalid: Tashkent 1917; Khalid: Making Uzbekistan, 56-89.

5 See Baberowski: Der Feind ist überall, 77-83; Meyer, Turks across Empires, 103-106; Iskhakov: Pervaia russkaia revolutsiia i musul'mane rossiiskoi imperii, 145-156.

and Russia in the ongoing war and was equally accompanied by violence between Armenians and Muslims.[6]

Compared to the Transcaucasus the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 initially took less dramatic forms in the Muslim-inhabited regions of central Russia which were not exposed to the same scale of violence until the outbreak of civil war. In Crimea and the Volga-Ural region, the first revolution centered on a struggle for influence between a new generation of political activists and the state-established organs of Muslim representation.[7] In February 1917 these institutions crumbled and Muslim political activists took over. As the quote at the beginning of this paper indicates, these activists mastered the language of revolution without any difficulty. A growing body of literature in the last years has shed light on the origins of Muslim individuals and social groups who developed the skills and the knowledge which enabled them to emerge as advocates of reform, change and revolution.

Recent historiography has emphasized that for the Volga-Ural Muslims the revolution of 1905 was not only about a changing relationship to the imperial state, but also brought divisions within Muslim society to the surface. [8] The origins of both of these developments can be placed in the transformation of Russian imperial society in the finale decades of the 19th century. A number of recently published studies on Muslims in the Russian Empire have stressed the importance of the reform era under Tsar Alexander II during which established modes of imperial rule came under scrutiny. In the case of the Volga-Ural Muslims the model of "mediated distance" established in the late 18th century by Empress Catherine II was increasingly regarded as insufficient both by government officials and the educated public. Catherine's approach had been based on the idea of ruling Russia's Muslim through religious intermediaries officially recognized by the state, but otherwise keeping the level of state interference in the

6 Reynolds: Shattering Empires, 167-251.

7 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 81-102.

8 Campbell: The Muslim Question and Russian Imperial Governance, esp. 21-32; Tuna: Imperial Russia's Muslims, esp. 57-78; Meyer: Turks across Empires, esp. 48-80.

lives of Muslims communities fairly low.[9] The official's attempt to increase state control of Volga-Ural Muslims since the 1860s – most noticeably in the realm of education – on the one hand elicited resistance from among the Muslim peasant population, but on the other hand drew Muslim communities closer to the state and its institutions. In 1905 this articulated itself in the demands voiced by petitioners from across the region who demanded the equal treatment of Muslims vis-à-vis Christians and hereby implicitly acknowledged their belonging to a wider imperial community. The petition campaign was to a large degree channeled and coordinated by the mullah Abdürreshid Ibrahimov who was originally from Siberia and the teacher and writer Yusuf Akchura, both of whom were part of a new generation of Muslim activists who aspired to bringing cultural and civilizational progress to the Muslim world. Their emergence as central figures in 1905 points to a second transformation in Muslim society, namely to the emergence of a Muslim intelligentsia.

Older literature, particular on the Volga-Ural Muslims, tended to concentrate on the antagonism between Muslim reformers known as the Jadidists and the traditional ulema over Muslim education and more broadly over questions of moral authority.[10] Recent literature has paid particular attention to the global and local developments which induced this change and its wider implications. James Meyer has emphasized the "transimperial context" which brought forth individuals such as Yusuf Akchura and the pioneering reformer Ismail Bey Gasprinskii. Meyer pays attention to the interconnectedness of particularly the Ottoman and Russian Empires with regard to Muslim activists, particular those he identifies as "pan-Turkists before pan-Turkism."[11] He argues that their back-and-forth movement between the Ottoman, Russian and Western European

9 Tuna: Imperial Russia's Muslims, 57-63. See pp. 37-56 for a detailed analysis of Catherine's model of "mediated distance." With his analysis Tuna also provides a subtle critique of Robert Crew's interpretation of Russia as a "confessional state." Crews ascribes the state a much greater role in the every-day life of Muslims than Tuna, see: Crews: For Prophet and Tsar; Crews: Empire and the Confessional State.

10 For a critic of this approach, see: Dudoignon: "Qu'est-ce que la 'qadîmiya'?"

11 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 5. See pp. 21-47 for a thorough analysis of the migration movements between the Ottoman and Russian empires.

worlds turned them into a mobile and well-educated generation well equipped to seize the opportunity in 1905 in an attempt to turn their ideas of reform into political action. As Meyer points out the majority of Muslim leaders in 1905 were actually not revolutionaries, but rather reformers: They were most interested in creating a parliamentary order for the Russian Empire and to establish participatory political rights for Russia's Muslims. Many of them stemmed from families who looked back upon a tradition of service to the Russian state. One of their main goals was to make way the state appointing of the highest governing bodies for Muslims in central Russia, namely the muftis, and to replace it which an electoral process which would entitle Muslims to decide upon their administrative representative vis-à-vis the Tsarist state. The engagement with state institutions was the agenda, not their overthrow.[12] For a variety of reasons, a number of Russian-born Muslim activists ended up in Istanbul after the revolution of 1905. Here, in turn, their experiences in Russia proved useful in the changing political and cultural environment of the Ottoman capital. The development of a relatively vibrant Muslim press in Russia in the aftermath of 1905 had produced Muslim intellectuals who knew how to produce newspaper and journals. This explains the considerable numbers of Russian-born Muslim activists in the emerging publishing scene in Istanbul after the Young Turkish revolution of 1908.[13] Meyer has thus demonstrated the close links between the Muslim participation in the revolution of 1905 and the Young Turkish revolution of 1908. The latter cannot be adequately understood without taking the experiences of the former into account. In this sense the revolutionary experience of individual Muslim activists had truly global dimensions.

At the same time, the Muslim revolutionary activity in the Volga-Ural region had local implications. The revolution of 1905 was not just about conflicts between the imperial state and Volga-Ural Muslims, but also brought to the surface divisions within Muslim society. One of the most visible conflicts among Muslims in 1905 was the question of who could claim to be speaking in the name of Muslims. For the appeal for unity among all of Russia's Muslim which the Provisional Central Bureau of

12 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 81-92.

13 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 150-170.

Russian Muslims put forward in 1917, was not the first of its kind. The first systematic attempt to create an organizational structure for an all-Russian Muslim political movement occurred in 1905 with the creation of *Ittifak* (union).[14] In the long run *Ittifak* did not succeed in establishing itself as a potent political force, but its history indicates how the appeal to a unified "all-Russian" Muslim community turned into a political argument in 1905. Central to *Ittifak*'s establishment was Yusuf Akçura who claimed to be speaking for the entire Muslim population of the Russian Empire. In reality, the revolution of 1905 had very different implications for the Muslim population in the Russian Empire. While Muslims in the Volga-Ural region and the Crimea were able to discuss their political demands in peace, in the Southern Caucasus and most particularly in the city of Baku the defining feature of revolutionary upheaval was an outburst of violence between Armenians and Muslims.[15] But even within Muslim communities in the Crimea or the Volga-Ural region the question of who could speak for Muslims was a contested one. In both of these regions one line of conflict was that between the Muslim governing bodies, that is the muftis in Orenburg and Simferopol, on the one hand and Muslim activists on the other. Muslim activists thus challenged the position of the official administrative hierarchy and questioned their legitimacy as representatives of Muslims without, however, calling for their complete abolition.[16]

A second line of conflict also erupted in 1905 within Muslim society which has been recently explored with regard to Volga-Ural Muslims. While many Muslim activists of the likes of Akchura as well as Muslim nobles and merchants had abstained from truly revolutionary activity, there was a segment of Muslim society which took to the streets in 1905: the students in urban madrasas, most particularly in Kazan'. When the First Muslim congress convened in Nizhny Novgorod in August 1905 in a boat on the river Oka, this was also a welcome possibility for the organizers to keep the more radical student protesters at a distance.[17] In the city

14 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 84-87.
15 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 103-106.
16 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 81-98.
17 Meyer: Turks across Empires, 87.

of Kazan, however, the protests continued. The Muslims joined Russian ones in their protests, attended political meetings and ditched school. In 1906 the teachers of some of the Kazan madrasas responded to these protests by tying admission to madrasas to the abidance by a number of rules among them that students were not to miss any prayer, speak up against their mullah, bring newspapers to school, learn Russian at school and convene meetings – a fairly accurate description of everything that their students had been doing the previous year.[18] However, the regulations put forward by the teachers failed to ease tensions. At the beginning of 1907 students in Kazan skipped class again and instead "welcomed the New Year by singing revolutionary songs and giving speeches" which in turn induced the schools' directors to call on the local police to help enforce discipline.[19] Again to no avail: boycotts of class took place in all of Kazan's madrasas in 1907 and these waves of protest also affected schools in Ufa and Samara and even in villages across the region. The Muslim students, the *shakirds*, also attempted to organize themselves politically in a supra-regional meeting in May 1907 in which they formulated the reform of the existing madrasas as their main goal.[20]

Not unlike Meyer's "trans-imperial Muslims" who were brought forth by the changing logics of Ottoman and Russian migrations regimes in the second half of the 19th century, the origins of the Muslim revolutionary youth also go back to the final decades of the 19th century. The changing models of education in Russia's era of the "Great Reforms" had repercussions for the Volga-Ural Muslims. Reformers like Ismail Bey-Gasprinskii argued that Muslims had to embrace Russian culture to a certain degree since it could help them overcome their own cultural backwardness.[21] This entailed learning the Russian language. The rationale behind this appeal

18 Noack: Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich, 328. For an overview of the shakirds' protest between 1905-1907, see pp. 327-333.

19 Cited in Noack: Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich, 328.

20 Noack: Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich, 333.

21 Bey-Gasprinskii: Russkoe musul'manstvo.

was not a rejection of Muslim culture, but rather the conviction that Muslims had to develop the necessary skills to compete in the modern world.[22] Danielle Ross has researched the changes this brought to the Muslim educational system: With the financial backing of reform-oriented merchants a number of schools opened in the Volga-Ural region from the 1870s onwards. Ross identifies the emergence of the "Great urban madrasa" as central for the emergence of a Muslim revolutionary youth culture.[23] She emphasizes the socio-economic motives for enrollment in these schools, which had more to do with increasing one's own social standing and less with "saving Muslim society and bringing it progress".[24] However, once enrolled in one of the Madrasas in Kazan or other provincial cities, students were exposed to a different kind of urban culture than previous generations. The experience of urban life changed the intellectual outlook of the Muslim students and this entailed a new perspective on the realities of the society they were living in.

During and after the revolution of 1905 the *shakirds* were heavily influenced by Russian student culture in Kazan and revolutionary socialist ideas became one component of urban Muslim youth culture.[25] At the same time their intellectual confrontation with the more traditional religious elites and even the first-generation reformers continued. Ross shows how this change also manifested itself in the self-identification of the graduates: they regarded themselves more as intellectuals and less as men of the ulema. However, it was not so much religion itself that they attacked, but rather the hypocrisy of the more traditional religious elites who pretended to be good Muslims but who in reality did not live up to their own standards. In a similar fashion they attacked the merging of superstitious elements with Islam in Muslim peasant folk culture which they regarded

22 Ross: Caught in the Middle, 61-62. For a slightly different approach to the history of the madrasas in the Volga-Ural region, see: Tuna: Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process.

23 Ross: Caught in the Middle, 64.

24 Ross: Caught in the Middle, 68.

25 Ross: Caught in the Middle, esp. 71-72.

as incompatible with scientific teachings.[26] Thus, unlike the first generation of reformers they did not engage in theological debates about the "right" teachings of Islam, and were more inclined toward the ideology of Tatar nationalism. The Volga-Ural Muslims who would go on to embrace Soviet power in the 1920s stemmed from this milieu.[27]

However, the alienation of the emerging Muslim intelligentsia from the wider peasant population also figures prominently in Mustafa Tuna's study of *Imperial Russia's Muslims*.[28] Their estrangement not only manifested itself in the books they read, but also in their habitus: These men displayed a more lax attitude to the consumption of alcohol, danced to Russian music and socialized with women.[29] Thus, the conflicts within Muslim society in the Volga-Ural region manifested themselves not just along generational lines, i.e. the more conservative ulema and the increasingly radical youth, but equally along social classes. In accordance with the interpretation put forward by Ross and Meyer, Tuna places the origins of this development in the reform-era of Russia's "great transformation" in which the Volga-Ural Muslims also took part. He is thus interested in the local implications of global transformation processes. The Russian Empire's growing integration into a global economy, the growth of a consumer market and an improved infrastructure enabled at least some of the Volga-Ural Muslims to participate in "European modernity" and hereby reduced their distance from the non-Muslim world.[30] These developments gave rise to a reformist movement among the Volga-Ural Muslims, whose authority was being challenged by a more radical intelligentsia by the turn of the century.

26 However, some in this new generation of Muslim intellectuals understood that the cultural gap which separated them from Muslim peasants constituted a potential problem for the success of the kind of progress they imagined. Thus, many of them would just not simply attack peasant culture, but would attempt to reinterpret it to make it compatible with their own ideological outlook, see: Kefeli: Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia, 227-232.

27 Ross: Caught in the Middle, 83-89.

28 Tuna: Imperial Russia's Muslims, 171-194.

29 Tuna: Imperial Russia's Muslims, 178.

30 Tuna: Imperial Russia's Muslims, 110-124.

Seen against this light, the ability of Muslim activists to speak the language of revolution in 1917 is not surprising. Among the more prominent members of the short-lived Provisional Central Bureau of Russian Muslims were Akhmet-Zaki Validov and Akhmed Tsalikov whose biographies mirror the developments analyzed by Ross, Tuna, and Meyers. Validov was born in the village Kuzianovo in the governorate of Ufa and was a student at the Kazan Medrese *Kasimiia* from which he graduated in 1912. Founded in the 1770s the school was not a forerunner of the "new-method" until its last director, Mukhammad Salikhov, took over.[31] Nonetheless, the study of Russian had been on its curricular since 1876. As a shakird Validov was exposed to the kind of urban culture which Danielle Ross has analyzed and this included contact with the world of Russian universities: In addition to his studies at a Muslim school, Validov heard lectures on linguistics and history at the University of Kazan and in 1912 published his study of the history of Tatars and Turks. Three years later he took up a teaching post at the madrasa *Gusmaniia*.[32] With his cultural background, Validov was well-equipped to emerge as a revolutionary leader in 1917. In the era of revolution and civil war he became an advocate for the establishment of an independent Bashkiria – or at least one with far-reaching autonomous rights within a greater Russian or Soviet federal state. After his break with the Bolshevik leaders, Validov eventually ended up as a scholar in the republic of Turkey where he embraced a radical variant of Turkish nationalism.

Tsalikov's path was a little different, but he too had good knowledge of Russian through his education. He had graduated with a law degree from the University of Moscow and was a veteran of the revolution of 1905 in the Northern Caucasus. He had joined the Mensheviks and had also edited the Tatar-language newspaper *Süz* ("The Word"). After the February revolution he became a member of the Petrograd Soviet and participated in the all-Russian Muslim congress which convened in Moscow in May

31 Iuldashbaev: Validov, Achmetzaki Achmetšachovich. For a short history of the Kasimiia Madrasa, see "Kasimija" in volume 3 of the Tatarskaia ėntsiklopediia.

32 Iuldashbaev: Validov, Achmetzaki Achmetšachovich.

1917. Tsalikov, too, was an advocate of a federalist Russia. After the Bolshevik victory he left Russia and settled in Prague.[33] Even if Validov and Tsalikov turned against the Bolsheviks, these two individuals were also the products of processes of transformation which dated back to the second half of the 19th century.

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Tobias Grill

"Another Messiah has come:" Jewish Socialist Revolutionaries in Russia and their Attitude towards Religion (1890s–1920s)

"Jesus performed great services for the Russian revolutionary movement."[1] Jay Bergman's statement describes the fact that despite the secularism of their ideology Russian Marxists, among them many Bolsheviks, invoked "religious imagery as part of an effort to gain popular support, particularly among classes of the population for which Christianity was still a principal source of attitudes and beliefs about political figures and events."[2]

Even though Jews and individuals with Jewish background played a crucial role in the Russian revolutionary movement, so far no concentrated research has been devoted to the question of religious semantics in the revolutionary rhetoric of Jewish socialists. In my paper I will discuss the questions why a remarkable number of Jews joined the revolutionary movement in the Russian Empire, what attitude towards religion they harbored, and last but not least the significance of religious motifs and imagery in their propaganda.

It is a matter of fact that since the 1870's Jewish revolutionaries played a major part in the Russian revolutionary movement. According to Erich Haberer:

1 Bergman: The Image of Jesus in the Russian Revolutionary Movement, 246.

2 See also Figes / Kolonitskii: Interpreting the Russian Revolution, 151: "It was a well established practice of the socialists to couch their propaganda in religious and peasant terms. The Populists of the 1870s, like other socialists, had often used the ideas of Christian brotherhood to preach socialism to the peasantry. And the same theme was taken up by the socialist parties in 1917. Pamphlets for the peasants presented socialism as a sort of religious utopia: 'Want and hunger will disappear and pleasure will be equally accessible to all. Thieving and robbery will come to an end. In place of compulsion and coercion there will be a kingdom of freedom and fraternity.'"

> even for an unprejudiced observer it was hard to escape the impression that by the end of the 1880s the revolutionary profession was dominated by socialist Jews, who surpassed numerically all other national minorities, and perhaps even the Russians, in the principal areas of continued anti-government activities.[3]

Also, later on, the Jewish influence within the Russian revolutionary movement remained remarkably high. Between 1901 and 1905 around 30 percent of the political arrestees and prisoners in the Russian Empire were Jewish. This was seven times the percentage of Jews in the Empire's total population.[4]

The Formation of Jewish Socialism in Russia

What was the reason that quite many Jews of the younger generation, especially from the Intelligentsia, turned to revolutionary Socialism since the 1870s? Many historians have argued "that Jewish participation in socialist movements has been inspired by basic values in Judaism, such as a messianic faith and a concern for social justice."[5] In a Yiddish article from 1939 Abraham Menes, important activist of the *Bund*, who had graduated from the Yeshivot (Talmud Academies) in Mir and Grodno, stated that the Jewish worker had transferred elements of Jewish religious tradition into the new revolutionary movement. According to him, the Jewish worker "would never have been able to display so much courage and self-sacrifice, if he had been concerned with material interests only."[6] It was much more the "Messianic vision" of a new time, of the "end of the days,"

3 Haberer: Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia, 254.

4 See Akhiezer: Jewish Identity and the Russian Revolution, 562; Frankel: Crisis, Revolution, and Russian Jews, 60.

5 Shuldiner: Of Moses and Marx, 33.

6 Menes: Di yidishe arbeyter-bavegung in Rusland fun anhayb 70er bizn sof 90er yarn, 59, quoted here after Patkin: The Origins of the Russian-Jewish Labour Movement, 47.

akharit ha-yamim in Hebrew[7], which "prompted him [the Jewish worker; T. G.] to act, to strike and to revolt."[8] And the eminent Jewish historian Zvi Gitelman has even asserted that "[s]ome of the more naïve workers saw [the socialist movement] as a quasi-religious movement whose ideals of social justice were precisely those advocated by the Jewish religion."[9] Arthur Liebman, however, has pointed to the fact that "there is little evidence to support the hypothesis that Judaism predisposes its adherents (or former adherents) toward a socialist political identification or support for socialism."[10]

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that a majority of the leading Jewish revolutionaries in Russia hailed from traditional Jewish families whose father or grand-father was quite often a religious scholar, a talmudist or a rabbi. Moreover, many of the first Jewish revolutionaries who joined the Narodniki-Movement and who were the forerunners or founders of Zemlya i Volya / Narodnaya Volya (Land and Freedom / People's Will), were former students of the rabbinical seminaries in Vilna and Zhitomir,[11] for instance: Arkadiy Finkelshteyn, Aron Liberman (1844-1880), Aron Zundelevich (1851-1923), Vladimir Jochelson (1855-1937), or Lev Shternberg (1861-1927)[12]. As early as 1881 an author in the *Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* observed:

7 Menes: Di yidishe arbeyter-bavegung in Rusland fun anhayb 70er bizn sof 90er yarn, 59.

8 Patkin: The Origins of the Russian-Jewish Labour Movement, 47. For a quite similar view, see Shuldiner: Of Moses and Marx, 15.

9 Gitelman: The Communist Party and Soviet Jewry, 326. When, for example, Chaim Zhitlowsky, an outstanding Jewish socialist and founding member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party in Russia, tried to explain socialist ideas to his grandfather, "the latter told him about the Essenes who had lived in the communes in Palestine during the Second Temple period and reminded him of the social protests of the prophets and the prayers for 'one world' in the High Holy Day Prayer Book." (Goldsmith: Modern Yiddish Culture, 162.)

10 Liebman: Jews and the Left, 11.

11 Haberer: Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia, 10.

12 Akhiezer: Jewish Identity and the Russian Revolution, 564. For the seminary in Vilna as a "centre of revolutionary propaganda" see Haberer: Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia, 74-83.

> Just like the 'Popowiczy' (sons of priests) in the proper Russian movement, the 'Talmud-Disciples' played a role in the Russian-Jewish movement. The rabbinical seminaries of Wilna and Zhitomir were nursaries of socialist thought.[13]

And it needs to be added that also the Yeshivot played an important factor in the formation of Jewish socialism in Russia, since they provided the movement with the so-called Half-Intelligentsia. As Mishkinski has stated these "former Yeshiva students infused the movement with Jewish knowledge, spirit and feeling."[14]

It is surely no coincidence that quite many of them, even though they had become irreligious socialists, regarded certain basic aspects of traditional Judaism as ideals which they would pursue in a secularized way. Main points of reference in this respect were messianism, millenarianism, prophetism, social justice legislation of the Bible, or the biblical story of Exodus.

In this regard I would like to expose very briefly the example of Lev Shternberg, who after the October Revolution became one of the fathers of Soviet Anthropology.

> [A]ccording to his best friend, […] the young Shternberg imagined himself a heroic savior of the Jewish people, a new Bar Kokhba or Judah the Maccabee. Shternberg's special sensitivity to all form of injustice and senseless violence was also greatly influenced by the biblical prophets who forever remained his heroes.[15]

One of the main reasons for this attitude was the fact that Shternberg had not only attended the traditional religious school, the kheder, but also later on, as mentioned, the rabbinical seminar in Zhitomir. After moving to Odessa Shternberg managed to bring together a group of radical students, in order to revive Narodnaya Volya, which was heavily decimated

13 Erz.: Die Entwicklung des sozialistischen Gedankens in der hebräischen Presse Osteuropas, 358.

14 Mishkinski: Regional Factors in the Formation of the Jewish Labor Movement in Czarist Russia, 46.

15 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 3.

by large-scale arrests. By the spring of 1884 Shternberg had been able to establish a southern branch of Narodnaya Volya and became a very influential and much respected leader of the populists in the south. The rallying cry of Shternberg was nothing less than "The God of Israel is alive!"[16]

A few years after the October revolution Shternberg published an article in which he argued that "the original Judaism proclaimed the unity and holiness of humankind, not just of the Jewish people, and called for the building of God's kingdom on earth."[17] According to Shternberg, the "'monistic enthusiasm' of Jewish thought demanded that God's world be just and that human beings struggle to turn the ideal of universal brotherhood and justice into reality."[18] For him this "impulse toward social action" was

> the basis for another key attribute of Jewish history and national psychology: 'prophetism.' The long line of prophets who not only preached social justice and freedom but actively fought for it, included the prophet Moses ('who began his career with a terrorist act killing an Egyptian slave-master'), the prophet Ezra, the Maccabees, Rabbi Akiva, and Jewish socialists of all stripes, from Marx to Lassalle to the leaders of the SR [Socialist Revolutionary] and SD [Social Democratic] parties.[19]

Eventually, Shternberg referred in his article "to Marx's works as 'not only the new Bible of our times but also a book of a new type of social predictions' and compared the subsequent commentaries and exegeses on these works to a 'new Talmud."[20] As his biographer Sergei Kan puts it

16 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 9.
17 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 317.
18 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 318.
19 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 318.
20 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 318.

> for Shternberg, an inclination toward sociopolitical action was neither an accident of history nor the influence of the environment or the historical moment, but a product of the psychology of that early racial type that is exemplified by the biblical prophets.[21]

In general, Moses Rischin's claim can hardly be dismissed that for "most Jewish socialists, although often unaware of it, socialism was Judaism secularized."[22] Even though most of the Jewish revolutionaries in Russia had abandoned religious practice and the belief in God, they, nevertheless, would reach back into Jewish tradition, in order to promote socialist principles among the Jewish population. After all, we should not ignore the fact that around the turn of the century the Jewish socialist intelligentsia was secular, whereas the Jewish masses, which they wanted to address, were still deeply influenced by religious orthodoxy.[23]

Religious Semantics in Jewish Revolutionary Rhetoric

This brings me to my next question: In what way did Jewish socialists use elements of traditional Judaism in their propaganda? Or to put it in a different way: How did Jewish socialists play with religious semantics in their revolutionary rhetoric?

First of all, we have to keep in mind that in the initial phase of the Jewish workers' movement there was a synthesis or combination of Jewish religious tradition and some sort of socialist ideology. When in 1901 Jewish workers boycotted Janovskiy's cigarette factory in Bialystok, this boycott was interpreted by some "as a religious act." Thus, for example, a Jewish worshipper proclaimed in one of the synagogues of Bialystok: "Jews, it is forbidden to buy Janovsky's cigarettes, there is a ban on them!"[24] In fact, the notion used by him was herem, which in the religious context means

21 Kan: Lev Shternberg, 318. See also Liberman who in 1875 argued in a very similar way (Vpered!, No. 16, 1 Sept. 1875, 505). See also Frankel: Prophecy and Politics, 33.

22 Rischin: The Promised City, 166.

23 Mendelsohn: Class Struggle in the Pale, 104.

24 Quoted after Mendelsohn: Class Struggle in the Pale, 109.

"excommunication." In general, Jewish socialists quite frequently employed the religious term "herem" to denote "boycott."

And in 1897 during a general strike 300 Jewish workers in Krynki (today Eastern Poland) discussed the strategy in an outdoor meeting. Since the strikers had already been standing in heavy rain for more than two hours, "all swore by a pair of phylacteries that they would stand firm and support those workers who had been fired, and everyone sang the 'Oath', the official hymn of the Bund'," [25] a forerunner of Salomon Ansky's famous Bund-anthem. "Thus," as Ezra Mendelsohn has noted, "a solemn religious ceremony was followed by the singing of a revolutionary song." [26]

However, not only the Jewish masses would intuitively combine Jewish religious tradition and socialist ideology. Also their leaders, the secular Jewish intelligentsia, would refer to religious semantics in order to promote revolutionary spirit. When the renowned Ansky, at first secretary of Petr Lavrov and the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Paris wrote the Yiddish anthem for the Bund in 1902, he "almost" quoted the Bible in one of his prophetic verses: "Himl un erd veln undz oyshern" (Heaven and earth will hear us) reminds one of Isaiah 1:2 "sham'u shamayim vehazeyni erets" (Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth). [27]

That Salomon Ansky would insert a phrase in the Bund-anthem which echoes a verse from Jesaya was not due to him being very religious, but should be attributed to the fact that such a phrase was very familiar to Jewish socialist workers who were usually brought up in a religious milieu. Although Ansky was radically anti-religious he nevertheless employed religious semantics, albeit in a negative way, to preach revolution. Let me quote in this respect his hymn "To the Bund:"

> Messiah and Judaism – both have died,
> Another Messiah has come:

25 Menes: Di yidishe arbeyter-bavegung in Rusland fun anhayb 70er bizn sof 90er yarn, 57, quoted here after: Mendelsohn: Class Struggle in the Pale, 109.

26 Mendelsohn: Class Struggle in the Pale, 110. Cf. Menes: Di yidishe arbeyter-bavegung in Rusland fun anhayb 70er bizn sof 90er yarn, 57.

27 See Menes: Di yidishe arbeyter-bavegung in Rusland fun anhayb 70er bizn sof 90er yarn, 59.

The Jewish Worker (the rich man's victim)
Raises the flag of freedom.[28]

Such a stanza does not only remind us that Ansky and other Jewish socialist intelligenty were first and foremost attracted to the ranks of the Jewish Bund because of its militant Marxism and internationalism,[29] but also reflects the fact that they interpreted socialism in a secularized messianic way.

Even when a leader of the Bund emphatically pointed to the existence of a distinct system of socialist ethics he wouldn't do this without reference to the religious sphere: "'The Party was a Temple, and those who served socialism had to have clean hands, clean thoughts, pure qualities, and to be pure in their relations with one another.'"[30]

On the one hand, Jewish representatives of the socialist intelligentsia would usually deny religion, belief and above all the religious establishment any relevance in a socialist future. On the other hand, they would depict this very same future by making use of religious motifs, symbols, and especially the messianic faith of liberation and redemption.

As Susanne Marten-Finnis has shown, the Jewish Bund used three different kinds of rhetorical devices in their publication: *First:* allegories, parables, personifications mainly to serve self-presentation and introduction of new ideas; *second:* folklorisms, similes, metaphors and metonyms to illustrate or symbolize the enemy; and *third:* repetition on both phonetic and lexical levels.[31]

Concerning the first category she explains that "allegories, personification and parables borrowed from biblical discourse and European folklore lent an archaic air to many Yiddish newspaper texts."[32] However, as she further emphasizes, those allegories

28 Ansky: The Dybbuk and Other Writings, XVII.
29 See Ansky: The Dybbuk and Other Writings, XVII.
30 Quoted after Liebman: Jews and the Left, 133.
31 Marten-Finnis: The Bundist Press, 17.
32 Marten-Finnis: The Bundist Press, 19.

> alluding to biblical discourse such as sacrifice, mercy, God, Messiah, a holy objective, temple or nile […], were transferred from Jewish religious traditions to the new secular ideas. […] By encoding familiar elements they convey a sense of familiar ground, self-confidence and trust, and no doubt also serve to allay the readers' fear of the unknown future.[33]

By far the most important biblical motive which was transferred to a Jewish socialist context was the story of Exodus. As Michael Walzer has shown, in general the

> escape from bondage, the wilderness journey, the Sinai covenant, the promised land: all these loom large in the literature of revolution. Indeed, revolution has often been imagined as an enactment of the Exodus and the Exodus has often been imagined as a program for revolution.[34]

According to Walzer there are three crucial elements in the biblical story of Exodus which make it so attractive to transfer it into revolutionary politics:

> first, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt; – second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land; – and third, that 'the way to the land is through the wilderness.' There is no way to get from here to there except by joining together and marching.[35]

Particularly, Jewish socialists in the Jewish labor movement were quite eager to employ a "more secular and pragmatic interpretation given to the events of the Exodus."[36] This was not at all surprising since one of the most important Jewish holidays – Passover or Pessakh – commemorates, celebrates and re-actualizes the exodus from Egypt and the subsequent march to freedom.

33 Marten-Finnis: The Bundist Press, 19.
34 Walzer: Exodus and Revolution, IX.
35 Walzer: Exodus and Revolution, 149.
36 Shuldiner: Of Moses and Marx, 35.

The Passover Seder marking the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Pessakh is a ritual re-actualization performed by a community or a family which involves a retelling of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. For that purpose during the seder evening the text from the Haggadah is read which contains this narrative of the Israelite exodus from Egypt, special blessings, rituals, and special Pessakh songs.

In order to transfer the holiday of Pessakh into an instrument of political activism, Jewish socialists would celebrate or at least pretend to celebrate the seder by using the format of the Haggadah invested with a secular socialist and revolutionary content. It was also some sort of parody of the traditional Haggadah and its religious connotations. As early as 1887 a revised socialist Haggadah was published in Vilna. In 1900 this secularized version of the Haggadah was adopted by the Jewish Bund and published under its own imprint.[37]

I won't discuss the whole Bund Haggadah of 1900 in detail. A few remarks should be enough to understand its anti-religious and socialist implications. While the well-known phrase in the traditional Haggadah: "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but Hashem our God took us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm" is quite similar in the Bund Haggadah, but takes a radical anti-religious turn afterwards when it says:

> Today, however, today God sides with the rich, as if they alone had a God, as if in order to have a God, people must pay in coin. […] Today we can't count on God to free us, today we have over us thousands of Pharaohs who torment us, who take our strength and to whom we are sold - our sons and the sons of our sons. […] Hold high with outstretched hands our red flag of socialism! […] A fear will fall on the capitalists, and they will see how the workers organize themselves to fight for their freedom.[38]

37 Shuldiner: Of Moses and Marx, 130-131.

38 A Bund Haggadah, 156, 159.

This radical anti-religious content in the Bund Haggadah becomes even more radical when "God" is replaced by "Progress." A few examples will suffice:

> Praise him, the Lord. Praise him, you honest folk, proclaim his name – 'freedom!' […] Go with Progress. He is good. […] His truth shall endure forever. Praise to the Redeemer Progress. […] through the nights of slavery you brought salvation, the Revolution. […] And from the present Capitalist slavery will inevitable Progress create the freedom of the working masses.[39]

In general, the Bund Haggadah was meant to serve two different purposes. On the one hand the religious form of the Haggadah was used to spread a socialist and revolutionary spirit or content. On the other hand it was also a scathing criticism of the oppressive role of religion and the belief in God. To what extent the Bund Haggadah was indeed used at radical Bundist seders we do not know. But this is not crucial. Much more important is the fact that the Bundists thought it appropriate to use such a traditional religious text as the Pessakh-Haggadah in order to propagate their socialist version of Exodus, Redemption of Mankind, and Messianism.

When talking about Exodus and its significance for Jewish revolutionary politics, it is necessary to mention an aspect which to the best of my knowledge has been ignored so far. When in 1897 a Jewish Social Democratic workers' party was founded in Vilna it was named: "Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeyter Bund in Poyln un Rusland," in Englisch "General Jewish Labour Bund in Poland and Russia."[40] Right from the beginning it was decided that the abbreviated name for the new party would be "Bund." Why did they activists choose the term Bund for their party? The Yiddish word Bund is only used in one other context: to denote the Mosaic covenant which God had established with the Israelites after he had saved them from slavery in Egypt. Thus, even the name of the party implied religious semantics. Of course, the Bundists didn't want to point to a cove-

39 A Bund Haggadah, 161-163.

40 In 1901 Latvia was added to the name.

nant with god, but to a covenant between the Jewish workers. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Bundists this kind of covenant should be understood as a quasi-religious union which would lead the Jewish worker into a bright future, to the Promised Land, to liberation and redemption.

Against this background I strongly agree with David Shuldiner whose general remark on Jewish socialists and their use of religious semantics is:

> In their desire to reconcile their cultural past with their struggle for a political future, they chose to mediate these conflicting sources of identification by selecting aspects of Jewish belief and ritual and transforming them into political metaphors.[41]

This was also the case with the Jewish artist El Lissitzky (1890-1941), who after the October Revolution was "one of the most sought-after artists among the Jewish publishing houses."[42] Lissitzky did not only hail the Bolshevik Revolution, "but very enthusiastically employed his art in its service." Thus, for example, he "designed the first flag for the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the 1918 May Day celebrations."[43] Being a member of the section of visual arts of the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment since 1918 El Lissitzky would rework in the following year a set of illustrations which clearly shows how his political allegiances had shifted recently. This set of illustrations was devoted to a religious motif which is also closely linked with Pessakh. The seder and the Haggadah end with the cumulative song *Had Gadya*, meaning one little goat or one little kid.

In the Jewish tradition Had Gadya is an allegory in which the goat serves as a symbol for the oppressed Jewish people.[44] In the Bund Haggadah, which was discussed above, the term Had Gadya was everywhere substituted by "Har ovdi," Aramaic for worker. Thus, the goat became the

41 Shuldiner: Of Moses and Marx, 13.

42 Apter-Gabriel: El Lissitzky's Jewish Works, 109.

43 Apter-Gabriel: El Lissitzky's Jewish Works, 111.

44 Apter-Gabriel: El Lissitzky's Jewish Works, 113; Friedberg: Lissitzky's Had Gadia, 295.

proletariat. However, according to the art historians Ruth Apter-Gabriel and Haia Friedberg, Lissitzky went even further:

> While the traditional Had Gadya story demonstrates the ultimate power of God over evil and death, Lissitzky illustrates the story in such a way as to also include his new messianic view of redemption through the Communist Revolution.[45]

In particular, Lissitzky illustrated the final episode "And God Slays the Angel of Death" as a parable of the ultimate victory of the October Revolution. In his illustration the Angel of Death is represented as a king wearing a crown whose shape is very similar to the Russian folklore depictions of the Tsarist crown.[46] Thus, the Angel of Death symbolizes Russian monarchy. While in Lissitzky's 1917 version the angel was drawn dying, in 1919 he was drawn dead, referring to the final triumph of Communism over Czarism. Such an interpretation is reinforced by the fact that Lissitzky chose a hand as a symbol for God. According to Friedberg the shape of the hand closely resembles hand depictions on one of the first series of stamps printed in Russia after the Revolution:

> It is the hand of the Soviet people, of the Revolution, uprooting slavery and oppression. The likeness between the two hands cannot be questioned. Lissitzky is suggesting that the hand of the Communist Revolution is propelled by the arm of divine justice and redemption.[47]

Regarding the employment of religious semantics in his revolutionary rhetoric El Lissitzky differed from others, since his Had Gadya-illustrations were mainly an allegorical expression that the Bolshevik revolution had ushered in a new era, the era of redemption. As we have seen, many

45 Apter-Gabriel: El Lissitzky's Jewish Works, 113. See also Friedberg: Lissitzky's Had Gadia, 303: "Lissitzky uses the Had Gadia paintings to convey a political message to the Jews of Russia: the Revolution is a fulfillment of Judgement Day and the redemption of the Jews."

46 Friedberg: Lissitzky's Had Gadia, 301; Apter-Gabriel: El Lissitzky's Jewish Works, 113.

47 Friedberg: Lissitzky's Had Gadia, 302.

other Jewish socialists would not only draw on religious semantics in order to propagate a revolutionary spirit, but also to criticize religious practice and belief as backward and oppressive.

This was also the case with the Jewish section of the Communist party, the so called Evsektsiya which was established in the fall of 1918. The main goal of Evsektsiya was to gain the support of the Jewish masses for the Soviet regime. Thus, one of its founders drew an analogy between the old and the new religion by declaring: "'Communism is the Mosaic Torah translated by Lenin into the Bolshevik tongue.'"[48]

At the same time the Evsektsiya was to "serve as the agency of antireligion 'on the Jewish street'."[49] That this antireligious campaign was not only directed at Jews, but also carried out by Jewish activists (largely in Yiddish) was very important since the Bolsheviks feared of being accused of anti-Semitism.

It is not possible to discuss the manifold aspects of the anti-religious campaign of the Evsektsiya. Instead, I will focus on a certain issue: Like Bundists and other Jewish socialists before, also the Jewish activists of the Evsektsiya "did not miss the opportunity to use Passover as a propaganda tool," since it is "traditionally associated with the spirit of freedom and independence."[50] In 1921 the Central Bureau of the Evsektsiya instructed its local branches to organize a "red Passover," intending to offer an alternative celebration. Since most of the Jews nevertheless celebrated the traditional Passover, Jewish communists "decided to attempt a substitution rather than an alternative celebration."[51] In this respect, several versions of a "Red Haggadah" were created, for example Moshe Altshulers "Komsomolishe Haggadah," which was published in Moscow in 1922. These Red Haggadot were much more radical than their Bundist forerunner. The initial phrase had completely discarded God replacing him with "October:" "We were slaves to capitalism until October led us out of the land

48 Gitelman: The Communist Party and Soviet Jewry, 331.

49 Gitelman: The Communist Party and Soviet Jewry, 324.

50 Shternshis: Passover in the Soviet Union, 61; Shternshis: Soviet and Kosher, 27.

51 Shternshis: Passover in the Soviet Union, 61.

of exploitation with a strong hand. Were it not for October, we and our children would still be slaves."[52]

The traditional search and burning of the remains of bread before Passover, the so called Chomets, was reinterpreted in the following way:

> Five years ago the working class of Russia together with the peasants checked all the khomets in our land. They threw away all the remainders of the landowners and bourgeois, took power into their own hands, took over the land, workshops and factories, and defeated all the enemies on all fronts. In the fire of the great socialist revolution they burnt Kolchak, Yudenich, Wrangel, Denikin, Pilsudski, Petlyura, Chernov, Khots, Martov, Abramovich, and after that they recited this blessing: 'All landowners, bourgeois, and their accomplices – Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kadets, Bundists, Zionists, Poalei-Zionists and all other counter-revolutionaries, ne'er-do-wells and parasites – must be burnt in the flames of the Revolution.[53]

The final exclamation of the seder "Next year in Jerusalem" – "symbolizing the connection of the Jewish people to the Promised Land and the hope that the Messiah will come – was substituted by 'This year a revolution here; next year – a world revolution!"[54]

However, at least in the 1920s and the 1930s the traditional Passover celebration could not be replaced by a Soviet style red Passover; rather both kinds of celebration would co-exist, especially in smaller Shtetls.[55]

But not only had the Jewish activists of the Evsektsiya reinterpreted religious practices in order to convey a socialist consciousness to the Jewish masses and to reduce the religious influence on everyday life. Also those Jewish artists who were involved in the Soviet Jewish State Theater in the 1920s regarded such an approach appropriate. According to Jeffrey Veidlinger "[t]hey were united by a common belief that the theater was

52 Quoted after Shternshis: Passover in the Soviet Union, 61. This phrase may be found in a very similar way in Shternshis: Soviet and Kosher, 29.

53 Quoted after Shternshis: Passover in the Soviet Union, 61.

54 Shternshis: Passover in the Soviet Union, 63; Shternshis: Soviet and Kosher, 29.

55 Shternshis: Passover in the Soviet Union, 70.

the medium most suited to liberating Jewish society from what they saw as its insipid, rabbinical scholasticism and bourgeois philistinism."[56] Thus, the Jewish State Theater, in accordance with a general turn of soviet theaters to the carnivalesque, would also present the Jewish festival of Purim in a sovietized way. Traditionally, during Purim, Jews would mock and masquerade as Haman, the Persian minister who had tried to destroy the Jews of Persia. According to Jeffrey Veidlinger "(i)n the Soviet context, Haman symbolized the tsar, and thus the carnival was interpreted as a rejection of historical tsardom and an affirmation of the revolution and its role in liberating the Jewish people." As Veidlinger further emphasizes "symbols and motifs from traditional Jewish culture were thus given a new meaning, one more appropriate to the revolution." And also Marc Chagall, who was for some time stage designer and artistic director at the Jewish State Theater, "incorporated Jewish folk motifs into his art in an effort to communicate revolutionary ideals through symbols familiar to his audience and to desanctify religious symbols."[57]

For instance, he would illustrate an acrobat wearing phylacteries standing on his head in order to symbolize "the theater's goal of turning religion upside down and converting 'unproductive' religious Jews into cultural figures."[58] Another example is the depiction of a ram's horn, the so called shofar, which is traditionally blown on Rosh Ha-Shanah to welcome the new year and which also figures as a messianic symbol. Chagall reinterpreted the ram's horn as a symbol of the new age and according to Veidlinger equated "messianic expectation with revolutionary utopianism."[59]

Conclusion

Quite similar to Russian Marxists, Jewish Socialists in Russia employed religious imagery as part of an effort to gain the support of the traditional

56 Veidlinger: Let's Perform a Miracle, 395.
57 Veidlinger: Let's Perform a Miracle, 382.
58 Veidlinger: Let's Perform a Miracle, 382.
59 Veidlinger: Let's Perform a Miracle, 383.

Jewish population. Such an approach was necessary in order to communicate with the Jewish masses and to convey to them a revolutionary and socialist consciousness. Only a language which was pervaded by religious connotations, motifs, and metaphors could be understood, since the majority of Russian Jews was still brought up in a very traditional and religious way. Moreover, Jewish socialist intellectuals, even though they claimed to be non-religious, would quite often interpret socialism as a secularized form of Judaism. Due to the ethical universalism of Jewish revolutionaries, references to the biblical prophets were quite common among them. Therefore, drawing on religious motifs was not just political calculation, but a deep conviction that ancient Judaism harbored socialist principles. However, at the same time, many Jewish socialists would not miss the opportunity to criticize religious practices as backward and oppressive. Thus for instance, Socialist and Communist Haggadot would not only interpret the biblical story of Exodus in a socialist manner of redemption, but would also serve as a medium to fight religion and its institutions.

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Vitalij Fastovskij

Dying for the Common Cause: The Value of a Good Death in the Moral Framework of the Revolution

The purpose of this article is to explore how the Russian Narodniki[1] reflected upon their approaching deaths and to define the role that Christian-Jewish perceptions played in this regard. I want to address two questions. First, what meaning did the Narodniki give to their lives and what role did death play in the conception of what a good and fulfilling life might be? Second, what were the political consequences of such evaluations? To answer these questions, we have to examine in what terms these people wrote about life and death. Did they articulate any moral conflicts? In what relation did goods and desires stand to each other? How did the Narodniki articulate the balance between the Private and the Public?

Introduction

In the 1860s, a number of small revolutionary cells emerged in the big cities of the Russian Empire. The members of these cells were young and predominantly male. The percentage of women, however, increased over the course of the decade. Some women even began to play leading roles in

1 The term "Narodniki" (a substantive derived from "Narod" [the people]) emerged in the mid-1870s and labeled radicals who shared a set of ideological patterns about the nature and role of the peasants in the revolution to come. Of central significance was the belief that the revolution had to take place "not only in the interests of the people and through their instrumentality but also in accord with their wishes." The notion of the "people" as bearers of a somehow unspoiled socialistic nature meant also that the peasants had only to be organized by the intelligentsia but not enlightened by them. Pipes: Narodnichestvo, 444. Later on, the term Narodnichestvo indicated a whole (ideological inhomogeneous) direction within the revolutionary movement while the original "optimistic" view on the nature of the "people" was sometimes called "pure Narodnichestvo," as distinguished from "Narodovol'chestvo". Chernov: Pered burey, 123.

the late 1870s. The circles were dominated by *ranznochintsy*,[2] social uplifters who lived through intellectual work. Characteristic for the thinking of the radicals was the connection between an elitist conception of life and a teleological understatement of history.

First, they shared the notion of an educated individual ("*razvitaya lichnost'*") who had to protect his autonomy ("*samostoyatel'noe Ya*") against the church, the autocratic state and the grasp of the owning classes. The often violent opposition of the Ancien Régime to political participation and independent thought promoted the growth of oppositional tendencies, making parts of the educated youth hostile "both against church and monarchical doctrines".[3]

Second, the radicals complemented the notion of autonomous reason with the idea of free self-creation, which derived from the notion of "natural needs" inherent to every human being. Since the 1860s, Russian socialists, in accord with Western European authors, demanded the reconciliation of feelings and rationality. In this regard, feelings became a precondition for the knowledge of the self and of the world.[4] A rationally organized society had to be based on the "*sincerity* of the feeling," as Lavrov put it, which meant "on the foundation of a sincere relationship to the natural needs and appetencies, routed in human nature".[5] Others, such as Bakunin, spoke of the "depth of peoples' instinct"[6] or "depth of peoples' essence"[7] that creates new forms of organization through an anarchist revolution. Socialism was therefore not only the great promise of

2 On the hard-to-define concept, read more in Kimmerling Wirtschafter: Problematics of Status Definition in Imperial Russia, 319–339.

3 Morozov: Avtobiografiya, 306. Stressing the "scientific" character of his worldview, Morozov writes about the hostile attitude of the classical school system towards the natural sciences, first of all towards Darwinism. Setting orthodoxy and autocracy against Darwinism and nihilism, the teachers, according to Morozov, promoted oppositional feelings.

4 Frede: Doubt, Atheism, and the Nineteenth-Century Russian Intelligentsia, 143-147.

5 Lavrov: Istoricheskie pis'ma, 153.

6 Bakunin: Gosudarstvennost' i Anarkhiya, 74.

7 Bakunin: Gosudarstvennost' i Anarkhiya, 234.

the abolishment of political oppression but also of the recovery of happiness and integrality of experience, something that Charles Taylor called "expressivism."[8] In this regard, history was imagined as a progression towards this great telos, often described in analogy to the notion of the "kingdom of God" as the "kingdom of goodness and truth."[9]

However, the orientation towards this particular hypergood[10] was often problematic, since several other goods, such as sexual fulfilment, family relations, professional growth and the relative comfort of legality, usually had to be sacrificed. In other words, autonomy and self-realization were strongly limited by the call of self-sacrifice. This moral stance was partly a product of the socialization in a religious surrounding[11] and partly a product of the writings of such authors as Pisarev and especially Chernyshevsky, who were themselves influenced by Christian morality and biblical images.[12] The radicals tended either to identify the self-sacrifice as a "holy duty"[13] that demanded the neglection of personal concerns, or to interpret a life for the "cause" as their "original" and "egoistic" wish.[14] In

8 Taylor: Hegel, 539-540; Knaller: Ein Wort aus der Fremde, 147; Kelly: The Discovery of Chance, 11.

9 "All socialist students were positively convinced" wrote Narodnik Dmitriy Butsinsky about the intellectual atmosphere of the 1870s, "that the ideas of socialism would soon be transformed into life and that the kingdom of goodness and truth is about to come. I believed deeply in this and heard no objections from anyone." Sedov: Geroicheskiy period, 87.

10 Taylor uses the term "good" in a "highly general sense, designating anything considered valuable, worthy, admirable, of whatever kind or category." Taylor: Sources of the Self, 23. He calls goods that have an unequally greater motivational effect "hypergoods." They structure a moral framework and help to define an identity. Nevertheless, hypergoods are generally the product of "a number of hard-fought and painfully won stages" and therefore more than often a source of conflict. Taylor: Sources of the Self, 23.

11 Morris: Saints and Revolutionaries 129; Hoogenboom: Vera Figner, 85; Holmgren: For the Good of the Cause, 144; Kan: "Narodnaya Volya," 36; Manchester: Holy Fathers, Secular Sons, 179-210; Rindlisbacher: Leben für die Sache, 46-47 and 195-196.

12 Paperno: Chernyshevsky, 49, 196-208.

13 Lukashevich: V narod!, 13.

14 GA RF. f. 6243, o. 1, d. 1, l. 98.

this case, the so-called "theory of rational egoism" could function as an allegedly rational justification for self-imposed hardship. This moral and political radicalism helped to foster a sense of belonging to a revolutionary elite and to establish the belief that a life for the "cause" was more worthy than an "ordinary"[15] one lead for the interests of the family.

There was certainly a constant tension between the striving to overcome any form of foreign determination in order to be able to pursue self-imposed goals and to live in accordance with one's basic values and the Russian autocracy. The elitist stance of the radicals and their belief in a final goal of history reinforced this tension and led to a fatal equation between "public interests" and the agenda of the revolutionaries.

The question whether political violence could be an answer to oppression was, for all we know, discussed during the early formative phase of the revolutionary movement. As long as the radicals tended to believe that complete transformation of society was possible by the means of propaganda and organization on the one side, and as long as a "supporter scene"[16] was not fully developed on the other, terroristic discourse was not translated into material practice – with Karakozov's attempt to shoot the tsar remaining an exception. However, Karakozov resembled a new kind of revolutionary. He desired, as Verhoeven put it, "to act in a historically meaningful manner" and "in accordance with" his "nature."[17] The idea of

15 "Ordinary life" is a technical term used by Charles Taylor for the tendency to locate the "good life" in the sphere of "production and reproduction, of work and the family." In older frameworks such as in medieval Catholicism, a life oriented towards productive and reproductive activity had always been overshadowed by a higher form, such as the priestly or the monastic. This distinction had been blurred in Western Europe since the 16th century when protest against religious elites arose. Taylor: Sources of the Self, 23.

16 In recent research, terrorism is most commonly understood as a communicative and performative act. As such, it needs support from sympathizers. The terrorist message to supporting circles was a double one: firstly, terroristic acts did send a message about right and wrong, justice and injustice; secondly, they showed that the autonomous individual does not need to feel powerless in the face of autocracy and its police apparatus.

17 Verhoeven: The Odd Man Karakozov, 6-7.

autonomy and the romantic notion of authenticity[18] were two distinctively modern forces behind the shooting. Combined with the notion of some kind of inner-worldly "salvation," they determined the dynamics of revolutionary violence. It was not until the massive disillusion with the attempt to respectively incite (Bakunin), and revolutionize (Lavrov) the peasants, known as the "Going to the People movement" of the mid-1870s, that *Zemlya i Volya*, the biggest revolutionary organization of its time, split into the so-called *derevenshchiki* (ruralists) and the *politiki* (politicians). While the former tended to believe that propaganda may lead to success in the long term, the latter came to the understanding that the achievement of political rights was an important prerequisite for socialism. Terror, understood as the killing of police agents in "self-defense," was already part of the organization's program. But the *politiki* tended to extend the notion of "self-defense" in a way where state officials became the target of more or less planned attacks.

After the trial of Vera Zasulich in April 1878,[19] terrorist practices became widely accepted among revolutionaries. Assassinations of state officials as well as assassination attempts were followed by public executions. Among the first revolutionaries to end on the scaffold were Valerian Osinskiy (1852 – Mai 1879), Dmitriy Lizogub (1849 – August 1879) and Solomon Wittenberg (1852 – August 1879). All three wrote "farewell letters" that later circulated in revolutionary circles and created the pattern for a whole tradition.[20]

18 I use this word to describe the idea that a "good life" should be led in accordance with one's supposed "nature." This idea should not be confused with the complex meaning of personal authenticity that appeared in the second half of the 20th century. One could even argue that "authentic" self-realization, understood as a creative search for an uncontaminated self, was not possible as long as socialism functioned as a sense-giving hypergood. Knaller: Wort aus der Fremde, 159-161.

19 For the Zasulich case as a starting signal for the so-called first wave of terrorism in Russia see, for example, Budnitskiy: Terrorizm, 46-48.

20 Troitskiy: Bezumstvo khrabrykh, 236.

Farewell Letters to the Comrades: Affirmation of the Good Death

Characteristic for most of these letters was the affirmation of having had a meaningful life and a good, useful death for the "liberation of mankind." The revolutionary elevated his death inter alia by taking recourse to notions of "martyrdom" and by localizing himself in the teleological course of history, which was, as stated earlier, broadly understood as a struggle between the "evil powers" of reaction and the "good powers" of progress. The actors themselves often referred to the goal of history (the victory of socialism) as their "faith," something that was worth fighting and dying for. This meant that the authors favored a position that could be defined as the dissociation of action and reward – a central notion in religious ethics. The revolutionary, too, described himself or herself not only as someone who was totally dedicated to the "cause" but also as someone who demanded nothing in return for his "sacrifice."[21] A death on the scaffold was therefore seen as an emblematic expression of this attitude; it was considered to be a "good death," worthy of a "true revolutionary." In this sense, the highest good, the "liberation of humankind," required the emphasis that the individual had overcome his fear of death or had accepted it even as a fulfilling moral experience. First of all, Osinskiy expressed his wish to follow "the Christian custom" and to say farewell to his comrades in an intimate manner. He wrote that he and his wife[22], indeed, did not regret their sentence; they knew they were dying for the "idea," although they had not been granted the opportunity to fulfill all their plans. He

21 This could lead to very extreme consequences, especially in the subculture of the Narodnaya Volya. As a participant, Aleksandr Mikhailov, wrote to his relatives: In this regard [psychological adaptation to the life in the underground, V.F.] you necessarily solve the question regarding your life, you solve it, of course, in the sense, that you give up your "self" [ya] now and in the future". Mikahilov: Kladbishche pisem, 98. This self-stylization reveals the rigorousness that shines from behind his commitment, exemplifying how the notions of autonomy and self-realization were strictly limited within the inner circle of the Central Committee.

22 Sofiya Leshern fon Gercfel'd was pardoned and received a life sentence of forced labor. She died in 1898 in Siberian exile after being amnestied in 1894.

wished for his comrades to die a death that would be more productive (*proizvoditel'nee*) and expressed his confidence in the immortality of the "cause" and the success of political terrorism.[23] His words appealed to the moral consciousness of his fellow comrades and, together with the stories about the degrading circumstances of the execution, achieved a strong emotional effect.[24] Nikolay Morozov's "*Listok 'Zemli i Voli'*" spoke about the "deep, limitless devotion" of the author that shines through his letter, praised its "sincerity and simpleness" and swore to continue the "holy cause of the liberation of the people."[25] In other words, the ego-document was regarded to be "authentic" in the sense that it suggested that the executed terrorist had indeed lived and died in accordance with his "deep" convictions, sacrificing himself and asking nothing in return. Such a performance proved to be very effective in promoting terrorism.

Dmitriy Lizogub, son of a wealthy landowner, probably did not expect to be executed, but to be imprisoned for life without the right to communicate with the outside world, which he equated with death. He argued that he did not regret anything, that he was "calmly" waiting for the "end," that he was confident in the increase in the numbers of future "freedom fighters" and in the victory of the "right cause."[26] Thus, Lizogub interpreted himself in an evaluative language as a selfless agent of progress. A farewell letter allowed him to affirm to himself and his readers that he had lived his life not in vain and that it could be regarded as a sacrifice for a higher goal. The effect of this message was strengthened by Lizogub's execution in August 1879.

An interesting source in this respect is the farewell letter of Solomon Wittenberg, dated August 10, 1879. Wittenberg was the son of a poor Jewish worker from Nikolaev and the leader of a small revolutionary circle that had ties with Osinskiy's terrorist organization. Wittenberg participated in the attempted assassination of Alexander II, intended to blow up

23 GA RF. f. 6225, o. 1, d. 56, l. 94-97.
24 Budnitskiy: Terrorizm, 53.
25 Bazilevskiy (ed.): Revolyutsionnaya zhurnalistika, 482.
26 Valk (ed.): Arkhiv "Zemli i Voli," 107.

the emperor's train. The assassination plans were revealed and Wittenberg was sentenced to death along with five other revolutionaries in the well-known "Trial of the 28." Among other things, Wittenberg wrote:

> My friends! Of course I do not want to die, to say that I would like to die would be a lie, but this fact does not cast a shadow on my faith and the firmness of my convictions: Remind yourselves that the supreme example of human kindness and self-sacrifice was the Saviour; but he also prayed: let this cup pass away from me! [Math 26:39, V.F.] How can I then not pray for the same? Therefore, as he did, I say to myself: If the triumph of socialism is not possible otherwise, the shedding of my blood is a necessity, if the transition from the current regime to a better one depends on our dead bodies, our blood should be shed, it should be shed for the salvation of humankind; but that our blood will fertilise the ground on which Socialism will triumph, and it will triumph very soon – of that I am sure! This reminds me again of the Savior: 'Verily I say unto you, that there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, until the kingdom of God comes' [Math. 16:28 and Luke 9:27].[27]

This text highlighted both the emotional and rational aspects of socialism by expressing a political message with the help of religious semantics. Wittenberg, whose "moral purity and height, [and] holiness"[28] was praised even 50 years after his death, fashioned the image of the self-sacrificing revolutionary with great success. Although he did not claim to die easily, he managed to express his fear in a highly dramatic way using Matthew 26:39 as an excuse for his departure from the expectations of his readers, thus turning his "weakness" into "strength." It is important to stress that the revolutionaries that utilized[29] Christ as their interceder only rarely believed in a crucified and resurrected God, but the image of regeneration,

27 [Bogucharskiy (ed.):] Literatura, 11-12. Both quotes are inaccurate. Wittenberg must have quoted the "New Testament" from memory.

28 Moreynis: Solomon Yakovlevich Wittenberg, 49.

29 The "reductionist" character of the reception of the Gospel was rooted in the fact that only certain Christian goods and virtues were compatible with the atheistic orientation of most of the Narodniki and their longing for political

the fulfillment of life with meaning and the hope for a better life in this world surely motivated the Narodniki.

Haberer, who has analyzed the case in detail, concludes that the religious semantics in the letter can be traced back to Wittenberg's traditional Jewish education. The secular, Jewish and Christian cosmos of ideas could, however, only merge in this unique way[30] due to the relatively strong homogeneity and validity of the language that was utilized to articulate the moral convictions of the movement. Wittenberg had to orientate himself in the moral framework of the revolution using this specific language in order to be recognized as an *equal* member of the movement and to be remembered as such.

The more revolutionaries were executed in the wake of the "terroristic campaign" against autocracy, the more effective the concept would prove to be. Even the Narodniki, who were not personally involved in the purposeful assassination of state officials spoke of an "age of terrorism" and of the necessity to take revenge for the fallen comrades. Natal'ya Armfel'd, for example, wrote in a letter from August 1879, possibly in reaction to the execution of Wittenberg and Lizogub, that in a time when "the heads of your brothers" were cut, you did not simply act with words. Almost word for word echoing the texts of other socialists, who stressed the necessity to produce new, socialist "martyrs,"[31] Armfel'd wrote to her comrade Batyushkova in a private letter: "'Cause if there won't be any examples, how people die for the well-known cause, if there weren't any martyrs, there wouldn`t be followers, too. I think, that now is the time for martyrs, a time of the greatest persecution and that is why I think that my brothers will soon be revenged".[32] By the 1st of March 1881, about three dozen revolutionaries had been executed. Around them grew a culture of

participation under the conditions of an authocratic rule. While a militant and suffering Christ fitted well with their standards, a humble and forgiving one contradicted their agenda.

30 Haberer: Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia, 151-156.

31 For an example, see Lavrov: Istoricheskie pis'ma, 121. In a very similar way wrote the radical Ivan Koval'skiy. Read Sedov: Geroicheskiy period 96-97.

32 Tsvilenev: Avtobiografiya, 535.

exalted worship,[33] which had even greater significance than purely theoretical texts for the advertising of sympathies and financial resources, as well as for the acquisition of new followers and for self-discipline. Motivation and mobilization were two other aspects of this concept. Dreams of "self-sacrifice" could, for example, become powerful sources of motivation for joining the movement, as the ego-documents clearly show.[34] On the other hand, they could function as tools for mobilization and discipline. Osinskiy's farewell letter for example was used by the terrorist faction of *Zemlya i Volya* in Lipezk to provide emotional access to the topic of regicide.[35] A last important aspect concerned the question of moral justification of violence. To remain an "agent of good" in the eyes of "society" as well as in his own eyes, the focus of his testimony had to switch to his own suffering and not to the suffering of his victims.[36] Religious semantics helped to conceal the problem of violence by focusing the attention on the question of the unjust suffering of the revolutionaries.

Farewell letters to the relatives: Conflict of values

The case was somewhat different in the letters from the condemned to their relatives. While in the letters to the comrades, a peer wrote to a peer and death was reframed as the last personal "triumph" over autocracy, many letters to the relatives revealed an underlying value conflict between recognition of the "ordinary life" and the uneven "higher" life in the name

33 A good example is the proclamation printed by the Executive Committee of the People's Will after the execution of the so-called Pervomartovtsy, the people involved in the assassination of Alexander II. Ot ispolnitel'nogo komiteta, 9-10.

34 Kantor: K istorii Voennoy organizatsii, 218.

35 Borcke: Gewalt und Terror, 13; Volk: Narodnaya volya, 83-94.

36 One of the very few ego-documents directly addressing the suffering of the victim is the so-called "Testament" of Ignatiy Grinevitskiy, the immediate murderer of Alexander II. Most other documents with explicit self-reference avoid this topic. An early "theoretical" attempt to justify terrorism morally can be found in the article "On which side is morality" by Lev Tikhomirov. [Bogucharskiy (ed.):] Literatura, 93-100.

of the revolution. This was somewhat paradoxical. The fascinating goal of the revolution was to create a world where an individual could live in harmony with the collective and at the same time realize its full creative potential in work, in love and family relations. However, to achieve this goal, a revolutionary had to adopt an elitist attitude, which was regarded as a clean break with the "philistine life (*meshchanskaya zhizn'*)" and often implied paternalism towards the object of revolutionary "salvation." This distinction, for its part, was closely linked to the evaluation of the "I" and "We" balance[37] that Russian revolutionaries inherited, among other things, from the so-called Utopian socialists.[38] The realization of public interests was interpreted in this tradition as a very personal concern. Hence, the radicals' self-expectations often demanded to put "personal happiness" aside for the "happiness of the community." Nevertheless, the Narodniki preserved a notion of privacy and respected the lives of their fathers and mothers, sometimes even then, when their own family was part of the "exploiting classes."[39]

When their own lives threatened to end, many of them felt obliged to say goodbye with letters and to justify their decisions to have chosen the path of revolution. A famous example for this conflict is a letter of Sofiya Perovskaya, one of the executed leaders of "Narodnaya Volya," to her mother. The text was not conceptualized as a last letter from a person sentenced to death. However, given the tremendous efforts that members of the organization have invested in self-stylization, it must be assumed that Perovskaya was well aware of the political significance of private letters.

She expressed the central conviction that to live a life for the "cause" meant also to die for it with dignity. A good life, lived in accordance with

37 See more on the concept of "I" and "We" balance in Lohauß: Moderne Identität und Gesellschaft, 151.

38 John Goodwyn Barmby, for example, an important supporter of Robert Owens, expressed this idea in a very striking fashion: "[...] I believe [...] that the devine is communism, that the demoniac is individualism." Billington: Fire in the Minds of Men, 255.

39 An example is the relationship of Mikhail Gots with his father, a wealthy merchant, as depicted in Mikhail's own memoires. Cf. GA RF. f. 6243, o. 1, d. 1, l. 4-46.

one's own convictions, and a good death that benefited a higher purpose thus formed a harmonic unity. They offered a sense of meaningfulness and suggested that the individual had acquired a concept of happiness that was not limited to the current state of things but referred to the whole of life:

> My beloved, priceless mommy. [...] I don't lament over my destiny, I meet it absolutely calmly, since I have long known and expected, that sooner or later it would happen like this. And certainly, my sweet mommy, it isn't that dark. I lived the way, that my convictions suggested; I was not able to act against them; this is why I'm awaiting everything, that lies ahead of me, with a clear conscience.[40]

At the same time, Perovskaya expressed not only great remorse about the suffering of her mother but also partly blamed herself for her trial:

> Worrying about you was always my greatest sorrow. I hope, my dear, that you will calm down [and that you] will forgive at least part of the sorrow I am causing you and [that you] won't scold me too much. Your reproach is the only thing that oppresses me.[41]

40 K biografiyam A.I. Zhelyabova i S.L. Perovskoy, 128. It is characteristic for the radicals and especially for the terroristic wing, that a good life was imagined as a unity between convictions and deeds. This idea was often expressed by quoting James 2:26. However, the goodness of the convictions itself was not up for discussion. A positive answer to the question of whether the social revolution could be "a huge experiment, that has no example in the past and maybe no future too, that, however, will cause and already causes countless sufferings, a terrible breakdown of everything that is dear to every developed personality" would have eroded the movement from within. Lavrov: Sotsial'naya revolyutsiya, 386. This sort of skepticism developed only after the collapse of "Narodnaya Volya" in the early 1880s.

41 K biografiyam A.I. Zhelyabova i S.L. Perovskoy, 128-129. Perovskaya was not the first member of the "Executive Committee" to articulate this conflict, but not all letters could get through the prison censure, since the authorities understood their subversive potential. See Baum: Predsmertnye pis'ma Aleksandra Kvyatkovskogo, 208.

According to an employee of the police department defender of the Tsarist regime, such a letter could only be a "total hypocrisy,"[42] while in the view of revolutionaries such as Kravchinskiy it was an authentic testimony in the sense that "all of Perovskaya with her pure and great soul"[43] was reflected in it. In fact, this text combined propagandistic and very intimate elements in an elegant way, making the distinction between manipulative propaganda and sincerity obsolete, since propaganda itself became a highly personal matter. This effect was further increased by gender perceptions. The use of diminutives such as "*mamulya*" or "*vorotnichok i rukavchiki*" in the context of death helped, in retrospect, to create the image of a fearless but nonetheless gentle and emphatic woman. Character traits that were regarded as typically male merged with supposedly female traits.[44] It is no coincidence that Kravchinskiy underlines Perovskaya's "tenderness," which, in his opinion, is only characteristic of daughters. Such words must have met with approval especially among those revolutionaries and sympathizers who regarded women as the "weak half of the working class."[45]

The comrades quickly realized the political potential of the letter, which was smuggled from prison with the help of a lawyer. The theorist of the "party," Lev Tikhomirov, published the text in 1882 in the form of a brochure. Even during the so-called second terroristic wave (1904-1911), terrorist supporters praised the way "Sonya" faced hardship and death – "quietly and with dignity."[46] Another good example for this complex constellation can be found in the letters of the three victims of the so-called "Yakutian Tragedy." The execution of three political exiles in the summer of 1889 was preceded by a conflict between the local administration and the exiles, which ended violently on the 22nd of March; soldiers

42 Shebeko (ed.): Khronika, 169.

43 Stepnyak: Podpol'naya Rossiya, 119.

44 Hilbrenner: The Perovskaia Paradox. Compare also with Mogil'ner: Mifologiya, 53-54.

45 [Bogucharskiy (ed.):] Literatura, 620. Cf. [Bogucharskiy (ed.):] Literatura, 384.

46 This characteristic was used in the foreword to the Byloe-edition of the document. K biografiyam A.I. Zhelyabova i S.L. Perovskoy, 128.

entered the house of the Yakutian Monastyrëv, where a group of exiles had gathered. The memoirists suggest that one of the exiles, the revolutionary Nikolay Zotov, tried to shoot the lieutenant as a reaction to the use of bayonets and rifle butts by the soldiers. This was followed by a massacre, in which seven people, six exiles and a policeman were killed. The military tribunal condemned three of the exiles to death.[47]

One of them was the Jew Kogan-Bernshteyn.[48] In a letter to his son, Matfei, at the time a three-year-old toddler, he wrote:

> My dear, my dear, blue boy, my poor Mityusha! I have already fulfilled my last duty and my last thoughts and my last words belong to you! I am guilty towards you, my dear, I gave you life, and then I left you in the arms of your poor, excruciated mother. How much suffering and agony lies ahead of her, until she sees you grown up, until you will be able to understand and reward her for all her losses, all the suffering that she has had to endure in her difficult life.[49]

As Kogan-Bernshteyn was hardly able to resolve this conflict, he shifted the solution to a faraway future. Maybe, the text states, the son would be able to understand why the ideals of the revolution were more important for his father than a life with his family, and he would forgive his, nevertheless guilty "papa" when the revolution were to be completed. Kogan-Bernshteyn wrote:

> Will you ever forgive me as selflessly and well as your mum has done? She will tell you the story of my whole life, and maybe then you will be able to understand me, maybe you will begin to love my memory

47 Bramson: Yakutskaya tragediya, 7-28.

48 The percentage of Jews participating in the "Monastyrëvskiy bunt" was very high, due to the anti-Semitic laws of that time. The Ukaz from 22 May 1886 extended the notorious administrative regulation (administrativny poryadok) and allowed to transport Jews exclusively to Yakutia (East Siberia). Margolis: Tyur'ma i ssylka, 114.

49 Pis'ma osuzhdënnykh Yakutyan, 151-152.

> and be thankful for my honest deeds. Oh my God! Give me this salvation! Give me this last hope!

Then the Bible was cited:

> Our faith predicted the prosperity of our country, the good for our poor people, but we have seen only sorrow, that we have sown around our dearest people. […] If not for this consciousness [of guilt, V.F.], I could climb the scaffold with joy, to see the light of day one last time and lay down my life for my friends.[50]

However, in a separate letter written to the comrades, he put himself in the tradition of the revolutionary farewell letter by celebrating the death for the "common cause:" "For me personally such a death is the happiest, the most desired one. Don't cry for me, but say: he is right, he died happily, he couldn't wish himself a better fate". His letter to the son suggested that he was not able to die with joy; the letter to the comrades stated otherwise. Here, Bernshteyn did not express any remorse. Death was reframed as a last personal triumph over the "spawns of darkness"[51]

The same can be said about Bernshteyn's comrade Nikolay Zotov. His letter to his father spoke of a comparable conflict of values between the respect for "ordinary life" and the self-imposed duty to lead a higher life in service to the revolution. On the one hand, he stressed the notion of an "easy" and "happy" death: "I am dying very, very easily," he wrote at the end of his letter, "aware that I am right, with the consciousness of my strength in my chest." On the other hand, he expressed remorse for bringing suffering and pain upon his family:

"Forgive me, papa," wrote Zotov, "forgive me, for I have inflicted a lot of pain upon you and I am doing it one last time. Not only do I know that you forgive me for that, you do not even accuse me. If I weren't so convinced of that, it would be so difficult to die."[52]

50 Pis'ma osuzhdënnykh Yakutyan, 151-152.
51 Pis'ma osuzhdënnykh Yakutyan, 151.
52 Pis'ma osuzhdënnykh Yakutyan, 153.

It was only in his letter to his comrades that notions of guilt were completely missing. As the Narodovolets A. Mikhailov had done in his "Testament"[53] (1882), the atheist Zotov gave the "beloved brethren" the "commandment" to exploit his own death and the death of the comrades propagandistically and to beat the greatest possible political capital out of them.[54] Here, too, the private was interwoven with politics, and religious semantics gave this nexus a special impressiveness. Just as his predecessors had done, Zotov also let the comrades know that he had not lived his life in vain. He fashioned his death into an act of worship for the "common cause."

Conclusion

The notion that the individual can choose his or her life goals independently and live in accordance with his or her own wishes and preferences was poorly compatible with the monarch's monopoly of political decision making, a hierarchical social order and securitized privileges for certain groups. The conflict between self-determination and self-realization, on the one side, with autocracy, on the other, was even potentiated by an elitist conception of life, which had to be fully devoted to a higher purpose. The close connection between an elitist self-understanding, the orientation towards a hypergood, a teleological concept of history and the localization of a good life in the "public" sphere finally led to a bloody campaign against the state. This was possible due to the development of a well-functioning urban underground network,[55] the development of "supporter groups," mostly among the intelligentsia,[56] and due to the fatal consensus that only violence could be regarded as "retribution for desecrated human dignity."[57]

53 Zaveshchanie Aleksandra Dmitrievicha Mikhaylova, 175.
54 Pis'ma osuzhdënnykh Yakutyan, 154.
55 Ely: Underground Petersburg.
56 Wortman: Scenarios of Power, 145-146; Itenberg: Dvizhenie revolyutsionnogo narodnichestva, 390-400.
57 Ivanov: Iz vospominaniy, 236.

"Service to the people," meant that the revolutionary tried to adopt an unusual attitude: the dissociation of action and reward, to the point that even death – in spite of what the person concerned might have felt or thought – had to be described as "easy," "pure" and even "joyful." In this context, the revolutionary elevated his death inter alia by utilizing tropes, produced by Christian Socialism, sometimes even comparing himself to Christ, and by localizing oneself in the teleological course of history. Most propagandistic leaflets and writings dedicated to the memory of the fallen comrades utilized the notion of "martyrdom" in one form or another. Without this "melody of exaltation,"[58] as a Russian historian put it, it would be questionable whether the revolutionary ideology could have sounded so compelling and convincing to some sections of the population, or to the revolutionaries themselves. Thus, the Narodniki forged a powerful model that was later utilized by the revolutionary parties of the 20th century. This was done, especially by the Socialist Revolutionaries who were famous for their emphasis on faithfulness to the "old traditions of the Russian revolution," which were to be placed higher than "personal and family interests."[59]

A good, successful life was not seen in the realization of a relative, coherent relation of the individual goods and desires, but rather in the capacity to subordinate oneself to political goals. Thus, the biographies of the mostly young radicals show a disproportion between desires, moral goods and aspirations. One's relationship to family, work, the pursuit of social recognition, enjoyment and comfort was dependent on a single hypergood. However, the act of self-sacrifice stood in a relationship of tension with the general appreciation of an "ordinary life" in service of the family. Revolutionaries sentenced to death generally articulated their "guilt" before their child, their mother, or their parents.[60] This difference

58 Zhuravlev: Ot sostaviteley, 6.

59 RGA SPI f. 328, o.1, d. 9, l. 1. The quotes come from a letter of a veteran from exile to Vladimir Burtsev.

60 This was one of many conflicts that revolutionaries tried to solve or to repress. Similarly conflictual, for example, was the relationship between the moral legitimacy of the terrorist practices and the recognition of the value of a human life.

indicates that loyalty to the family still persisted, often forcing the "new people" either to denounce the concept of total submission to the primacy of revolution or to condemn family foundation as a "sin."[61] Although many revolutionaries perceived this situation as a burden at some point in their lives, a strict moral framework often prevented them from articulating these concerns and fears directly and openly in their ego-documents, leading, for instance, to a differentiation between "letters to family members" and "letters to comrades". This framework also often hindered the veterans from writing about the "shady parts"[62] of their past.

Positioning oneself in a teleological process of history, that ended in the "liberation (*osvbozhdenie*)" or "salvation (*spasenie*)" of humanity granted the individual an understanding of the significance of his way of life. It is, however, important to stress that it was not these "secularized" notions of salvation but rather a) their translation into political practices in a very concrete conflictual context of individual aspirations for self-determination and b) state paternalism that had a decisive effect on the durability of the revolutionary movement and on its enormous potential for violence. The interpretation as "martyr" by oneself and by others helped Russian and Jews alike to strengthen the elitist group identity and to discursively obscure fundamental ethical conflicts. Religious semantics provided a sense of purpose where revolutionary violence, instrumental reason and new uncertainties specific to modernity created a feeling of loss. They fulfilled this function not by a reconnection to religious beliefs but by the purely linguistically based realization of the "expressivistic" idea of the creative potential of man. Due to its decontextualization from traditionally religious contexts and the recontextualization within the context of politics, the new religiously connoted terminology created a sense of world-shattering novelty in the socialist project.[63]

61 This was the bitter conclusion Ol'ga Lyubatovich (1854-1917) came to after losing her six-month-old daughter in prison. Decades after this personal tragedy she concluded: "it's a sin for revolutionaries to start a family." Holmgren: For the Good of the Cause, 129.

62 More on this topic in Rindlisbacher: Living for a "Cause."

63 This sense of novelty was of course not a goal in itself, but rather a consequence of the use of revolutionary tropes, since the recovery of the wholeness

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Johannes Gleixner

Soviet Power as Enabler of Revolutionary Religion, 1917–1929

Discussing religion in the Soviet public

On August 22, 1928, a public dispute on the question: "What is the essence of religion and is it reconcilable with communism?" (V chem sushchnost' religii i sovmestima li ona s kommunizmom?), took place in the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow. Two visitors from the United States, Sherwood Eddy and Julius F. Hecker, the first a Protestant missionary working for the YMCA, the latter an emigrated Russian sociologist with an interest in religion, faced off against two atheists, Anton Loginov and Mikhail Reisner. These were distinguished intellectuals as well, known for their anti-religious stance and working with the so called "League of the Militant Godless" (Soyuz voinstvuyushchikh bezbozhnikov, SVB).[1] According to Izvestiya, the official newspaper of the Soviet government, this was not at all unusual:

> Moscow is spoilt with philosophical and religious tournaments. Arguments between godless and believers, between materialists and idealists, attended by thousands of listeners, captivated the public attention of Moscow in spite of this year's winter.[2]

The almost dismissive attitude of this article sounds like propaganda on supposedly unrestricted free speech within the Soviet Union. But it simply stated well-known facts of that time: between 1917 and 1929, hundreds — probably thousands — of discussions between believers and anti-religious activists took place throughout the country. As foreign citizens, Eddy and

1 The SVB and its precursors had been at the forefront of the Bolshevik's anti-religious struggle since 1923. Its history has been researched quite thoroughly. See Peris: Storming the Heavens; Dahlke: Antireligiöse Front.

2 Izvestiya, 24 August 1928, No. 193 (2824), 3.

Hecker were most likely treated more carefully by the authorities than average Soviet citizens.[3] But as Eddy remembered from his first participation in such a dispute in 1926,

> we had expected to meet an audience of atheists and probably go down to a forensic defeat, in the hope of getting the door of tolerance or religious liberty opened just a little further. To our surprise, about one third of the audience were Christians who boldly heckled the communist speakers, as the atheists heckled the Russian Christian who spoke.[4]

Although the NEP era, during which most of these events took place, was indeed more lenient than the Stalinist period following mass collectivization from 1928 onward, this seems to contradict the picture of an atheist state, whose supposed goal from the very beginning was to eradicate all religion.

At least in Moscow and Petrograd / Leningrad, up until 1929, supporters of religion could take part in such disputes without major repression. Vladimir F. Martsinkovskiy, son of an orthodox priest and a prolific religious debater, remembers how he was imprisoned and closely escaped execution by red guards in the countryside, while he could debate anti-religious activists in Moscow without major trouble.[5] Others, like Nikolay D. Kuznetsov, an expert in church law, were repeatedly arrested or sent into exile for their public speeches on religion. Still, public authorities were either not able or not willing to stop him from re-appearing in public and speaking on religious topics several times.[6] There exists a large number of

3 Hecker later returned to the Soviet Union, where he perished during the Great Terror.

4 Eddy: The Challenge of Russia, 178. Eddy sympathized with the Bolsheviks, although he clearly thought their atheism was misguided.

5 See Marzinkowskij: Gott-Erleben, 94-100. Priests were, however, threatened with retribution if they spoke too boldly: see Levitin-Krasnov: Lichie gody, 141-143.

6 As Kuznetsov was well-known to the public, reports on religious discussions often mentioned him by name. See Izvestiya, 1 June 1919, No. 117 (669), 2;

memoirs from Soviet citizens coming of age during and immediately after the revolution which mention spectacular public discussions in revolutionary Moscow.[7] Religious intellectuals and preachers from abroad were fascinated by them as well.[8] All these reports boiled down to one common denominator: although Soviet power was wrong to commit violence against believers, its actions represented the religious spirit of the time.

Obviously, public discussions on religion were a widespread occurrence between 1917 and 1929. In this article, I will examine this peculiar phenomenon that seems to contradict the common perception of Soviet antireligious policy: why did this avowed "atheist" country allow religious speech while effectively shutting down other venues of public discourse? There existed an interdependence between religious radicals and Bolshevik ideology.[9] Despite its seemingly ideological foundations, the Soviet state had difficulty drawing a line between providing a discursive frame of reference, on one hand, and being a part of an ideological discourse on the other hand, thus mirroring a general problem of modern polities.[10]

Open debates were already a staple after the autocracy fell in February 1917. They continued well into the first year of Soviet power. Particularly controversial policies, like the decision by the young Bolshevik government to drop out of the ongoing World War in March 1918 by making peace with Imperial Germany, were discussed widely and controversially. Members of the revolutionary government met non-Bolshevik socialists

Pravda, 5 January 1928, No. 4, 2. Authorities did prevent him from organizing Christian congregations into a larger legal framework. See Krivosheeva: Vsetselo prisposoblenie, 31-32.

7 See the authors listed by Levitin-Krasnov: Levitin-Krasnov: Renovationist Movement, 286-288. See also: Aidarova: Moya zhizn'; Schalamow: Das vierte Wologda.

8 Apart from Eddy see: Briem: Kommunismus und Religion; Evans: Churches in the U.S.S.R; Fülöp-Miller: Geist und Gesicht; Hecker: Religion Under the Sowjets.

9 The key role of the public sphere in the development of antireligious campaigns has already been stressed by Dahlke: Kampagnen für die Gottlosigkeit.

10 For a comparison of Soviet Russia with Central Europe, see Gleixner: Menschheitsreligionen.

in public disputes.[11] Up until spring 1921, despite terror against political opponents, non-Bolshevik socialist parties and non-party activists were – at least theoretically – part of the political system and could campaign for elections.[12] In addition, opposition within the Communist party could still be voiced.[13] The most popular form of discussions, however, were those on religious topics called *religioznye disputy* (religious disputes).[14]

As systematic outlawing and persecution of political dissent by the Bolshevik government took their toll on the variety of public speech, topics were narrowed down to either a) technological discussions, b) discussions about art or c) religious disputes. This pushed dissenting voices into these remaining areas for unrestricted speech and let them become a public beacon for fundamental dissent with how the Bolsheviks were running things. Such a kind of fundamental critique was bound to be formulated in philosophical terms, bordering on religious language. The nature of disputes, in which two or more opponents spoke before an audience that could itself interact with the speakers, made them rather difficult to censor. The Soviet press therefore tried to frame their results afterwards (or kept entirely quiet about them). The following example exhibits both of these features:

On March 10, 1922, a large dispute on "the future of agriculture" was held in Moscow and advertised in the press beforehand. On the day, the main newspaper of the Communist party, Pravda, simply noted the topic of the dispute and its participants. A day later, the dispute was analyzed again, this time placed prominently on the front page. In its headline, Pravda insinuated the uncontrollable nature of public speech. It read: "On

11 Most prominent "opponents" included former members of the RDSRP or still active Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. For one example, among many, see Politicheskoe obozrenie. In: Izvestiya, 9 April 1918, No. 69 (333), 2. Two representatives of the group "Novaya zhizn'," a splinter group of both former Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, named after the journal of the same name, criticized the Bolshevik's treatment of bourgeois intellectuals.

12 Brovkin: Mensheviks and NEP, 354-356.

13 For a general discussion see Daniels: Gewissen der Revolution.

14 For my research, I used official newspapers and journals as well as memoirs and archival material. Although these disputes were never formally registered, up to the early 1930s all sources paint a quite consistent picture.

personal liberty and other business," (O svobodnoy lichnosti i o prochem) alluding to the fact that, during a discussion purportedly on economic topics, suddenly the fate of individual freedom under the Bolshevik government was at stake. Boris D. Brutskus, a known liberal economist and expert on agronomy, used the discussion to denounce not only state intervention in the economy but Soviet policy in general, advocating for a free society. The article dryly noted that Brutskus succeeded in capturing the numerous audiences by virtue of his erudition and powerful oratory. In contrast, its author ridiculed the Bolshevik speaker for being rhetorically and intellectually inept and failing to counter his bourgeois opponent in any meaningful way: "Comrade Iakovenko is not able to shine with a beautiful objection [to Brutskus, J. G.]. He is in general not very talkative."[15]

Still, technological discussions usually stayed on their subject and discussions on art seemed to be mostly outlets for inner-party conflicts.[16] In contrast, religious disputes continued to elude party control and frustrate the godless movement. Disputes in large cities inevitably attracted the remnants of a bourgeois and liberal public. As Sherwood Eddy noticed at his dispute, to his surprise, a large part of the audience was openly supporting the religious speakers. Soviet reports on such events mostly agreed with this perception. On the countryside, the audiences of lectures and disputes were satisfied with practical questions as long as the local parish itself was not questioned.[17] In Moscow, however, every antireligious speaker had to expect to be heckled relentlessly.[18] At a *religioznyj disput* between Aleksandr I. Vvedensky, head of the Renovationist Church and its most popular speaker, and Anatoly V. Lunacharsky, the people's commissar for enlightenment and one of the most popular Bolsheviks, the

15 Pravda, 15 March 1922, No. 60, 1. Brutskus was exiled shortly after his ridiculing statement; this was ordered during the purging of intellectuals.

16 Questions on Soviet culture could be quite controversial and these discussions remained relevant for inner-party discourse well into Stalinism. See Brandenberger: Simplistic, Pseudosocialist Racism.

17 For a general overview, see Freeze: Assault on the Parish.

18 Sarab'yanov: Beglye Vospominaniya, 34-35.

newspaper of the Godless movement described the audience in black and white colors:

> On the one side, the nepmeny [businessmen of the NEP era, J. G.], their fat wives, […] clergymen in black cassocks. One the other: Workers, dressed brightly, who had been given tickets by their factories.[19]

The article further mentioned that the Bolsheviks had trouble addressing their own constituency through such channels, furthering the impression of dispute as an official Soviet outlet for bourgeois ideology. N. P. Rozanov, a priest who reported on the disputes, concurred, mentioning an overwhelmingly bourgeois audience that had the obvious goal of supporting "their" side. Several other reports and memoirs point out the fact that it was quite difficult to get into a dispute if the speakers were well known, like Vvedensky, Lunacharsky or Ilarion, one of the official spokesmen of the patriarch.[20] Religious disputes were in demand; they were often sold out, generating profits for their organizers. Looking back in 1935, Anatolij T. Lukachevsky, one of the leaders of the League of the Godless, observed that propaganda was easier during the 1920s, as the people themselves were asking for discussions and lectures on religious topics.

In short, religious discussions attracted a very specific kind of audience and played the role of an officially sanctioned counter-public. While many disputes were organized by government or party institutions, at their core they were a form of institutionalized spontaneity. They happened periodically in the same buildings in Moscow, mostly in the Polytechnical museum, the Experimental theatre, the former Zimin theatre as well as the conservatory.[21] Official newspapers like Izvestiya had running rubrics in which lectures and disputes were announced. Usually, one main speaker

19 Mallori: O lichnosti Khrista, 6.

20 See Krivosheeva: Religioznye disputy, 216; Schalamov: Das vierte Wologda, 155.

21 This is confirmed by analyzing Soviet newspapers in the given timeframe. Moreover, several sources repeatedly name these same places. See also Krivosheeva: Religioznye disputy, 215.

held a lecture on the advertised topic. Afterwards, one or several opponents expressed different points of view. They were, however, in close interaction with the audience the entire time, which – as Eddy described so vividly – also took active part in the discussions by either heckling speakers or, in case the speakers were not convincing, nominating new ones out of their midst. Sometimes opponents to the main lecture were determined on the spot. While there existed official chairmen (usually appointed by either the Communist party or the Godless movement) who could write up unwanted speakers and mark them for repressions later on, their powers were quite limited during discussion.[22]

Several times, the main speakers were given notice of their appearance only immediately before the event started. Either they were replaced spontaneously or a new date was scheduled on the spot.[23] After the lecture, members of the audience usually submitted written notes (*zapiski*) containing questions and commentaries, to which the speakers had to react at least in a broad sense. One discussion could spawn a new one if the results were satisfying neither audience nor lecturers. Those interested simply knew when and where to expect such discussions, even without official announcement.

The dynamic process of public interaction between speakers and audience made it difficult for Soviet authorities to control the course of public disputes. They had (and used) the power to either arrest certain undesirable speakers or suppress any notification of disputes. As soon as disputes happened, however, there was not much they could do, short of arresting several hundred (or thousand) people.

22 See the memoirs of Martsinkovsky as well as N. P. Rozanov. In both cases the chair lost control of the discussion. The audience intervened, because it felt that one side was underrepresented. See Marzinkowskij: Gott-Erleben, 96-97. Cf. also Rozanov's recollection as given by Krivosheeva: Religioznye disputy, 217.

23 Popular speakers like the reformist priest Vvedensky or the people's commissar for enlightenment Lunacharsky were often announced without their knowledge to draw in larger audiences. See RGASPI, fond 89, opis' 4, delo 158. See also Izvestiya, 12 March 1926, No. 55 (2686), 5.

Bolshevik policy and religious radicals[24]

Disputes were a remnant not only of a more pluralistic public but also of democracy inside the Bolshevik party and adjunct organizations like the SVB, as the enthusiastic reaction amongst Bolsheviks like the aforementioned Loginov and Reisner shows. Indeed, the upper party leadership did, with few exceptions, not take part at all. Moreover, even Bolshevik speakers did not heed the repeated demands of their higher-ups to either abstain from such events or treat them with caution, as the example of the aforementioned Anton Loginov shows. The SVB reprimanded him several times for not stopping to appear at religious discussions, but he ignored virtually all of them. This was helped by the fact that antireligious policy up to 1922 was never properly institutionalized. It is quite telling that one of the first references of an "anti-religious" rather than simply anticlerical agenda in post-revolutionary Russia was a journal published by a Russian émigré to the United States in 1917 by the name of Mikhail Rayva. In 1919, a collection of his writings, titled "The truth about god," appeared posthumously.[25] Up until 1921, most Bolshevik authors were busy defending the separation of state and church. Starting in 1922, there were attempts of formulating a more coherent policy and simultaneously bringing it in line with the emerging Leninist canon.[26] While the leadership of the Godless movement eventually succeeded in centralizing and streamlining inner-party strategies, it could not exercise effective control on the local levels where these disputes took place. Nominally, the department for agitation and propaganda (Agitotdel) of a local party cell was in

24 For a more detailed discussion of the state of religion within Bolshevik ideology see: Gleixner: Menschheitsreligionen, 126-146.

25 Rayva: Pravda o Boge.

26 Soviet authors usually point to the program of the Russian Communist Party as agreed upon on its VIII party congress in 1919. While it does indeed mention the need for antireligious propaganda it only vaguely speaks of the abolishment of "religious prejudices," warning at the same time not to offend believers. See Protokoly i stenograficheskie otchety s"ezdov i konferentsii kommunisticheskoy partii sovetskogo soyuza: Vos'moi s"ezd RKP (b). Mart 1919 goda, 401-402.

charge of supervising participation of Bolshevik speakers, a task in which they more often than not did not succeed.[27]

The absence of a coherent policy on what religious freedom meant in Soviet society created an ideological opening that was filled by religious radicals, who were drawn to these public disputes. Already following the February Revolution in 1917, reformists had made themselves heard within the Russian Orthodox Church.[28] Next to an increasing secularization of urban population, this development gained momentum when the young Soviet government issued decrees on the nationalization of church property (26 October 1917) and on the separation of church and state (23 January 1918) and simultaneously stopped any funding of church activities, weakening the church hierarchy.[29] This led to an empowerment of believers on the fringes of and outside this hierarchy, i.e. lay activists, reformist lower clergy and non-Orthodox denominations.[30]

From the point of view of religious reformist and radicals, Soviet power seemed even friendlier than the Provisional government. Already since the revolution in 1905 and the subsequent issuing of a certain degree of religious tolerance, a whole generation of religious activist across all kinds of faiths and denominations had put its hope in revolutionary Social Democracy. Vice versa, leading Bolsheviks like Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich and Mikhail Reisner had already at that time expressed keen interest in religious dissent, focusing mostly on Old Believers and "sects" (*sektanstvo*), whom they envisioned as natural allies in the fight against bourgeoisie and loyal socialist subjects alike.[31]

27 RGASPI, f. 142, op. 1, d. 457.

28 Schulze Wessel: Revolution und religiöser Dissens, 182-189.

29 In 1917, the main body tasked with church matters was the VIII section of the Narkomyust, responsible for enforcing the separation decree and in charge of any antireligious policy until the end of the civil war. A task, for which it never was designed, as its head, Petr A. Krasikov, admitted himself. See Luchterhand: Sowjetstaat und Russisch-Orthodoxe Kirche, 46.

30 See Freeze: Subversive Atheism, 28-30. See also Young's account of rural believers taking church matters into their own hands as a matter of "joining" the new order: Young: Power and the Sacred.

31 See Coleman: Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 157-158.

This was not an exclusively Russian phenomenon: All over Europe, socialist parties in the late 19th century became "projection screens" for religious radicals, who noticed the appealing combination of potentially utopian ideology and political mass movement. Mainstream socialist parties were however almost unanimously wary of introducing religious thought and language into socialist ideology, i. e. painting socialism as a quasi-religious force.[32] The RSDRP (Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party) largely was no different in this regard.[33] Nonetheless, religious dissidents were a force that Socialist politics could (at times unwillingly) tap into. Soviet religious policy during the first years seemed to cater to these expectations, when several anti-church brochures criticized the former state church for not being Christian enough.[34] This was reinforced by the fact that a lot of this literature was written by former priests or *popovichi* (sons of priests) like Mikhail Galkin-Gorev and Sergei K. Minin.[35] Leading Russian "sectarians" like Ivan M. Tregubov campaigned on behalf of the revolutionary state. Up until 1921, this cooperation remained mostly unspoken and uneasy: Several leading Bolsheviks recognized the danger of preaching socialism through religious channels. Lunacharsky early on warned that to criticize the church for not living up to the Bible came close to protestant proselytization and was not antireligious at all.[36]

A Soviet religion?

This diffuse relationship changed, when the Bolshevik leadership decided to take decisive action against the Russian Orthodox Church. Without a coherent antireligious political framework being in place, the hunger cri-

32 For a general overview, see Prüfer: Sozialismus statt Religion.

33 Luukkanen: Party of Unbelief, 48.

34 For an example, see Lukin: Tserkov' i gosudarstvo, 5.

35 Minin: Religiya i Kommunizm. On Galkin-Gorev see Peris: Commissars in Red Cassocks, 345-349.

36 Lunacharsky: Ob antireligioznoy propagande. Ironically, Lunacharsky himself could be called the poster boy of "religious socialism." See Gleixner: Menschheitsreligionen, 206.

sis of late 1921 presented a political opportunity for a coordinated campaign against the church. In the official press, calls for the confiscation of church valuables started to appear. This campaign led to an escalation of tensions within the church, with reformist priests calling for the abdication of the patriarch.[37]

A public event on 7 March 1922 epitomizes this cooperation between various reformist movements and interested Bolsheviks. Gorev-Galkin delivered a lecture on "Hunger, church valuables and the Karlovci synode abroad." He was joined in discussion afterwards by leading proponents of "Renovationism" (*obnovlenchestvo*), a schismatic movement which eventually grew into its own church, like bishop Antonin (Granovskiy) and Sergei V. Kalinovskiy, several representatives of other denominations and faiths as well as leading Bolsheviks like Bonch-Bruevich, Loginov, Lunacharsky, Krasikov, Reisner, Nikolai A. Semashko (the people's commissar of health) and Vladimir N. Sarab'yanov, a former Menshevik interested in religious topics. A representative of the patriarch Tikhon, protoierey Tsvetkov, was also present.[38] While the official church did answer calls for donating valuables to hunger relief, the framing of this discussion was obvious: A "democratic" clergy, other loyal believers like Tregubov, and various representatives of state and party confronted the "Tikhonovites". Similar public demonstrations of "loyal" clergy publicly donating to charity while disputing Tikhon's followers followed.[39]

If antireligious activists initially hoped to engage and refute Orthodox priests in order to reduce their influence on the populace, this kind of confrontations was the exception rather than the rule. Most traditionalists simply avoided discussing religious matters with representatives of the Bolshevik party or other antireligious speakers. Those priests and religious activists, who like Tregubov engaged men like Loginov and Reisner were in fact religious radicals themselves and representative of modernist

37 See especially the documents provided by Pokrovskiy and Petrov: Pokrovskij / Petrov: Politbyuro i tserkov' 1922. See also Schulze Wessel: Revolution und religiöser Dissens, 229.

38 Izvestiya, 7 March 1922, No. 53 (1492), 2.

39 Pravda, 29 April 1922, No. 62, 3.

currents in their respective denominations. At most disputes, religious reformers were amongst themselves, not discussing but agreeing on the need for religious reform.[40]

Up until 1922 this was overshadowed not only by civil war but the fact that orthodox priests still all belonged to the same church. It was only during and after the campaign for the donation of church valuables that a fundamental schism within religious communities (most of all within the Orthodox Church) became visible.[41] In retrospect, it became clear that most of the debaters during the early years were in fact supporters of Soviet power. Minin rather unknowingly noted this as early as 1919, when he complained about the lack of priests who would discuss religion with him. The only priest he could engage had declared himself chairman of a "religious commune," a clear indicator for a reformist agenda. Reisner agreed, when in 1923 he warned his fellow agitators that most clergymen they would meet in discussion "openly defied biblical mythology as well as orthodoxy."[42]

The coordinated campaign of 1922 suddenly brought this distinction between representatives of a public "Soviet" religion and those of a more private "church" faith into the public.

After the schism gained traction, the whole framework of what these discussions consisted of, changed in a way that was detrimental to the state's goals. To take part in discussions was tantamount to support for a stately approved faith, whatever its substance might be. Up until the onset of Stalinism, the Bolsheviks were surprisingly powerless in changing this emerging narrative of an official religion. More and more, these discussions became a medium for loyal religious activist to present their point

40 Pravda, 17 May 1922, No. 62, 2.

41 For more on that topic, see Roslof: Red Priests.

42 Minin: Religiya i Kommunizm, 3-4; Reisner: Obzor literatury o religii, 106. For a more detailed account, see also Gleixner: Menschheitsreligionen, 187-188.

of view vis-à-vis the Orthodox Church, framing the meaning of Soviet religious policy in this process. They created the notion of an official "religious NEP," an impression the authorities repeatedly tried to reject.[43]

But public discussions continued to drive home the point that there existed such an approved version of religion – not limited to one denomination. Reformist orthodox clergy, followers of Tolstoy, Baptists and other Russian sects appeared together and accused the church of suppressing true Christianity just like Bolshevik authors had done themselves.[44] Religious radicals from other countries, mostly from the USA, also continued to spread this message: In 1923, a protestant bishop from the United States appeared and spoke at the Renovationists' *sobor* (synod), which was not recognized by the patriarch and cemented the existence of two churches.[45] Religious intellectuals like Hecker travelled between Soviet Russia and their countries of residence.

In the eyes of the public this collusion of interests between the state and religious radicals became part of official policy. Thus, when anticlerical measures turned into antireligious policy, given the ideological void in Soviet ideology it did so within a framework set by religious radicals. Both official and personal recollections of the time also reflected this perception.[46] The Bolsheviks allied themselves with religious radicals cau-

43 No religious NEP policy was ever pronounced. It would have contradicted one of the core features of Bolshevik policy after 1921: Relaxing economic coercion but tightening the ideological framework. See David-Fox: What Is Cultural Revolution.

44 Some of the so called sectarians were already used to debate Orthodox priests from pre-revolutionary times. See Robson: Of Duma and Antichrist.

45 Hecker: Religion under the Soviets, 95-96.

46 This view was further reinforced by historians like Anatoliy Levitin-Krasnov who wrote an influential comprehensive account of the Orthodox schism. He considers religious disputes a "high form" of antireligious work starting in 1922. Quite the contrary, even the Soviet press announced countless disputes beforehand. See Levitin-Krasnov / Shavrov: Ocherki po istorii russkoy tserkovnoy smuty, 190-192. For recollections by the Godless Movement itself, such as Vladimir N. Sarab'yanov, a veteran of religious disputes, who

tiously and for an obvious strategic purpose; the latter embraced this opportunity wholeheartedly. While the Bolsheviks at most saw the radicals as progressing further to the (rather murky) goal of the dying out of religion in general, the religious activists saw themselves and the Bolsheviks converging on a goal of a truly revolutionary faith, encompassing the whole public sphere. The religious discussions were by virtue of taking place already proof of this public religion. Contrary to the hope of politicizing religious dissent, these believers in revolutionary faith took their opportunity to make politics religious. Even more important, they made Bolshevik ideology a part of their world-view.

It was the radicals, who framed this religious discourse. Antireligious activists tried to shape disputes their way by talking only about narrow topics and targeting small audiences, asking for example whether "religion was necessary to the working people."[47] But they had to resign to the fact that they themselves were not initiating most of the discussions.[48]

Changing shape of religious disputes

Beginning around 1923, the shape of disputes therefore began to change. Church officials usually refused to discuss anything else than church matters, such as the meaning of religion.[49] At the same time, the emerging anti-religious apparatus tried to reign in its own activists and declared participation in religious disputes unnecessary and harmful. Although this often was not successful, the disputes more and more resembled discussions between religious activists, not confrontations between believers and atheists. Correspondingly, the Soviet state changed from being involved as an actor into being a hostile arbiter. Heretofore, public discus-

pinpoints the year 1921 as a turning point, after which non-Church groups were much more active, see Sarab'yanov: Beglye Vospominaniya.

47 Eliashevich: Antireligioznaya propaganda, 8.

48 Sarab'yanov: Osnovaya zadacha, 3.

49 Krivosheeva: Religioznye disputy, 216. See also the following report from Komsomol activists: Pravda, 22 February 1925, No. 44 (2975), 5.

sions (on religion and other subjects as well) had been a channel for relatively free speech within the confinement of Soviet power. During NEP era the revolutionary state tried at the same time to streamline its own ideology while staying at least formally bound to its own legality, which guaranteed religious freedom.[50] The best way to deal with religion was therefore not to address it directly, but let its representatives discuss it among themselves without crossing over into the realm of state policy.

One of the crucial problems of Soviet religious policy in the 1920s was precisely to manage this shift: The Bolsheviks wanted to fight religious "prejudices" without being sucked into a religious discourse that let them appear as a religious actor themselves. Surely, religious radicals aligned themselves with revolutionary state, which they perceived as a religious force, fulfilling a higher task. This was a discussion the Bolsheviks wanted altogether avoid, as the repeated demands by the Godless leadership not to engage religious activists in public disputes showed all too clearly. On the other hand, the Soviet state wanted to be more than just a neutral framework for comprehensive ideologies, be they religious or philosophical.

To a certain degree, this "disentanglement" proved successful, as the disputes during the late 1920s showed with Eddy and Hecker being the exception rather than the rule.[51]

In the end, the unwillingness of the traditional clergy to discuss religion with the government actually offered the Bolsheviks a way out of this conundrum by helping to solidify the distinction between a political public sphere and an institutionalized private religious one. Soviet religious policy from the late 1920s well up until the onset of the Great Terror in 1936/37 reads as an (paradoxical) attempt to push religion back without encroaching on its territory. The focus of antireligious campaigns increasingly turned on manifestations of religion in public and on the believers themselves, at the same time allowing the church some unspoken (and

50 Freeze points to the year 1929 as the failure of "revolutionary legality," also with regard to religious policy: Freeze: Assault on the parish, 215. For a similar, but more detailed, argument see Luchterhand: Sowjetstaat und Russisch-Orthodoxe Kirche, 76-84.

51 After 1925, there was a sharp drop in disputes, which the press reported on.

often violated) prerogatives. In the end, the revolutionary state needed to compartmentalize religion. To do so successfully, it needed a reliable enemy not allies without ideological boundaries. Despite mass terror during Stalinism, the underlying objectives of Soviet religious policy were surprisingly similar to other modern states of our time.

The legacy of Soviet antireligious policy thus was quite ambivalent: While the global appeal of revolutionary religion faded during Stalinism, it was never replaced by a consistent ideology other than a vague idea of an atheist society. Interestingly, both émigrés and Soviet sources remembered the religious public discussions in strikingly similar terms. Although for a time they shaped the public perception of religion in Soviet society, in the end everyone remembered only an inevitable confrontation between state and church, depriving religious radicals between them of any agency of their own.

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Impact on Asia

Martin Aust

From Political and Social to Imperial and Global: Historiographies of the Russian Revolution Then and Now

This contribution elaborates on the task to write a general account of the Russian Revolution on the occasion of the centenary of 1917. To write a history of the Russian Revolution challenges historians to bridge a huge divide between the many syntheses which are already on the bookshelf and the rich research on late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet Union of the past two decades. To put it shortly, research is one and a half steps ahead of synthesis. The first step concerns imperial history and the second global history. On the following pages I will first sketch out the state of the art of accounts of the Russian Revolution and will then proceed to bringing imperial and global history in.

Historiography in the Soviet Union has always been framed by a Marxist approach that relates political superstructures to social foundations. Soviet histories of the Revolution are no exception to this rule. Soviet historiography had to serve the self-description of the Soviet system.[1] As to historiographies in America and Europe, accounts of the Russian Revolution after World War Two were emerging in the field of political history. The paradigmatic rise of social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s shifted historians' attention to the social dimension of the Russian Revolution. Next came the cultural turn which highlighted categories of agency and narrativity. There are various accounts of the Russian Revolution which reflect these paradigmatic shifts. At the same time, all these accounts kept a more or less Russo-centric view of the Revolution beyond all paradigmatic shifts.[2]

Richard Pipes' narrative, for example, takes 1905 as a point of departure. 1905 is the foreshock of what was to come in the following years. This is political history which traces the course of events. In doing so, most of Pipes' account is dedicated to the period from February 1917 until the

1 Plaggenborg: Experiment Moderne, 81-119.

2 Noteworthy exceptions to the rule: Smith: Revolution and the People in Russia and China; McCarthy: Interpreting the Russian and Chinese Revolutions.

end of the Civil War in 1921. In Pipes' book the course of history is pushed ahead by political actors: monarchs, statesmen, ministers, generals and officers, party leaders, revolutionaries and terrorists. They make their appearances in Pipes' book to advance or block reform plans, to formulate political programs, to take demonstrations to the street, to launch attacks and counter attacks, to overthrow governments, to fight their political enemies, to establish new orders and so on. Thus, the Revolution comes along as a great struggle between the monarchy and revolutionaries and between Reds and Whites.[3]

In contrast to political history's emphasis on political actors, social historians stressed structural dimensions of history and the significance of larger social groups. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Dietrich Geyer sketched out the challenge of modernity and the Tsarist government's response to it as the main driving factors of the revolution.[4] Following Geyer, social historians in Germany produced ever longer chapters on the agrarian question, industrialisation and backwardness preceeding their account of what actually happened in Russia in 1917.[5] In American historiography, Sheila Fitzpatrick underscored the social dimensions of the Russian Revolution.[6]

Ever advancing their analysis of social structures social historians removed individuals, their experiences and agencies as well as cultural symbols from the pages of history books. Bringing these issues back into historiography was the huge endeavor of the cultural turn. In the field of writing the story of the Russian Revolution, "Interpreting the Russian Revolution" by Boris Kolonitskii as well as Orlando Figes' "A People's Tragedy" appear as the prime examples of cultural history.[7] Throughout the latter book, individuals as Aleksei A. Brusilov, Maxim Gorkii, and Count Georgii L'vov appear. Figes cites from their diaries and letters to

3 Pipes: Die Russische Revolution.
4 Geyer: Die russische Revolution.
5 Hildermeier: Die russische Revolution 1905-1921; Bonwetsch: Die russische Revolution 1917.
6 Fitzpatrick: The Russian Revolution.
7 Kolonitskii / Figes: Interpreting the Russian Revolution; Figes: A People's Tragedy.

introduce experiences and perceptions into his vivid account of the Revolution.

As different as these types of political, social, and cultural history might appear, all books mentioned above share a focus on the Russian center, actors in the capital and groups such as Russian soldiers, workers and peasants. What has been emerging as imperial and global histories in the past decades was, however, not completely out of focus. To be sure, multiethnicity, national questions, and the variety of the empire and its regions received their share of attention by afore mentioned historians – but only in limited terms and specific contexts. The broad range of the empire and its regions only come into Pipes' focus when he turns to explain the building of the Soviet Union. Pipes tells the story of the Bolsheviks conquering most of the border regions of the former empire.[8] And what is of interest to global historians today – tracing (mutual) transfers, interconnections and entanglement[9] – has been detached from the story of the Revolution by Geyer and Eichwede who have written text book chapters on early Soviet foreign policy.[10] Non-Russian regions are also included into the narrative by Figes but his main focus is on the Revolution as the Russian People's tragedy.

A full-scale turn toward the empire and its variety as the main objects of research has been taking place in the past two decades. New topics on the agenda of historiography and a rush into the opened archives in Russia and other countries have produced a rich literature on late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet Union. Imperial rule viewed from the center and peripheries, regions within the empire, projects of nation-building, the history of religions, symbolic representations of concepts of identity, infrastructures of communication, migratioins, violence, everyday-life, autobiographical practices, cultural history in its broadest understanding – all these topics turned research on the first third of the 20th century in

8 Pipes: The Formation of the Soviet Union.

9 General readings on global history: Bentley: The Task of World History; Sachsenmaier: Global Perspectives on Global History; Conrad: Globalgeschichte.

10 Geyer (ed.): Osteuropa-Handbuch: Sowjetunion.

Russia and the Soviet Union into a productive laboratory of historiography.[11]

While there is a broad range of titles on the late Russian empire and the way the Bolsheviks remade the former territory of the empire,[12] the process of developing and applying global perspectives to the study of Russia's past is still underway. There are some edited volumes on Russian and Soviet history within the confines of global history.[13] Ever more contributions by historians of Russia and the Soviet Union make their way onto the pages of e.g. the *Journal of Global history*. Sessions at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) annual conventions and at the *European Congresses of Universal and Global History* indicate that global studies in the field of Russian and Soviet history are still developing.

To merge political and social histories of the revolution with the latest scholarship on imperial and global history is an opportunity and a challenge at the same time – raising a lot of questions. The first question is this: can a synthesis of the revolution include everything which recent research has brought to the surface? The answer is no. Given the multitude of topics of recent research, a synthesis of everything would blow the narrative of the book into bits and pieces of unrelated and scattered information. This inevitably leads to the next question: what to include and what to exclude from such a book? Basically speaking there is the need to achieve a balanced account. My book, which I was working on when the Graduate School's annual conference took place and which has been published meanwhile, attempts to address a general reading audience.[14] So it would be out of place to drop the spine of basic events and processes of the Russian revolution, known from the pages of political and social history. The challenge is to keep that spine and to include aspects of imperial

11 Introductions into this broad fields of literature: Novikova: The Russian Revolution from a Provincial Perspective; Wolff / Albert: Neue Perspektiven; Cvetkovski: Reich der Ränder.

12 Most notably: Suny / Martin (eds.): A State of Nations.

13 Aust (ed.): Globalisierung imperial und sozialistisch; Aust / Obertreis (eds.): Osteuropäische Geschichte und Globalgeschichte.

14 Aust: Die Russische Revolution.

and global history into it. A look at Helmut Altrichter's book on the Revolution shows how difficult that is indeed.[15] Altrichter's book comes along as three books in one. He tells the stories of a state in crisis, a society in upheaval and an empire in decline in three large and seperated chapters.

Here the category of space comes to the rescue of one inclusive narrrative. To include the government and various groups across the empire into one narrative spatial dimensions and relations build the focal point of my book. Visions of space and power and the dynamics and changes of relations between the center and various regions create the central theme. This approach allows me to combine the classic story of politics and society in times of revolution from 1905 into the 1920s with the findings of recent scholarship on imperial rule, regions and processes of nation-building. Instead of merely highlighting 1917 as a rupture, this approach places a metamorphosis of empire from 1905 into the 1920s into focus. The aim is not to downplay the significance of the 1917 revolution but to contextualise it within a broader frame of change occurring in the imperial space in the first third of the 20th century. This puts a metamophorsis of empire into the picture with the Bolsheviks creating a new type of empire – a polity which they would never have called empire, but which, however, rearranged the territory of the former Russian Empire in a new style; formally speaking, a federation of nations.[16]

Space is also the category which connects the story of the Revolution with global history. The opportunity is to continue a global history of 1918/19 from the point when the so called Wilsonian moment in global history ended. Erez Manela has shown how hopes of decolonisation across the globe were growing, while President Wilson, elaborating on Lenin's rhetoric of self-determination, made his speeches throughout the year 1918.[17] The term self-determination, although not coined but used by Wilson, inspired visions of decolonisation in countries as China and India. The decisions taken at the Versailles peace conference to transfer former

15 Altrichter: Russland 1917.

16 Suny / Martin: A State of Nations; Martin: The Affirmative Action Empire; Holquist: Making War, Forging Revolution; Hirsch: Empire of Nations.

17 Manela: The Wilsonian Moment.

German colonies to China to Japan as well as the enduring state of emergency in India frustrated hopes of decolonisation across Asia. The British and the French strengthened their colonial empires and underscored hierarchies of colonisers and colonised.

At this point it seems promising to properly reflect upon the global significance of what Terry Martin named the affirmative action empire. How did actors of decolonisation perceive the Soviet model of nation-building and the creation of a supranational state? Early Soviet nationality policy came along as an alternative both to the past of the Russian Empire – labelled by Lenin as a people's prison – and the presence of European colonial rule in Africa and Asia. Here, the prospects of a global history of the Russian Revolution are looming large. It is tempting to conceive the 1920s as a Soviet moment in global history with the new Soviet model of nationality policy being adopted in various colonised countries. This global story of the Russian Revolution still awaits its historians. Points of departure will be a rereading of the history of the Comintern and the Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku in 1920.[18]

But we also have to take into account potential limits of globalising the history of the Russian Revolution. A global history of the Russian Revolution is challenged by the well established paradigm of the Bolshevik drive toward world revolution. This story has been told many times by historians of foreign affairs as well as the Bolsheviks. It is about the Bolshevik struggle to control the internationalisation of the October revolution. It is a story of influence radiating from the centre in Moscow into the world. And it is also a story of the limits of Bolshevik influence in Europe and the world. In contrast to this, global historians search for agencies and adaptions in various regions beyond centers of power. Thus, globalising the history of the Russian revolution shifts the focus from the center in Moscow and the Bolsheviks to actors in other world regions. To explore their agencies biographical and autobiographical approaches seem to be a fruitful tool.

18 White: Communism and the East; Hedeler / Vatlin (eds.): Die Weltpartei aus Moskau; Vatlin: Die Komintern.

The Indian revolutionary Roy serves as an example.[19] Taking up a critical stance on Indian concepts of passive resistance and elaboratoring on experiences of the Mexican Revolution, Roy perceived the Soviet experiment as a new model to engage the masses in revolution and decolonisation. Without a doubt, Roy is a prime example of cosmopolitan revolutionaries travelling across continents and transfering and adopting various concepts of revolution and decoloninsation. What Roy was looking for was a revolution from below, by the people, to finally be able to establish complete Indian independence. In the decrese of Roy's enthusiasm towards the Soviet Union, the firmer Stalin's grip became on the Comintern. In the 1930s Roy's Soviet honeymoon had definitely faded. All in all, Roy's biography sheds light on how biographic approaches – focusing on agencies of mobility, transfers and adaptation – can help to underscore global dimensions of the Russian Revolution.

It seems highly likely that upcoming fresh research will explore more biographies similar to Roy's. All in all, they surely will further enrich our knowledge on the Russian Revolution and its global entanglements.[20]

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19 Manjapra: M. N. Roy.

20 This optimistic end is based on the appearance of these titles: Rinke / Wildt (eds.): Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions; Miéville: October; Bianco: Stalin and Mao; McGuire: Red at Heart.

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Gerhard Grüßhaber

From the Baltic to Anatolia: The German officer Hans Tröbst, between Freikorps, Wrangel, Kemalists, and Bolsheviks (1920–1923)[1]

The period following the First World War saw numerous subsequent conflicts directly linked to it. In many cases, the war that "failed to end"[2] was conducted by soldiers who simply continued their business, unable to or not interested in returning to civil life. One such soldier was Hans Tröbst (1891-1939), a former engineer captain in the German Imperial army. Having joined the armed forces in 1910, Tröbst had been socialized in the German army. He was not, however, reluctant to serve in other armed forces after 1918. Tröbst could not imagine leading a life as a civil clerk, and preferred the existence of a military freebooter and soldier of fortune. Despite the negative aspects of this occupation, Tröbst was convinced that it was the right thing for him: "To hell with the office chair and the ink pot! […] I love the war and adventures!"[3]

After the First World War, Tröbst served with the *Grenzschutz Ost* in Poland, the "Iron Division" in the Baltics and participated in the March 1920 Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch with the *Freikorps Erhardt* in Berlin. In order to evade criminal prosecution, he planned to leave Germany for some time. However, Tröbst had to give up his plans to join the White army operating in southern Russia, after those troops under the command of Pyotr Wrangel had capitulated in early 1920. In the end, Tröbst decided to apply for the Turkish nationalist forces (Kuva-yi Nizamiye) under General Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] in the war against the Greek invasion of Western Anatolia. Tröbst served with the Turkish nationalist forces between January 1921 and July 1923. After discarding his plans to settle in Southern Russia, Tröbst detected the right wing German Nationalist circle's Munich newspapers as a source of revenue and assisted in preparing

1 The following article is an extended version of a chapter from the author's dissertation thesis: Grüßhaber: The 'German Spirit,' 190-199.

2 For an overview of the postwar conflicts see Gerwarth: The Vanquished.

3 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 151, 188.

for the November 1923 Hitler putsch. After this incident, he left Germany again to evade prosecution and worked as a freelance newspaper correspondent in several countries between 1924 and 1939. He died in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, the last station of his career as a journalist.[4]

Did Tröbst's time in Anatolia really provide the background for his writings for the early National Socialists, as suggested by Stefan Ihrig?[5] Or was it rather Tröbst's experience in the Western theater of the Russian Civil War, endued with the figurehead of the much more popular (in the eyes of the German Right) war of the Kemalist forces? We will examine some of the doctrines acquired by Hans Tröbst in Eastern Europe after 1918 and compare them with his experiences in Anatolia. In this regard, this study is a contribution to the still highly contested issue of the National character of the Greco-Turkish war, which leaves little space for Non-Turkish actors.[6] For a better understanding of the nature of this conflict, we will first turn towards the Turkish Nationalist movement, its goals and its cooperation with the Bolshevik leadership.

Kemalist and Bolshevik entanglements, 1919- 1923

The Ottoman Empire, member of the Central Powers between 1914 and 1918, had ceased hostilities with the Russian empire with the signing of the Brest-Litowsk treaty in 1917. However, this relief from the Caucasus theatre of war had not prevented the Ottoman defeat in 1918. In the aftermath of the Mondros armistice, the Sultan and his government were under the control of the victorious powers and exerted limited control over the old capital city and Eastern Thrace. The Turkish nationalists had formed their resistance against the dividing of the Anatolian mainland according to the Sèvres peace treaty and against the French- and British-

4 Gebhardt: Leben und Arbeit des Auslandskorrespondenten Hans Tröbst, 15- 40.

5 Ihrig: Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination, 69-107.

6 Gingeras: Gangsters, Kidnappers and Other Patriots. A Turkish translation of Tröbst's Soldatenblut was published in 2017.

backed Greek invasion of Western Anatolia in spring of 1920. The nationalist circles in the city of Ankara, led by the former Ottoman General Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk], were opposed to the Sultan's government. The Turkish case was interesting for Lenin's government, not least because of its antimonarchic attitude. After the Bolshevik abandonment of the Tsarist claim for parts of Ottoman territory and the publication of the Sykes-Picot treaty in 1917, the Turkish nationalists feared no negative repercussions from revolutionary Russia's foreign policy regarding Turkish territorial integrity. Therefore the relations between the Ankara government and the Bolsheviks were based on common interests from the very beginning.[7] Both sides were able to counter French and British territorial claims in the region. The Turco-Bolshevik cooperation during the crucial period between 1920 and 1922 even provoked fear of a German-Russian-Turkish alliance against the victory powers.[8] However, these fears were not entirely unjustified. The German military leadership of the early Weimar republic was of the opinion that concealed support for the Bolshevik's political goals regarding the victorious powers was not to Germany's disadvantage. Moreover, the head of the German *Reichswehr*, General Hans Seeckt, had a high esteem for the Turkish nationalists. This was partly attributable to his service in the Ottoman army and his knowledge of the poor state of Ottoman Imperial forces in 1918, in comparison to the firm defensive of the Turkish nationalist army against the Greek invasion.[9] It might have been due to the admiration for the former ally that Hans Tröbst was allowed to leave Germany in 1920. After all, he was not joining the ranks of a hostile army.[10]

In a letter dated 26 April, 1920, Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the Turkish nationalists, asked Lenin to unite both governments' efforts to fight

7 Werner: Das Verhältnis Mustafa Kemals zur Sowjetmacht, 34.

8 Orr: Mustafa Kemal, Communism, and Germany in French Intelligence Nightmares, 1116-1118; Macfie: British Intelligence and the Turkish National Movement.

9 Carr: The Bolshevik Revolution, 229-249.

10 Gebhardt: Leben und Arbeit des Auslandskorrespondenten Hans Tröbst, 18.

together against the "imperialist powers."[11] Lenin's answer was positive, as he favored the idea of the war of a 'revolutionary' Asian country against the West European victorious powers. The Bolshevik government supported the Turkish war against Greece and its allies (1919-1922) with nearly 10 million gold rubles. They also sent Mikhail Frunze, one of their most prominent generals, as an emissary to Ankara.[12] Lenin's intentions were clear among the veterans of the past German-Ottoman military alliance. Prior to Mustafa Kemal's letter to Moscow, the former German naval attaché, Hans Human, had noted in a letter to the former German military attaché Otto von Lossow:

> Lenin makes them [the Turkish nationalists] favorable offers, refraining from social or rather a Bolshevik movement [in Turkey] and being content with anti- English politics, souped-up as Pan Islamism following the motto of the right of nations to self-determination.[13]

However, the German officials knew that the circumstances of the Turkish case were not comparable to those of Germany, and that the German resistance to the Treaty of Versailles had to be different from the Turkish resistance. Otto von Lossow, who was the commander of the German army in Bavaria, had received a note from a German diplomat:

> [I]n Turkey there is nothing to Bolshevize and from our standpoint every problem caused for the Entente has to be highly welcome. Indeed the Turks with their resistance against the Entente are ranking far below us and the other defeated. Certainly I don't ignore that the

11 For the letter in its original Turkish and for a German translation see Jäschke: Neues zur russisch-türkischen Freundschaft, 204-205. Also see Plaggenborg: Ordnung und Gewalt, 58.

12 Gökay: Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 15, 29. In 1928 the figures of the Bolshevik Generals Mikhail Frunze and Kliment Voroshilov were placed next to the leaders of the Turkish nationalist forces in the Republican memorial (Cumhuriyet Anıtı) on Istanbul Taksim square. Also see Plaggenborg: Ordnung und Gewalt, 23.

13 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv IV, HS 3158: Hans Human to Otto von Lossow, Neubabelsberg, February 21, 1920, 4.

> geographical and political circumstances are different and that the Turks can dare things which would be inappropriate and unsagacious with us.[14]

In these two letters to Lossow, the admiration for the Turkish nationalists by representatives of the German Right is clearly visible, a sentiment that was later used by Hans Tröbst. However, this private correspondence was also the reason why Otto von Lossow was reluctant to support the National Socialist movement in the autumn of 1923, when the commanding general of the Bavarian *Reichswehr* openly declared that the experiences from Anatolia were not applicable to Bavaria.

Regarding the Bolshevik-Turkish alliance, both sides were to benefit. In January 1921, the Turkish General Ali Fuat [Cebesoy] assisted in the crushing of the Kronstadt rebellion and, after contributing to Turkish efforts, esteem for the Bolsheviks rose in the South Russian regions with significant Muslim populations.[15] It should also be noted that Lenin tolerated the January 1921 Kemalist purge of Turkish communists. And in August 1922, Bolshevik forces killed Mustafa Kemal's political rival Enver Pasha in Tajikistan, who had joined the Basmaji rebellion there.[16] On the grounds of this advantageous cooperation, the Turkish nationalists and the Bolsheviks agreed on the course of the Caucasian border in the treaty of Kars in March 1921. For Lenin, this agreement settled the century-old conflict with the southern neighbor, which "will rid us of interminable war in the Caucasus."[17]

As assumed by the aforementioned German spectators, Mustafa Kemal was far from introducing elements of the Russian revolution to Turkey. In 1922, he declared in the Turkish National Assembly that "[…] we

14 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv IV, HS 3158: Güllner to Lossow, undated c. 1920, 2.

15 Spector: General Ali Fuat Cebesoy and the Kronstadt Revolt, 29.

16 Spector: General Ali Fuat Cebesoy and the Kronstadt Revolt, 24. On the relations of the former strong man of the Ottoman state and Mustafa Kemal see Sonyel: Mustafa Kemal and Enver in Conflict.

17 Quoted after Gökay: Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 30.

are neither Bolsheviks nor communists. We cannot be one or other. Because we are patriotic and respect our religion."[18] The patriotic spirit of the Turkish Nationalists was also attractive for Hans Tröbst, who was seeking an occupation after his participation in the Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch.

Tröbst's learnings: The Russian Civil War and Germany, 1919-1920

For Tröbst, his time in the Russian Civil War was a continuation of World War One, by other means and with extended objectives. One of his goals was the "punishment" of the Jewish population in Central Eastern Europe for its alleged guilt for the German defeat in 1918. Officially, the German occupation force in Eastern Europe had refrained from Anti-Semitism during the First World War. However, there had been an underlying resentment among German officers against the local Jewish population.[19] With regard to the growing anti-Semite sentiments among the German *Freikorps* fighters in the Baltic States (*Baltikumer*), the experience of unlimited warfare on the Western front of the Russian Civil War was to become a catalyst for violent measures:

> While freebooters arrived hoping to find an identity here, they were thrown into confusion and madness instead, as the mission in the east turned into a rampage, which changed the Baltikumer. They returned to Germany brutalized, scarred by a failure they could not accept or explain […]. Baltikumer identity, founded on violence directed against the East, confronted a threatening, overwhelming foreignness and met it with a ferocious, merciless kind of fighting, mirroring that of the natives. […] The Freikorps saw the East as a place with no limits, where the only order was violence.[20]

18 Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi: Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Vol 3, 51.

19 For the Polish case see: Lehnstaedt: Polen und Juden in der Wahrnehmung der Mittelmächte, 406-407.

20 Liulevicius: War Land on the Eastern Front, 228, 240, 243.

It will become evident from Tröbst's memoirs, spanning his time in the Iron Division of the Baltic states, that he was also affected by this madness of unlimited warfare. The time in the *Grenzschutz Ost* was not the only 'school of violence' for Hans Tröbst, yet this unit was already rated as a "wild band of soldiers […] like [in Friedrich Schiller's] Wallenstein's camp" by the former German naval attaché.[21] This was to be seconded only by the *Iron Division*,[22] Tröbst's next 'staging post'. In his memoirs, he incidentally referred to the violence he had witnessed during the brutal skirmishes in Latvia in 1919. After four years of war as a regular soldier, Tröbst had become a hard-bitten man. Nonetheless, the dry remarks in his memoirs are still shocking. When his unit took Bolshevik prisoners during the battle for Riga, Tröbst even volunteered to execute them together with his men. However this was only a foretaste of what he saw in the city:

> […] nearly in the twinkling of an eye a dithering human heap sprinkled with blood and inner organs laid in front of us. […] Everywhere in the streets the dead Bolsheviks were still lying around. Crossing the new built bridge over the Düna in impeccable marching order singing 'Deutschland über alles!' we went to the old city.[23]

In a similar vein, Tröbst had developed a radical Anti-Semite worldview. He did not hide his feelings, and this was only the initial stage of what he later formulated in Munich. Regarding the Jewish settlements in Latvia, Lithuania and northern Poland, he remarked long before his time in Anatolia:

> Pogrom and once more pogrom! That is the only solution for the Jewish question. Hopefully we will reach this solely cultural attitude [Kul-

21 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv IV, HS 3158, 3: Hans Human to Otto von Lossow, May 28, 1919. Human was absolutely right in his assumption. Also see the Schiller quotation in Tröbst: Soldatenblut, XI.

22 On the German participation in this front of the Russian Civil War see: Barth: Dolchstoßlegenden und politische Desintegration, 255-290.

23 Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost, position 1039.

> turstandpunkt] in Germany pretty soon. […] The whole nest was inhabited by Jews and one could see there such disgusting faces, that one could slap them for hours and hours.[24]

While the anti-Semitism in this front did not reach the dimensions of the Ukrainian theater of war, it is important to note here that "one must consider the pogroms of the Russian Civil War as precedents for the Holocaust."[25] The Freikorps captain accepted the rampant anti-Semitism among his fellow German soldiers as something unavoidable, and he even enjoyed violent excesses of that kind. When the Iron Division was disbanded and had to return to Germany, the farewell party escalated: "The situation became turbulent, when an artillery officer fired off a flare cartridge inside the pub and a big persecution of Jews started. Of course they caught the wrong guy."[26] For Tröbst, the killing of innocent people – a "refreshing incident"[27] – was one of the unavoidable circumstances of war. He also linked those acts of violence with short remarks depicting his sexual adventures. Tröbst, who at that time had already developed an addiction extending far beyond regular excessive drinking of alcohol, made a remark about one of his female amusements in the Polish town Leszno:

> She was versed in all fields: literature, art, music, adding to that extremely pervert, a morphine addict etc., absolutely my cup of tea. […] Noted by the way on Sunday I nearly would have died of a morphine poisoning, since the bitch had given me several strong injections.[28]

The mention of such an incident was part of the strategy in the writings of Freikorps fighters "to connect the acts of destruction with the acts of love and self-fornication."[29] The manner in which Tröbst and other Freikorps members approached the opposite sex was comparable to how they

24 Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost, position 1370.
25 Budnickij: Russian Jews between the Reds and the Whites, 274.
26 Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost, position 3616.
27 Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost, position 1018.
28 Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost, position 542.
29 Theweleit: Männerphantasien, 375.

captured enemy ground. For Tröbst, even Berlin was rated as a hostile environment, allowing the transfer of his experience in the Eastern theatre of war to his country of origin. When he was with the *Freikorps Erhardt* in the spring of 1920, Tröbst stated that he felt "like in Reval, or the entry to a conquered city"[30] during the putsch in Berlin. In those days, he did not miss the opportunity to hand out anti-Semite leaflets to his company.[31] It is therefore possible to conclude that Tröbst had acquired his violent fantasies before he was confronted with the post-genocidal realities of Anatolia.[32]

Hans Tröbst in Kemalist service, 1920-1923

As Tröbst had chosen the life of a freelance warrior, he found it acceptable to join a foreign army. He viewed it as another opportunity he had to seize:

> The main thing was always to be permitted to be part of the game. Now this was my third cockade that I was wearing in my life as a soldier. First the old holy black-white-red one, then the Russian one of the Awaloff-Bermondt army, and now the crescent with the star.[33]

In the Turkish army, his dreams came true; he was happy to be serving in the army again in the near future. While attending Turkish basic training in Kastamonu, he admitted that he had missed the atmosphere:

> Everything was like at home! The drills were according to German standards, and the voice tone of the Turkish commandos resembled ours so that one could [understand them without knowing Turkish].

30 Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost, position 4012.
31 For examples see the reproductions in Tröbst: Grenzschutz Ost.
32 Regarding the impact of the Russian Civil War experience on the Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch see also Kellogg: The Russian Roots of Nazism, 102-107.
33 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 149.

> […] For me this spectacle was a real refreshment, and in my mind I saw myself working in a similar environment.[34]

In the end, Tröbst's militant prayers for getting back to soldiering were answered and he received a position in the Kemalist army's corps of engineers. However, there had been some changes to the Great War's practices. For example, Tröbst remained a captain. The Turkish army no longer automatically promoted German officers, as this practice made Ottoman officers jealous during the 1914-1918 German-Ottoman alliance. In addition, Tröbst quickly realized that the methods applied by the German military mission were inapplicable to the Turkish recruits due to cultural differences.[35] Having no active command in Ankara, he spent most of his time smoking hashish. This waiting period was followed by a command behind the front, where a construction corps built reserve trenches for the case of a Greek advance. Tröbst was purposely not sent to the front line. His captivity could have caused political problems for Germany and would have challenged the national Turkish character of this 'war of independence', as it was later referred to.[36] Tröbst only had the right to give advice to the commanding Turkish officer, another Turkish lesson resulting from the unsuccessful German military mission during World War One.

Tröbst also remarked about the Turkish strictly abiding the engineering regulation, whereas the German officer was accustomed to grasping the 'spirit' of the written word and applying it accordingly. In addition, the Turkish army used some of the German prewar instructions, which had been outdated by war experience.[37] The Turkish officer's attitude towards the 'untrustworthy' Armenians and Greeks was reproduced by the German captain without much critique. These ideas seemed to fit the worldview developed during his experience with the German *Freikorps*;

34 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 131-132.

35 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 188, 154.

36 See this issue of the national myth in Turkey Gingeras: Gangsters, Kidnappers and Other Patriots.

37 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 175, 190.

the German captain, with his classical Greek education, replaced the Jews and the Bolsheviks with two new enemy groups.[38]

However, even in his life as a soldier of fortune, all 'good' things had to come to an end; after his last posting (in a railway regiment), his contract was dissolved due to the peace treaty in the summer of 1923. During his time in the Turkish service, Tröbst had come to a more realistic understanding of the difficulties of the past and present German-Turkish military cooperation. The German soldier had a disgust for the wartime practices of the German military mission. The Prussian way of military education had been doomed to fail:

> [The German instruction officer] did measure everything according to European standards, and he believed in making reforms everywhere in order to achieve records and performance. […] The typical Prussian 'military mind' ['Kommißkopf'] does not fit for foreign nations, it is only designed for the Prussian mind [Psyche].[39]

Therefore, according to Tröbst, the German side had to learn their lesson as a prerequisite for further cooperation with the Turkish army.[40] Tröbst was one of the first German officers who reflected critically on the German-Ottoman military cooperation of the past. His political orientation following the episodes in the Russian Civil War and the Greco-Turkish war was also quite clear, as he stated in the final remark of his memoirs about his supreme commander Mustafa Kemal: "The fate gave the country in the moment of severest hardship the man, […] that we [in Germany] also require and whom we are waiting for with consumptive fervor!"[41]

38 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 204-205.
39 Tröbst: Der deutsche Offizier und Soldat und die 'Neue Türkei', 156, 166.
40 Tröbst: Der deutsche Offizier und Soldat und die 'Neue Türkei', 167.
41 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 329.

Hans Tröbst's synthesis: Munich, autumn 1923

Meanwhile, there were no job opportunities for a soldier (of fortune) in Germany anymore, and the Reichswehr did not recruit participants of the Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch.[42] As the German foreign ministry was not interested in Tröbst's expertise, he had to look for other sources of income.[43] To save money, the returnee stayed with his brother in Munich, where he soon made contact with the local right wing extremists. After a presentation to the retired General Ludendorff regarding the Turkish conduct of war against Greece, Ludendorff invited Tröbst to publish an article series in the conservative *Heimatland* newspaper.[44] Tröbst used the opportunity to present the Turkish war and the imposed Treaty of Sèvres as an ideal model for the German resistance against the Treaty of Versailles. Tröbst made three very clear points. First, there was a need for a dictatorship in Germany to unite all forces, as Mustafa Kemal had refused to follow the orders of the Sultan's government in occupied Istanbul (in Tröbst's view equal to the German right wing opposition to the German government). Secondly, the 'non-native' population (i.e. the German citizens of Jewish religion) had to be expelled. Tröbst defined the Greeks and Armenians as "bloodsuckers and parasites," which had either been annihilated or deported by the Turkish authorities. Their houses were then handed to "ethnic compatriots" ("Volksgenossen") as part of the "purification of the racial corpus" ("Reinigung des Volkskörpers"). And finally, as in Turkey, a war against the exterior enemies should be waged, based on real volunteers and not unreliable drafted men.[45] With these points, Tröbst showed the merging of the former stages of his 'career' into his worldview. The army of the Turkish nationalist forces had been composed of conscripts

42 Gebhardt: Leben und Arbeit des Auslandskorrespondenten Hans Tröbst, 17.

43 See Hans Tröbst's unanswered letter to the German Foreign Ministry on August 10, 1923 offering to give insight to the Greco-Turkish war: Auswärtiges Amt – Politisches Archiv, R78561, n.p.

44 Gebhardt: Leben und Arbeit des Auslandskorrespondenten Hans Tröbst, 20.

45 For all quotations see the last article of the series in Tröbst: Mustafa Kemal Pascha und sein Werk, 7. Also see Ihrig: Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination, 82.

since 1920. The earlier Freikorps-like structure of the formerly paramilitary Turkish forces had thereby been transformed into a regular army.[46] Because of the long period of military mobilization, persisting in Turkey with only short interruptions since 1912, the ongoing war had caused widespread resistance, resulting in up to 48,000 deserters in April 1921. Therefore, contrary to the slack Ottoman practice, the Kemalist forces applied a strict policy of persecuting the military service evaders.[47] It is obvious that, regarding the question of composition of the armed forces, Tröbst did not refer to the Turkish model, but rather to his Freikorps experiences in Eastern Europe.

Tröbst's view was collectively formed by his impressions as a German former imperial soldier, his participation in the Freikorps movement – with its uninhibited use of violence in the Russian Civil War and Berlin, as well as his service in the Turkish army. In the latter case, he learned from the (previous) annihilation campaigns against the Armenians and Greeks. These impressions culminated in an article, written in the midst of a heated political situation in Munich in autumn of 1923. The captain from Ankara, with his notorious alcohol addiction, enjoyed listening to Adolf Hitler's "fascinating gift of oratory" in the crowded beer halls.[48] After the publication of his articles, he once met Adolf Hitler and was impressed by this energetic man "charged with electricity."[49] Hitler was mainly interested in Tröbst's Turkish experience. The Turkish nationalists had been able to renegotiate the Treaty of Sèvres in Lausanne and had founded the Turkish Republic – free of any foreign occupant forces – on October 29, 1923. The right wing groups gathered in Munich were fasci-

46 Üngör: Paramilitary Violence in the Collapsing Ottoman Empire, 182.

47 Alkan: İstiklal mahkemeleri, 23, 37.

48 For Tröbst's admiration for Hitler see Tröbst: Die Ereignisse in München, position 69. To read more on the Munich venues of the NS and Völkisch movement see also Meinl: Münchener Bierkeller als politische Orte 1919-1945, 118-121.

49 Also for the reproduction of Hitler's invitation letter cf. Tröbst: Die Ereignisse in München, position 16.

nated by the potential of this model. Mustafa Kemal and his war of liberations reached the status of a kind of German "hypernationalist pornography" in those days.[50]

Before his encounter with Hitler, Tröbst had paid his dues to the right wing circles with his officer rank from the imperial army and his activities in diverse *Freikorps* units. Therefore, it must be noted, that during his weeks in Munich, Tröbst followed the rationale from his time in the *Freikorps*. As a first step towards the revolution, he seriously considered raiding the homes of members of the Bavarian government. Dressed in fake police uniforms, he intended to kidnap or execute politicians with a squad selected from the right wing veteran organizations. However, he soon realized that an uprising was not promising at all; the Bavarian police and the local *Reichswehr* units would have been ready to suppress any attempt to overthrow the government. Finally, Tröbst received an unexpected blessing in disguise. He was sent to Berlin by the retired General Ludendorff for an urgent matter and arrived back in Munich the morning of November 9, 1923, when the putsch was close to failure.

Tröbst continued to write in favor of the failed putsch.[51] However in his memoirs, he professed to prefer a general of the caliber of Erich Ludendorff:

> We, Germans are no nation where you can do revolutions on command; therefore we are too clumsy. […] I do not consider Hitler as a leader [Führer] but a wonderful agitator who knows how to poach up the people deeply. He will and he has to be the trailblazer for an even bigger leader.[52]

Despite later disassociations with the National Socialist leadership, Hans Tröbst should be recognized as a notable contributor to the early NS movement's ideological formation, especially in terms of the proposed policy against minority groups in the German society. However, it would

50 Ihrig: Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination, 11.
51 Ihrig: Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination, 98-100.
52 Tröbst: Die Ereignisse in München, position 856.

be wrong to overstate the share of Tröbst's Turkish experience in this regard. In this context, it is important to note that other members of the early NS movement had backgrounds similar to that of Tröbst. A noticeable number of right-wing Baltic Germans were sympathetic to the early NS movement – Tröbst himself was married to a baroness from that region.[53] Later, during Hitler's dictatorship, they were to take important positions. For Hans Tröbst and Max von Scheubner-Richter, who had both been to Anatolia, participated in the Russian Civil War, and been involved in the Hitler putsch, it was the experience of violence in the Russian Civil War, combined with the political developments in Germany, that generated this type of extremist mentality.[54]

Conclusion

It has previously been shown that "there is evidence that the massacre of the Ottoman Armenians helped persuade the Nazis that national minorities posed a threat to empires dominated by an ethnic group such as the Germans or Turks."[55] However, in the case of Hans Tröbst, this evidence alone is not convincing.[56] We must also consider other influences. It is obvious that the German Freikorps experience during the Russian Civil War (1919-1920) had profound repercussions for future German policy

53 Tröbst: Soldatenblut, 310.

54 Scheubner-Richter's Ottoman experiences are mentioned by Ihrig, whereas his activities in the Baltic region in 1919/20 are neglected. See Ihrig: Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination, 103. However, Scheubner-Richter had, like Tröbst, fought as a Freikorps member in the Baltics. On Scheubner-Richter and the influential NS ideologue Alfred Rosenberg's Russian Civil War experiences see both Baur: Die Revolution und 'Die Weisen von Zion' and Kellogg: The Russian Roots of Nazism, 41-42, 80-83.

55 Travis: Did the Armenian Genocide Inspire Hitler?, 27.

56 As in the case of the conclusion, that German National Socialists who had served in the Ottoman army must have learned the extermination policy applied there later and nowhere else. See Travis: Did the Armenian Genocide Inspire Hitler?, 33- 35. Also see Ihrig: Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination, 179-181.

in Central and Eastern Europe after 1939.[57] This practice of unlimited violence, visible in the memoirs of Hans Tröbst, belonged to his sum of experiences before joining the Turkish nationalist army. His praise for the Turkish authoritarian rule during the war against Greece was in accordance with the events in Turkey.[58] However, this cannot conceal the fact that his writings in Munich actually referred to another conflict, namely the Russian Civil War. During this conflict Tröbst's political ideas were shaped, and he appropriated his radical approach towards the Jewish population. Therefore, his article series from November 1923 should be read as a synthesis of his experiences as a soldier of fortune, bearing the 'Turkish garb'. This presentation was much more attractive for the Munich right wing and National Socialist movement than the experiences of the Russian Civil War in the autumn of 1923.

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57 Liulevicius: War Land on the Eastern Front, 266-272.

58 For this policy see Alkan: İstiklal mahkemeleri, 50-51.

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Tatiana Linkhoeva

The Russian Revolution and the Japanese Debates on the "Bolshevization" of Asia during the Foreign Intervention, 1917–1925

By any measure, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the most crucial event in the twentieth century. It created the most formidable organized revolutionary movement and imposed its style of revolution on the rest of the world's radicals as the only correct one. The Russian Revolution exposed a new factor in the domestic and international political order: the power of ideas, or ideology. It gave a harsher, redder meaning to the Left and, in response, radicalized the Right. The Russian Revolution took a distinctive character in the non-European world: it not only merged socialism and revolution, but also anti-capitalist with anti-imperialist struggles. Geopolitically, post-revolutionary turmoil created power vacuums in both the western and eastern frontiers of the former Russian empire, which neighboring countries, including Imperial Japan, duly exploited. The history of the Russian Revolution therefore necessarily includes the story of how, in the process of regaining its geopolitical pre-eminence in Europe and Asia, Soviet Russia transformed the meaning of Marxism and communism for people inhabiting those territories.[1]

It is probably safe to say that it was in East Asia where the ideas of the Russian Revolution had the longest repercussions, and it was here where Russian communists were the most successful. Mongolia, China, Vietnam, and North Korea are obvious examples. However, the success of Russian communism in the interwar period in East Asia must be investigated vis-à-vis Russian and Asian leftist radicals' struggle with the dominant power in the region, Imperial Japan. Japan was a major threat to the survival of the Soviet state and the world proletarian revolution, and the struggle against Japanese imperialism became the main objective of Russian communists and Asian radicals. In 1917, Japan was the only Asian empire, and it already formally incorporated Taiwan (1895) and Korea

1 On the global impact of the Russian Revolution in the twentieth century, see Hobsbawm: The Age of Extremes.

(1910) and enforced aggressive policies in Northeast China and the Russian Far East. After the collapse of Tsarist Russia, Japan took advantage of the power vacuum in East Asia and, nominally under the auspices of the Allied Intervention to contain the Bolshevik Revolution, deployed considerable armed forces to the Russian Far East, Eastern Siberia, and Northern Manchuria between January 1918 and 1925. Japan's direct interference in the Russian Revolution and its efforts to expand its colonial control in the region, both formal and informal, set in motion a chain of events that had profound repercussions for the prewar history of East Asia.[2] Coupled with the bitter memory of the loss in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, the Intervention antagonized the Russians against Japan, and the mutual feeling of distrust shaped Japanese-Soviet relations from then on. More importantly, the Russian Revolution and the Japanese Intervention sparked a national liberation struggle among people inhabiting those territories (Russians, Siberian native people, Mongols, Koreans, and Chinese), aimed against the Japanese Empire.[3]

Domestically, the Russian Revolution provoked a debate among the general public in Japan on the relative merits of socialism and capitalism in resolving economic, political, and social problems. As a late-developing empire, Japan experienced rapid industrialization and development of its capitalist system. During World War One, as Japanese business penetrated Asian markets, the pace of industrialization and urbanization accelerated. The price for the high growth rate was, however, growing pauperization of the population, which was followed by widespread social unrest. Peasant discontent surged during the epochal Rice Riots of 1918, which involved over one million people. Workers were organizing and radicalizing, staging an increasing number of strikes and walkouts. From 1914 to 1919, the labor force increased from 850,000 workers in 17,000 plants to approximately 1,800,000 in 44,000. There were four labor unions

2 For a more detailed discussion of the Siberian Intervention, see Morley: The Japanese Thrust into Siberia; Dunscomb: Japan's Siberian Intervention.

3 On the impact of the October Revolution in the Russian Far East and Japan's interference into the local politics, see Stephan: The Russian Far East. On the early Bolshevik policies in China, see Whiting: Soviet Policies in China; Lee: Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria.

in 1915, fourteen in 1917, and 71 in 1919.[4] Grievances against capitalism had already existed in Japan before the arrival of communist ideas. But it was under the impact of the Russian Revolution that socialism began to be seriously considered as a solution to current economic problems, or as an alternative to capitalism.

As a result of foreign and domestic upheavals, Imperial Japan developed its own sort of anticommunism, which was quite different in its substance and causes from the anticommunism of the United States and Western Europe. Anticommunism in the United States was influenced by the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and was the most coherent, virulent, and enduring "moral crusade," despite the fact that there was no significant Communist presence.[5] In Imperial Japan, I argue, anticommunism was a highly contingent and historically situated occurrence rather than an instance of a general anti-radical tendency in Japanese politics and society. The long-standing competition between Imperial Russia, later the Soviet Union, and Japan for the spheres of influence in East Asia profoundly shaped the way the Russian Revolution was perceived in Japan. I attribute Japan's imperial anticommunism as it was formulated by the Foreign Ministry, the Army, and party politicians to the Russian Revolution's incursion into the borders of the Japanese Empire—an incursion that, as I argue, prompted the Japanese government to wage a crusade against communism in the name of imperial interests.[6]

I have traced the emergence of Japanese anticommunism to the little-known clash in the Russian Far East, eastern Siberia and north Manchuria between the Russian Bolsheviks, the Japanese Army, and the Korean and Chinese national liberation fighters during the Japanese Intervention in the Russian Revolution in 1918-1925. Japanese anticommunism, I

4 In addition to factory workers, about 450,000 men were employed in mines. There were 50 disputes and strikes in 1914, involving 8,000 workers, and 497 in 1919, involving 63,000 workers. Cf. Beckmann / Okubo: The Japanese Communist Party, 16–24.

5 Cf. Goldstein: Little 'Red Scares'

6 See Linkhoeva: Revolution Goes East. Imperial Japan and Soviet Com-munism.

demonstrate, was formulated by the high-ranking members of the military, some interest groups within the government, and nationalistic members of the educated public. The notion of the "Soviet threat," or "Bolshevization" of Asia, was a potent self-reproducing construction and provided a viable rationale for the Japanese empire to sustain and expand. Between two world wars the military, the civilian politicians, various advocacy groups, think-tank organizations, and right-wing associations reproduced it regularly to satisfy their own institutional interests and ambitions on the Asian continent.

The Japanese Intervention

With the October Revolution, the balance of power in East Asia was broken, and the Japanese fixed their interest on the territories formerly under Russian influence – including Siberia, Manchuria, and Inner Mongolia – as well as on the opportunity to exert more control over Chinese domestic politics. Japan's Siberian Intervention, as it is known in Japan, was formally part of a broader international effort to contain the Bolshevik revolution and maintain the eastern front against Germany. The Allied Intervention was the first multi-national military intervention in modern history and involved four Great Powers: Britain, France, Japan, and the United States. Britain and the United States also deployed their troops in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, the northwestern part of Russia, in March and August 1918, respectively, to protect military supply, which was in danger of being cut off by German-supported Finnish forces. Between 1917 and 1922, approximately 125,000 soldiers belonging to armies from ten countries deployed to Siberia and the Russian Far East as part of the Allied intervention. Despite agreement among the Allied Intervention forces on limiting the total number of troops to seven thousand, and in opposition to the cabinet and the Privy Council in Japan, the Army General Staff asserted the "right of supreme command" and launched a full scale assault, deploying more than seventy-two thousand troops (one-third of all of Japan's active service troops) to Vladivostok and the Trans-

Baikal region.[7] By the end of October 1918, the Japanese army occupied the region between Irkutsk and Vladivostok along the Trans-Siberian Railroad line and the city of Nikolaevsk at the mouth of the Amur River (some 1,600 km north of Vladivostok), in addition to deploying 60,000 troops to northern Manchuria.[8] Japan was also given command of Allied troops in Siberia.[9]

The official reason to intervene was to maintain the eastern front against Germany and rescue some 30–50,000 former Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, known as the Czechoslovak Legion, who had been marooned in Russia by the revolution before gaining recognition as an official Allied army. During its transportation to the port of Vladivostok, the prisoners of war revolted and seized control of a 7,000-km stretch of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. However, it is safe to say that Japanese policymakers were neither seriously preoccupied with the German threat in the East nor cared much about the evacuation of the Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war.[10] The Bolshevik advance into the Russian Far East prompted the Japanese government to react swiftly. After the establishment of the Soviet rule in Vladivostok in January 1918, the Japanese government authorized the dispatch of two battleships to Vladivostok port to protect Japanese residents and businesses. The Navy, however, was prohibited from engaging in any further actions. After the murder of some Japanese residents by a Russian mob (the Soviet historians argued that the murders were provocations masterminded by the Japanese General Staff), in April,

7 Smith: Vladivostok Under Red and White Rule.

8 Wolff: Open Jaw.

9 The British also dispatched troops to Central Asia, fearing the Turks' advance through Afghanistan to India. The French in Ukraine withdrew their forces in early 1919 without any fighting. Classic studies on the Allied Intervention include White: The Siberian Intervention; Kennan: The Decision to Intervene; Ullman: Intervention and the War; Maddox: The Unknown War with Russia; Connaughton: The Republic of the Ushakovka.

10 Classic studies on the Siberian Intervention in Japanese include Hosoya: Shiberia shuppei no shiteki kenkyū; Hosoya: Nihon gaikō no kiseki; Teruyuki: Shiberia Shuppei. For a useful review of Hara Teruyuki's study, see Stephan: Shiberia Shuppei. In English, see Morley: The Japanese Thrust into Siberia, though it focuses only on the first period of the Intervention.

1918, the marines landed in Vladivostok and occupied the city. The General Staff pressed for further intervention, but both the Army and Navy ministries and the Cabinet rejected the proposal, giving stern instructions to the Consulate in Vladivostok not to interfere in Russian domestic affairs. The landing, however, made a huge impact on the Russian population, spurring nationalist feelings and strong anti-Japanese sentiments. In turn, the Bolsheviks were skillful in manipulating the public's fear of Japanese invasion, soon eliminating competition from other leftist factions and establishing an exclusive Bolshevik authority in the Far East. In Japan, for a while, the government managed to keep control of the General Staff, which steered clear of implementing their plans in Siberia. The situation changed completely once the United States decided to intervene and invited Japan to undertake joint armed intervention.[11] Woodrow Wilson's decision enabled the General Staff, the Army, and the Foreign Ministry to proceed with their own agenda to expand Japan's political and economic power in northeast Asia and the Russian Far East.

The Japanese official statement at the start of the military intervention in Russia from August 1918 promised a withdrawal once the order in the Russian Far East was restored and renounced any desire to infringe on Russian territorial sovereignty and Russian internal affairs. Notably, there was no actual enemy identified and no "threat of Bolshevism" mentioned. Thus, it is safe to say that, initially, the Siberian Expedition was not envisioned as anti-Communist counterrevolution. Instead, the Japanese military and the government looked forward to new opportunities for realizing long-cherished plans for control over Northeast Asia. Early in 1918, General Tanaka Gi'ichi, prime minister of Japan in 1927-1929, proposed the creation of an independent Siberian state free from Communism, which would flourish economically through an alliance with Japan.[12] The

11 Kennan: Russia Leaves the War, 484.

12 The Japanese government initiated a Japanese yen area in northeast Asia by issuing and circulating banknotes of the Bank of Chosen (the central bank of Japanese colonial Korea) and gold-backed Japanese military notes in Manchuria, Siberia, and the Russian Far East. The Bank had nine branches and offices in Siberia and its currency was favored by the locals over the discred-

Japanese general staff was convinced that the establishment of a Siberian republic would increase pressure on China to accept Japanese economic and strategic influence in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.[13] Considering that Finland, Poland, and the Baltic states gained independence after the Russian Revolution, such plans were, it seemed to them, not unrealistic. With this aim, the Army undertook every effort to set up a puppet government headed by the Cossack Ataman Grigory Semyonov (1890-1946). Even in 1920, when it was clear that the Bolsheviks were getting the upper hand in the Russian Civil War and that the Japanese Army failed to achieve any significant success, General Tanaka had not completely abandoned his idea of creating an "independent" puppet state. Tanaka's ideas thus foreshadowed the later concept of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" (1940), which was meant to replace European imperialism and liberate Asia under the Japanese leadership. In reality, the concept was aimed at empowering and enriching Japan at the expense of its Asian neighbors. The idea of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" was already being entertained, I argue, during the Siberian Intervention.[14]

By summer 1920, the Allied operation, aimed at replacing Lenin's Bolshevik government with a White Russian administration more sympathetic to Allied interests, had failed. The failure reflected domestic opposition to the Intervention in Allied capitals, divisions among the Allies and the White Russians, and a robust partisan guerilla insurgency. The Allies pursued a confused and inconsistent policy in Siberia, hampered by serious internal rivalries. By November 1920, all foreign troops except the Japanese withdrew from Russian territories. The Japanese, however, did not

ited Russian currency. It was used for tax payments in the Far Eastern Republic (1920-1922) and subsequently in Soviet Russia. Around four percent of the Bank notes issued were to be found in Siberia by the end of 1921 and 17 percent of the Bank's total lending was in Manchuria and Siberia by the end of 1924. The Vladivostok branch of the Bank operated until 1930. Eighty percent of the trade that passed through the port of Vladivostok was handled by Japanese trading firms. See Ono: The Siberian Intervention and Japanese Society.

13 Humphreys: The Way of the Heavenly Sword, 26.

14 Hara: The Occupation of Northern Sakhalin, 61.

plan to leave. In 1920, they came up with a new reason to stay in the Russian territory. In a memorandum to the United States Department of State on February 3, 1920, as well as in an official announcement on March 31, the Japanese government explained that political conditions in the Russian Far East gravely affected affairs in Korea and Manchuria, and that this was the main reason that Japan could not withdraw its troops immediately. The Japanese Army in Siberia needed to defend the Japanese empire, by which they meant territory of Manchuria and Korea, from Bolshevism, specifically from Communist Koreans and Chinese.[15] The Japanese would use the same excuse in 1922 and remain in South Manchuria.

How much was the Bolshevik threat a matter of genuine concern and to what degree was it an outcome of manipulation and propaganda by the military? There is no doubt that the Japanese colonial administration was gravely concerned about the intensifying and violent anti-Japanese activities of radicalized Koreans in the early 1920s. The landing of Japanese troops in Vladivostok in April 1918 pushed the Korean communities in Russia to pledge support to the Soviet government in the hopes that it would restore Korea's national independence. Aspirations for both social and national independence revolutions among the Koreans in Russia resulted in creation of a Korean section of the Irkutsk Communist Party in January 1918 and the Korean Socialist Party in Khabarovsk in June 1918. Finally, it was again a Korean from Vladivostok who initiated the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai in August 1919. The March First Independence Movement of 1919 in Korea, which saw thousands of unarmed Koreans confronting the Japanese colonial police in demonstrations for independence, caused a stir in the Russian Far East and, as a result, in 1920, an independent Korean government was proclaimed in Khabarovsk. Moderate Koreans organized meetings and demonstrations in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok but were suppressed by the White authorities, often at the request of the Japanese expeditionary administration.[16] More radical Koreans organized guerilla groups in early 1919 and conducted anti-Japanese operations on Russian and Korean territory, quickly retreating either to the Chinese territory in Manchuria or

15 Cf. Kobayashi: Nisso seiji gaikōshi.

16 Cf. Popov: Oni s nami srazhalis' za vlast' Sovetov.

back to the Russian Far East. Many Korean political exiles returned to Korea from Russia to participate in the national liberation movement. The Japanese military authorities in Korea reported that armed Koreans were coming from Russian territory into Manchuria. On one occasion in 1920, "certain Koreans who were in collusion with the Bolsheviks had actually attempted an armed invasion of the Korean border and burned a Japanese Consulate." The situation worsened in 1920, and there were rumors that an armed invasion of Korea under the leadership of Russian Bolsheviks was underway.[17] It was also Koreans who were sent first to Japan in 1919 and 1920 by the Comintern to establish contact with Japanese socialists. Because Koreans were subjects of the Japanese empire, it was relatively easy for them to cross borders of China, Russia, Korea, and Japan, and they were ideal for the Asia-wide Comintern-led clandestine activities.[18]

The Korean movement came as a shock to both the ruling elite and the general population in Japan, all the more so because the Koreans had been portrayed as a people incapable of revolting and organizing. The Japanese military and the press, however, downplayed the nationalist moment and treated it as the result of Russian Bolshevik manipulation. Nevertheless, anticommunism rhetoric developed in Japan at this point in 1920, when Bolshevism began to spill out of Russia into China and Korea, challenging Japanese imperial dominance in the region.

Besides the threat to the stability of the empire from radicalized Korean and Chinese nationals, the Japanese ruling political and military elite was wary about Japanese soldiers finding themselves in the midst of radical Russia. The army carefully monitored the attitudes of soldiers and was concerned that they would sympathize with the Russian Bolsheviks – all

17 Seoul Press reported on October 2, 1920, that 300-400 Koreans, allegedly under the leadership of a Russian, attacked and burnt the Japanese embassy in the town of Hunchun in North Manchuria. In a matter of days, Chinese soldiers joined the rioters and attacked the Japanese and the Japanese embassy again. Japanese officials insisted that the rioters were Korean Bolshevik partisans and included 50 Russians. Eventually, the wave of protests spread around the whole of North Manchuria, with 40,000 people involved. See Pak: Koreytsy v Sovetskoy Rossii, 73-93; Lee: Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria.

18 Cf. Esselstrom: Rethinking the Colonial Conquest of Manchuria.

the more so because the Japanese Army command had conducted extensive research on the radicalization of the Russian and German Imperial Armies, and the crucial role that mutinied soldiers played in the Russian and German Revolutions. The army command in Siberia controlled which books and periodicals were sent to soldiers from Japan and prohibited the distribution of the progressive magazines. Numerous cases of low morale, evasion, and insubordination were documented in official military reports from Siberia and in soldiers' personal diaries. Despite this vigilance, there were quite a few acts of insubordination. Many new conscripts refused to read the oath of loyalty to the army and some even mutinied against their superiors. Those who complained were often branded as "socialists." There were also many documented cases of Japanese Army deserters joining the Russian Red Army or Korean guerilla groups. The fear of internal subversion, be it among rank-and-file soldiers or colonial radicals, would never leave, prompting the Japanese ruling elite and the general public to address the issue of the meaning of Bolshevism and its imagined or real dangers.

Domestic Debates

Because of Japan's engagement with the Russian Revolution, a lively debate over the meaning of the Revolution and merits of socialism took place in the Japanese public sphere. In July 1919, the magazine *Roshia hihyō* (*The Russian Review*) asked several leading journalists, university professors, and army officers about the possibility of the Bolshevization of Asia and Japan, in particular. Their opinion pieces show how undecided the educated Japanese were about the causes and goals of the Russian Revolution. Aoki Seiichi, a member of the powerful Association of Veterans, described how he went to Siberia a year earlier and was horrified at the army's demoralization. Japanese soldiers, he asserted, were becoming very susceptible to Bolshevik ideas amidst the chaotic environment. Aoki insisted that Bolshevism was a threat to the Japanese empire, as the Korean uprising was masterminded by the Siberian Bolsheviks, who instigated anti-Japanese Koreans in Siberia. The Chinese uprising and the rise of the

anti-Japanese movement in China were also the result of the Bolshevization of the East Asian region. He saw a difference between socialism, which dealt with social problems, and Bolshevism, which was socially destructive and anti-national. Ultimately, he argued that Bolshevism was part of the Jewish conspiracy to overtake the world.[19]

Another contributor, the journalist Murobuse Kōshin, doubted the influence of Bolshevism in Japan but, like Aoki, pointed out that the military in Siberia had been strongly drawn to Bolshevism. The success of Bolshevism in Russia, he emphasized, was due to the Bolshevization of Russian soldiers. Bolshevism appealed to the Japanese soldiers as well, and thus the common Japanese eventually could be drawn into Bolshevism, too. He also pointed out that, unlike Japanese soldiers, American soldiers in Siberia were not interested in Bolshevism. This difference, he claimed, was due to the relative lack of political freedoms in Japan; the more the Japanese government denied civic freedoms to its people, the greater the possibility of Bolshevization of young people and workers.[20]

The journalist Ōba Kakō also argued that Bolshevist ideas were popular in Japan, citing the many popular magazines that dedicated an increasing number of issues to Marxism and the translations of main Marxist thinkers that sold out immediately. He also pointed out that the Japanese cooled towards the "democracy" movement because of Bolshevik ideas. Ōba noted that Communist propaganda had nothing to do with this popularity. As Bolshevism advocated liberation, equality, and cooperation, it was only natural that it would become popular among Japanese soldiers

19 Seiichi: Shakai seikatsu no kekkan ni yotte, 134–35. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion was introduced to Japan during the Siberian Intervention, first by an early graduate of the Russian Orthodox Nikolai seminary in Tokyo and the Theological Seminary in Saint Petersburg, Higuchi Tsuyanosuke (1870-1931), who was a professor of the Russian language in the army during the Intervention. In 1921, Higuchi published his collected lectures under the title Yudayaka (The Jewish Peril), thus coining the Japanese term. Shiōten Nobutaka, military staff in Vladivostok during the Intervention, was the first Japanese language translator of the Protocols. Goodman / Miyazawa: Jews in the Japanese Mind, 81.

20 Murobose: Kageki shisō to Nihon, 138–139.

and workers.[21] Ōba Kakō's fate, however, was tragic. In late 1921, he went to Russia as a journalist but was arrested in Chita on suspicion of being a Japanese spy. Very little is known about what happened to him, but he was most likely executed around 1924 in Siberia.

Kemuyama Sentarō, a historian of Russian anarchism, expressed his doubts as to whether Bolshevism or socialism were properly understood in Japan, and if anyone could talk about their influence at all. Bolshevism, he wrote, was a Russian phenomenon based on the peculiar Russian history and the "self-destructive character" of its people. Although there was no doubt that Russian proletarian absolutism shook the "world capitalists and aristocracy" with its radical ideas and actions, the situation in industrialized and advanced Japan was inopportune for a Bolshevik revolution. However, he warned, as the Japanese were "impressionable people and have a tendency to run from one extreme to another," the government should be watchful.[22]

Those few in the minority who denied the possibility of the Bolshevization of Japan maintained that there was no organized Japanese working class that could struggle to take political power. The liberal Kayahara Kazan dismissed Japanese workers as timid and ashamed of their status as workers. He also pointed out that socialist and Bolshevik ideas were popular among university professors and students, who were too infantile to translate their ideas into an actual political movement. The "socialist craze" in Japan, Kayahara concluded, would only "confuse already confused minds, make more anxious already anxious people." He called on the government, which, he acknowledged, had been "defining education, morals, and the philosophy of its people," to step up and create a new ideological framework for the national polity.[23]

All the distinguished participants of the debate, although in disagreement as to the degree of influence and desirability Bolshevism exercised in Japan, did agree that the government and the ruling elite should take some preventive measures, from keeping an eye on the Russian Jewish

21 Ōba: Kagekihashugi to minshūshugi, 136–137.

22 Kemuyama: Raido wo itashimeyo, 135.

23 Kayahara: Konton yori konton he, 137–138.

communities in Japan (Aoki Seiichi) to establishing a domestic democratic system (Murobuse Kōshin). Notably, it was Kayahara Kazan, a leader of the interwar "democracy" movement that struggled for the extension of voting rights to a broader population, who urged the government to develop a stronger national ideological framework and tighten police control over internal subversive elements.

In general, the Japanese public did not perceive the Russian Revolution as an epoch-making event, nor did they believe it had launched a new international order. The events in Russia were seen as internal affairs, with little relevance to Japanese society. On the eve of 1917, the idea that Russia was feudal and backward, lagging far behind Japan, was firmly established in the minds of the Japanese public. This understanding shaped interpretations of the February and October Revolutions. Having said that, we should stress that the pressure of Bolshevik ideology was not absolutely ignored, especially by party politicians. The Great War and immediate post-war developments made Japanese politicians aware of the power that ideas and ideology could exert. In Japan, the Russian Revolution coincided with the movement for universal suffrage that united students, professors, journalists, women, and labor unions. Japanese liberals used the events in Russia to demand the extension of political, social, and civil rights to a broader population. The year 1918 had historic meaning for every Japanese person: it marked 30 years since the establishment of constitutional and democratic order in Japan, which, an increasing number of the Japanese thought, endured not because of but despite bureaucracy. The Russian Revolution was seen through the prism of their own fight with Japanese bureaucracy, political oligarchy, and military. In turn, the military's concern over the "Bolshevization" of Japanese soldiers in Siberia was rather more about the soldiers' and low-rank officers' support of democratic movements back home. The officials also saw Bolshevism as part of the evolving international democratic movement, a more extreme version of popular protest. Party politicians and conservative intellectuals recognized that democratic changes, part of "the trend of the world," must be included in domestic and foreign policy in order to counter the rise of domestic labor disputes, international socialism, and Chinese nationalism.

In Lieu of Conclusion

The Japanese ruling elite were aware of the ideological threat Russian communism posed, especially the notion of class struggle, world communist revolution, anti-imperialism, and, since the 1930s, demands to topple the Japanese monarchy. But it was not a coincidence that anticommunist propaganda intensified when the Russian Revolution spilled into the borderlands of Japan's Empire, recruiting Korean and Chinese national liberation fighters, and again later when the Japanese military committed to the occupation of Manchuria in the early 1930s. The Japanese were less concerned with how communism would affect the Japanese nation, but rather with how anti-imperialist struggle of imperial subjects could destabilize their empire and thwart their plans for Manchuria.

In the 1930s, the rhetoric of communist ideological threat became common. General Araki Sadao (1877-1966), one-time Minister of War and a veteran of the Siberian Intervention, likened the spread of Bolshevism in Asia to that of tuberculosis in the human organ. Araki declared it was Japan's mission to keep Bolshevism out of East Asia and to protect the rest of the "moral" world from the Red terror. Japan's confrontation with the Soviet Union was an act on behalf of "mankind and civilization." Not surprisingly, he was one of the authors of the doctrine of Northern Expansion, which proposed at attack on the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. But, even in Araki's statement of ideological threat of Russian communism, the primary concern was geopolitical rivalry. Araki maintained that foreign policy of Soviet Russia was not different from Tsarist policy:

> It is only the interior constitution that has changed in Russia. The USSR is an active volcano spouting its lava to any direction where there is the least resistance. The USSR, just like in old days Tsarist Russia, will maintain its offensive character.[24]

Based on the same geopolitical concern, pro-Army career diplomat Shiratori Toshio advocated war with the USSR to remove the possibility of a

24 Lensen: The Damned Inheritance, 480–483.

"future calamity." He judged that this was an opportune moment for Japan to act because the Russians were "comparatively impotent" at the time, other powers were preoccupied with the world depression, and anticommunist feelings were still strong in the United States and Europe, both of which would support Japan's "crusade against the Reds."[25] At the same time, Japan's policymakers understood the usefulness of having "Red Russia" around. On July 29, 1933, Tani Masayuki, chief of the Asia Bureau of the Foreign Office, wrote:

> It seems advantageous for Japan, from the standpoint of foreign policy, to leave Russia as Red Russia. If it changes to White Russia, the sympathies of the European powers would all be transferred to Russia. It is advisable, in view of Japan's position, for Russia to be hated to a certain degree.[26]

Much of anti-Bolshevik or anti-communist rhetoric was a convenient way for the Japanese imperial government and the army to gain public support for the imperial project on the continent, to justify their actions, and to gain support of the foreign powers. When attempts to expand Japan's informal empire in Siberia and the Russian Far East failed, the Japanese focused on solidifying its control over Manchuria. When the full scale invasion and occupation of Manchuria was opposed by Western powers, Britain and the United States specifically, the military revived the rhetoric of anticommunism, which became an integral part of the government's and military's efforts to mobilize domestic and international support. The "Soviet threat" was such a convenient, self-reproducing construction that nothing the Soviet Union did, or might reasonably have done, could have dislodged this conviction.

25 Lensen: The Damned Inheritance, 373-374.

26 Lensen: The Damned Inheritance, 482.

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Yoshiro Ikeda

Time and the Comintern: Rethinking the Cultural Impact of the Russian Revolution on Japanese Intellectuals

The Bolshevik timeline and Japan

The Bolsheviks were time-oriented revolutionaries. Both before and after the October Revolution, they devoted much attention to the notion of time and history. Elaborating Karl Marx's understanding of world history in a more systematic manner, they conceptualized an escalating timeline, which was composed of a series of stages such as feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and so on. Based on this timeline, the Bolsheviks gave a political and economic evaluation of Russia and other countries, allocating each society to some stage of human history.[1]

One of the advantages of the Bolshevik timeline was that it depended on European history, which was then considered to be universal by many intellectuals around the globe. Accordingly, those who lived in non-European, that is, semi-peripheral or peripheral corners of the globe, could interpret the history of their own society as part of something universal with the help of this timeline, and could try to promote the pace of transformation of their homeland towards a more "civilized" stage, and even try to skip over some stages to catch up with Europe.

The fact that such a specific understanding of time and history was promoted in Russia reflected a trend of world history in the early twentieth century. Caused by the First World War, this trend was the eclipse of European hegemony over the other parts of the globe and the rise of new actors eager to remold the world order. As an epicenter of this global trend, Soviet Russia tried to propagate its own interpretation of world history. And, in March 1919, it established an apparatus with which to institutionalize their concept of history, namely the Comintern.

1 On the importance of time for the Soviet regime, see Hanson: Time and Revolution.

At the same time, in the Far East, Japan appeared as a challenge to the vacillating European hegemony. During the 1920s, the ruling elite of Japan remained rather modest in carrying out reforms modeled on the modern European path. But for those Japanese intellectuals who jealously hoped to reconstruct their country in a more radical manner, the Russian Revolution in general and the Bolshevik Revolution in particular seemed quite attractive, and the escalating concept of timeline propagated by the Comintern found resonance among many Japanese leftists in the early 1920s, as it provided them with an authoritative roadmap towards a social revolution. Here, I would like to trace the basic development of interrelations between Soviet Russia and the Comintern on the one hand, and leftist intellectuals of Japan on the other, with special attention paid to the role played by the Bolshevik concept of world history.

1920s

The uniqueness of Japan as a once "backward" country that had steeply accomplished modernization deeply affected the way the Bolsheviks reflected on Japan's position in their multi-stage timeline. As was to be expected, the focal point was how to evaluate the relationship between feudal elements and modern elements in Japanese history after the regime change of 1868, known as the Meiji revolution. During the 1920s, the modern elements remained dominant in the Bolshevik view of Japan. In part, their evaluation of Japan was influenced by the political conjunction of that time. Especially in the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks linked their estimation of Japan with their hope of world revolution. In July 1920, at the Second Congress of the Comintern in Moscow, Karl Radek made a typical remark:

> Comrade Lenin has pointed out that there is no theoretical necessity for every nationality to pass through the stage of capitalism. All the people who today are capitalists have not come to capitalism through

> the stage of manufacture. Japan passed straight from feudal conditions to a culture of imperialism.[2]

Following Radek, Hendricus Maring, a major activist in the Dutch East Indies, also mentioned that "the capitalist development can be bypassed in the colonies. Just as Comrade Radek showed that the development of Japan was different from that in Europe, so too can the colonies develop in a different way."[3]

In a similar vein, high evaluation was given to the ripeness of Japan for a social revolution at the First Congress of the Revolutionary Organizations of the Far East, which was held in Moscow and Petrograd in January–February, 1922. Targeting the Washington Conference (November 1921–February 1922), this congress was originally planned to be convened in Irkutsk in November 1921, following the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East, which had taken place in September of the previous year. Among the participants of the Far East Congress, there were sixteen Japanese from Japan and the US, including both communists and anarchists. After returning home, some of these activists took the initiative to establish the then-illegal Communist Party of Japan (JCP) in July 1922.[4] Emboldened by the attendance of comrades from Japan, and especially by the exaggerated information they provided about the rising tide of social movement there, G. E. Zinoviev, the head of the Comintern, stated in his keynote speech that

> the key to the solution of the Far Eastern question [of the anti-imperialist struggle – Y. I.]is in the hands of Japan. Marx has said that, without a revolution in England, any European revolution would just amount to but a storm in a teacup. Well, mutatis mutandis the same

2 Second Congress of the Communist International, 129.
3 Second Congress of the Communist International, 154.
4 Adibekov / Vada (eds.): VKP (b), Komintern i Yaponiya, 224-225.

> may be said of the Japanese revolution, without which any other revolution in the Far East would be but a local event comparatively unimportant.[5]

So, G. E. Zinoviev allocated Japan an honorable place in the revolutionary timeline. That Japan's location was measured against more "backward" regions of the Far East also deserves attention. As the head of the Comintern stated: "The fate of several hundred million people living in China, Korea, and Mongolia is in the hands of the working class of Japan."[6]

In the Far East Congress, the old, or "feudal," factors in Japan were not omitted, but emphasis was placed on their modernized features. In his report on *"The colonial problem and the struggle for national liberation in the Far East,"* G. I. Safarov, the head of the Eastern Section of the Comintern, wrote:

> In Japan, 'honorable' landed nobility became bourgeois more than in any other country. Even the Mikado, who pretends to be of divine descent, does not shun from the owning of a big hotel in Tokyo and from being a shareholder of a whole range of commercial-industrial establishments.[7]

Then, in an article dedicated to the Congress, he also wrote that

> having developed on the path of the Prussian model, Japanese feudalism adapted itself to the imperialist interests of the Japanese capital and so coalesced with an industrial-bank plutocracy that is impossible to separate from the other.[8]

Besides the overestimation of Japan's social movement, mechanical application of the history of Russia as a once "backward" country to measuring the place of Japan on the revolutionary timeline was also a significant fea-

5 The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East, 33.
6 The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East, 35.
7 Pervyy s"ezd revolyutsionnykh organizatsii Dal'nego Vostoka, 62.
8 Pervyy s"ezd revolyutsionnykh organizatsii Dal'nego Vostoka, 41.

ture of the Comintern's view of the country. In other words, the Bolsheviks took Russian history as a universal timeline. At the Third Congress of the Comintern in June 1921, G. E. Zinoviev envisaged the situation in Japan as follows: "This state [Japan – Y. I.] is, approximately, in the same situation in which Russia had been shortly before 1905. There exists a large revolutionary mass movement."[9] Then, in February 1924, when the perspective of world revolution paled, he still insisted that "an approaching revolution in Japan (the Japanese 1905 revolution) will immediately turn the Japanese Communist Party, now small and illegal, into a major factor of the international revolutionary movement."[10] A paradox here is that the Empire of Japan had already passed the Russian experience of 1905 in establishing a constitutional monarchy, which existed in Japan from 1889. Omitting the juridical-institutional facets of the historical development, the Bolsheviks evaluated the situation in Japan only by the criteria of social movement.

This paradox was an underlying reason for the discrepancy between the Comintern and the leaders of the JCP. During the 1920s, the Japanese government took further steps to reform the political institutions, including, first of all, the adoption of universal male suffrage in 1925 (though, at the same time, a harsh public security preservation law was introduced as a compensation for it). This trend began to intensify as the leaders of the JCP became more supportive of parliamentarism and as they endorsed making slow progress, when the Comintern insisted on radical slogans calling for the overthrow of the monarchy. The waves of mass arrest and the brutal attack by militarists in the wake of the great earthquake in Tokyo of September 1923 pushed the communist leaders to disband in April 1924. The Comintern did not recognize it, and a number of the earlier leaders of the JCP with social-democratic orientations left the party.

G. E. Zinoviev was so impressed by these disasters that he began to reflect sincerely on the incorrectness of mechanical application of the Russian timeline to Japan. On September 8, 1925, at the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, he said.

9 Tretiy vsemirnyy kongress kommunisticheskogo internatsionala, 100.

10 Zinov'ev: Pervoe pyatiletie Kominterna, 2.

> I think it would be the largest mistake if we will try now to establish an illegal party in Japan based on the so called Russian model for a prerevolutionary time […] I am afraid whether we may give you [Japanese comrades – Y. I.] a good service from Moscow if we wish to tell you our experience of 1905 or 1908 […] Bolshevism does not consist in repeating all that was in Russia.[11]

In spite of such a zigzag, the Comintern and Japanese leftist intellectuals shared a high evaluation of the socio-political development of Japan in general. A Bolshevik expert of Siberia and Asia, V. D. Vilenskiy (Sibiryakov), wrote in 1925 that, "in the eyes of the whole amazed world, she [Japan] has turned, with incredible speed, from a backward Eastern country into a capitalist power."[12]

Then, the *"Thesis of 1927 on Japan,"* which was prepared at the Executive Committee of the Comintern with the direct participation of newly appointed chair N. I. Bukharin, also highlighted the modern features of the country, calling the regime change in 1868 a revolution. "The Revolution of 1868 paved the way for a bourgeois development of Japan (...) [and – Y. I.] the process of merger proceeded extremely rapidly between the feudal segments with the new bourgeoisie (...) No European country has come so close to the state capitalism system as Japan." Depending on such an evaluation of the contemporary situation of the state, the 1927 Thesis anticipated "the rapid transformation in Japan of a bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution."[13]

1930s

In this light, it was a drastic change when, in March 1932, the Executive Committee of the Comintern recognized a new thesis on Japan, which

11 Adibekov / Vada (eds.): VKP (b), Komintern i Yaponiya, 361, 363.

12 Vilenskiy (Sibiryakov): Yaponskiy imperialism, 5.

13 Adibekov / Vada (eds.): VKP (b), Komintern i Yaponiya, 451-452. On the JCP in the 1920s see further Kurokawa: Teikoku ni Kōsuru.

underscored the feudal factors in the country, in general, and the reactionary role played by the monarchy, in particular.

> Established in Japan after 1868, the absolute monarchy, with all changes of its politics, has held the whole power, all the time expanding its bureaucratic apparatus of violence and oppression over the toiling classes. (…) The monarchy has been the main stronghold of the political reaction and all the remnants of feudalism in the country.[14]

What factors caused this drastic change? Firstly, the hardening of oppressive measures against the JCP and the beginning of militarization of the whole Japanese regime in the early 1930s undoubtedly influenced the Comintern's evaluation of Japan. Secondly, the downfall of N. I. Bukharin, the author of the 1927 Thesis, led to its revision. A central role in the elaboration the 1932 Thesis was played by G. I. Safarov, who, having underlined the modernized transformation of feudal factors of Japan in the Far East Congress of 1922, now put more emphasis on the persistence of the past in the country. Thirdly, the change of both the political and cultural conditions in the USSR seemed to have caused a corresponding shift in the Bolshevik depiction of Japan. Having forcefully accomplished industrialization and collectivization, the Bolsheviks began to think that they had arrived at the gate of "real" human history. This recognition led to their reconsideration of the historical timeline, not as progress moving towards the future, but as an eternal process out of time.[15]

Composed originally in Russian, the 1932 Thesis was published as a German translation in the *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* in May, and this German version was translated into Japanese and appeared in the illegal organ of the JCP *Sekki* (Red Flag) in July 1932. Highlighting the backwardness of the Japanese polity in general, and the incompleteness of social transformation after 1868 in particular, the new thesis found resonance within the JCP, which, at the time, was being harshly oppressed by the police. *Before* the contents of the 1932 Thesis became known to Japanese intellectuals, an important publishing plan with a similar orientation

14 Adibekov / Vada (eds.): VKP (b), Komintern i Yaponiya, 564.

15 See Papernyy: Kul'tura Dva, 44-53, 237.

had been elaborated by a group of Marxist theorists. It was a seven-volume *Lecture on the History of the Development of Capitalism in Japan*, which was published from May 1932 to August 1933. By promoting the evaluation of the Japanese monarchy as "absolute" and backward, both the 1932 Thesis and the *Lectures* had a significant influence among the Marxist scholars of Japan, with the proponents of such a view soon being called *Kōza-ha*, or the "Lectures School."

In fact, not all Marxist intellectuals of Japan shared this view. A number of theorists grouped around the journal *Rōnō* (Labor and the Peasant) believed that, however insufficient, the regime change of 1868 was still a bourgeois revolution. In this sense, they interpreted the socio-political regime of Japan in a similar way to that of the Comintern during the 1920s, and many former leaders of the JCP with social-democrat orientations were proponents of this view, and came to be known as *Rōnō-ha*, or the "School of the Journal *Rōnō*." Debate between these two schools would provide the Japanese intellectuals with a basic framework to understand the modern Japanese history up to the 1970s, when Marxist terminology began to lose influence as a defining category for many intellectuals.

The reaction to the 1932 Thesis was not limited to scholarly discussion. In June 1933, partly as a reply to the document, two prominent leaders of the JCP, Manabu Sano and Sadachika Nabeyama, who were in jail at the time, published a letter, on the pages of an authoritative political journal *Kaizō* (Reconstruction), to comrades of the party with the declaration of their secession from the party. Of these two, especially authoritative was Sano, the author of the letter. He was a former general secretary of the Central Committee of the JCP (from December 1927 to March 1928) and a participant of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern of 1928, in which he was elected as a member of its Executive Committee. In 1929, Sano was arrested in Shanghai and then sentenced to life imprisonment in Tokyo. Imprisonment and enduring struggle in prison only increased his prestige; therefore, his decision to leave the party together with Nabeyama in June 1933, and his harsh critique of the Comintern, shook not only his comrades but also many intellectuals in Japan. Their action had a deep

impact on their comrades in prison, causing a mass defection in the following years.[16]

In the famous letter, Sano criticized the mechanical application of Russian history to Japan. "The Comintern fully identified the monarchy in Japan with tsarism in Russia, and forced the Japan Section [of the Comintern – Y. I.] to undergo the same struggle as had been made against tsarism."[17] Likewise, he harshly attacked the low evaluation of the regime change in 1868 put forth in the 1932 Thesis, and tried to offer an alternative understanding of modern Japanese history.

> The fact that Japan had not become a colony of other countries, but had developed itself as a capitalist state in the second half of the nineteenth century, had an enormous revolutionary significance under the conditions of that time.[18]

As if reversing the internationalism of the Comintern, Sano tried to underline the importance of modern Japanese history for the whole Far East, maintaining that the independent development of Japan "has accelerated the awakening and the revolutionary struggle of the Asian nationalities, which had been oppressed under the heavy pressure of the capital of Europe and America."[19]

On the whole, Sano's letter was a manifestation of ultra-nationalism and chauvinism expressed using the words of Marxism. As such, it was partly a product of the Comintern worldview and especially of its notion of time and history. In particular, the following sentence clearly shows the influence of the Comintern / Bolshevik timeline on the thinking of the convert. "The Japanese nation from ancient to contemporary times has passed developmental stages of human society appropriately and solidly and without interruption due to outer enemies."[20] In the same vein, he

16 On Sano and his letter, see Adibekov / Vada (eds.): VKP (b), Komintern i Yaponiya, 588-590, 743.
17 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 195.
18 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 194.
19 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 194.
20 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 195.

tried to legitimize an aggressive war depending not on the ideology, but the terminology of the Comintern.

> Rather, a war against the warlords of the Chinese Kuomintang has, objectively, a progressive significance. (…) Under the contemporary international situation, a war of Japan against the USA may rapidly turn, from an imperialist war for both sides, into a national liberation war for Japan. Further, a world war on the Pacific Ocean may develop into a progressive war of world historical importance for the liberation of the toiling people of backward Asia from the oppression of the capital of Europe and America.[21]

According to the letter, the imperial dominance of Japan over Asia was also justifiable. Again, the Bolshevik notion of progress and regression was mobilized. "Undoubtedly, a defeat of Japan would lead to a regression of several decades for Asia."[22] Sano considered that the mechanical application of the principle of national self-determination to the colonies of the Empire of Japan would just lead to the birth of reactionary small states dominated by the bourgeoisie. Thus, he concluded that "we anticipate in the future the establishment of a giant socialist state comprising not only Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, but also Manchuria and mainland China."[23]

In Manchuria

Sano's letter demonstrated that the Bolshevik / Comintern notion of time and history had merged with the idea of ultra-nationalism that was forcefully promoted by the Japanese government from the early 1930s, and resulted in a kind of state socialism. We may find another example of such an amalgam in Manchuria. As early as the 1920s, the South Manchuria Railway, a Japanese state company with a significant influence over this territory, showed significant interest in the idea of a planned economy.

21 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 196.
22 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 197.
23 Sano / Nabeyama: Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho, 198.

For example, a former member of the board of the South Manchuria Railway, Baron Ōkura Kinmochi, made a research trip to the USSR from December 1927 to September 1928. During his trip, Ōkura met with a large number of functionaries, including People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the RSFSR, V. N. Tolmachev, and visited various cities of the Soviet Union. This grand tour yielded a 1624-page book comprehensively surveying the politics, economy, society, and culture of the USSR, *The Actual Situation of the Soviet Union*, which was published in 1929 in Dalian, the base of the South Manchuria Railway.[24]

The brain of the company was its Research Section, a powerful think tank, which had energetically investigated materials obtained in the Soviet Union. Besides non-Marxist technocrats, some Marxists also found their place in this section. Then, after the destruction of the JCP in the early 1930s, a number of Marxist intellectuals fled to Manchuria, or the puppet state Manchukuo, from 1932, to find refuge in the Research Section of the company.[25]

On the whole, the intellectuals in the Research Section of the Manchurian Railway sought to reconstruct a social structure of the territory according to the Bolshevik understanding of world history. For example, they analyzed the agriculture of North China from the viewpoint of developmental stages of world history, insisting on the persistence of a feudal land system and the backwardness of rural society there.[26] Likewise, they argued that Manchurian agriculture remained colonial in relation to the mainland of China and to the world market.[27]

From 1936 onward, the Research Section began to devote considerable energy to the elaboration of a "Five-Year" Planning Project of Industrial Development in Manchuria.[28] Visual propaganda partly reflected their eagerness, highlighting planning and modernization in Manchukuo. For ex-

24 Ōkura: Sovieto Renpō no Jissō, esp. 219-229.
25 Kobayashi: Mantetsu Chōsabu, 128-135.
26 Ōgami: Manshū keizai no shiteki kōsatsu, esp. 31.
27 Amano: Manshū nōgyō kindaika no katei, 58-66.
28 Kobayashi: Mantetsu Chōsabu, 94-105.

ample, a poster of the Manchukuo government (1937) featured a construction plan of the new capital Hsinking.[29] Likewise, in a poster of the Manchurian Railway promoting tourism in Manchuria, the Asia Express symbolized the reconstruction of speed and space.[30] In a sense, in Manchuria, the Marxist intellectuals of Japan found for the first time a chance to institutionalize, with their own hands, the Bolshevik / Comintern concept of time and history.

Thus, the Bolshevik / Comintern timeline had a significant impact on the thinking of Japanese intellectuals, and its influence lasted until as late as the 1970s. As intellectuals in a non-European and semi-peripheral country, they needed a worldview with which to understand their own place in the world history and to promote the reconstruction of their own country. Even after rejecting the communist movement, or, refusing to participate in the imperialistic project of governing Manchuria, some leftist or former leftist intellectuals continued to be dependent on the Bolshevik / Comintern timeline. For the Bolsheviks (and not only for them), this timeline functioned as a key to interpreting world history on their own, and as such, it had a universal impact on the intellectuals of non-European parts of the world, including Japan.

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29 Kishi: Manshūkoku no Bijuaru Media, frontispiece.

30 Kishi: Manshūkoku no Bijuaru Media, 45.

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The Mongolian Revolution of 1921 and its International Effect

The history of the population inhabiting the lands known at present as the Republic of Mongolia (RM) appears peripheral in Western and Eastern historiographical traditions. In Modern Times, this region – Inner Asia – was perceived as an area of underdeveloped political institutions and primitive economies dependent on the more advanced neighbors. This vision prevailed due to colonial ambitions of these imperial neighbors (Western knowledge about Inner Asia used to be transmitted through their lenses) and due to the paucity of information about "indigenous" Mongolian historiographies. Thus, since the mid-17th century, the expanding Qing (Manchu) China and Imperial Russia imposed centripetal political structures upon Beijing-Mongolian, St. Petersburg-Mongolian communication. The Manchus gradually conquered Mongolian tribes and integrated them into their imperial administration. The Russian Empire, concerned about its geopolitics in the Far East and negotiating against Qing China and Tokugawa (and since 1886 Meiji) Japan, endeavored to establish its own dialogue with the Mongolian nobles and high Buddhist hierarchs of the Western (the *Oirat*) and Central (the *Khalkh*) parts of the territory known as Outer Mongolia, that later became the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR). Inner Mongolia – the territories of Southern Mongolian tribes, first integrated into Qing China and therefore experienced the most drastic sinicization, – remained a part of the People's Republic of China.

Outer Mongolia between the Chinese Xinhai and Russian October Revolutions, 1911-1917

In contemporary RM's historiography the Mongolian-Chinese and Mongolian-Russian relationships are interpreted as a permanent and keen, al-

beit periodically failed, Mongols' quest for the independence of their polity. The Mongolian Buddhist historical chronicles[1] fixate a few centuries' struggle of the Mongolian political elite – the nobles (*noyon* in Mongolian) and the high Buddhist hierarchs (*khutagt*) – for their political power hub to be in Mongolian lands, not in Beijing. At the start of the 20th century, education in Buddhist Mahayana tradition was the only available in Outer and Inner Mongolia. Western ideologies' influence on Mongolian elite was indirect and marginal. However, the thickened historical time of the revolutionary eve of the 20th century presented the Mongolian population with a chance to rapidly learn the new modern revolutionary rhetoric against the re-occurring patterns of political chaos.

When the Xinhai revolution of 1911 paralyzed Beijing's political will, drawing attention away from the northern steppe regions of the overthrown Qing Empire, a group of Mongolian *noyon*s and *khutagt*s used the momentum with (albeit cautious vis-à-vis Beijing) support from St. Petersburg to establish a Mongolian Autonomy in the capital Urga (contemporary Ulaanbaatar). The peculiar political structure of the Autonomy was a combination of theocratic monarchy with the eighth Jebtsundamba Khutagt, Bogdo Gegen, at its head and a ministerial government attached to him. That specific form of theocratic monarchy rested on a long Mongolian tradition of political legitimacy via strengthening Indian-Tibetan-Mongolian religious and cultural ties against the Chinese. In Outer Mongolia, a special department of monks (*Shabi'*) for running religious affairs of the numerous Buddhism clergy and believers (*sangha*) had been established and its jurisdictions reminded of a state within a state. The government structure of the Autonomy, which had no saying on the politics of *sangha*, was eclectic und functioned controversially. Still, the organization of ministries represented the Mongolian elite's interest in Western political institutions and an attempt to adopt some of them as a means to modernize their political structures against the former Manchu administration and the anticipated renewed colonization from China. The latter came with little delay after the October revolution of 1917, when political chaos

1 For example, the Mongolian chronicle Altan Tobchi (1604) by Sagang Sechen is an embodiment of the official and popular cult of Chinggis as the one true Mongolian *qan*.

and civil war in the former Russian Empire withdrew the support the Khalkh Mongols had from St. Petersburg and confused the Mongolian elite about the short and long-term developments in Russia. Consequently, in 1919, the newly appointed Northwest Frontier Commissioner Hsu Shu-cheng arrived in Urga to pursue the Beijing's decision to abolish Mongolian Autonomy. As his new regime turned out to be even more oppressive than before 1911, the Mongolian ecclesiastic and secular elites were in need of new allies.

The Comintern and the Mongolian People's Republic

The modern idea of the nation state was brought into Mongolian valleys and steppes by the Bolsheviks and the agents of the Third Communist International, the Comintern, in the situation of the civil war in the Russian Far East at the end 1910s-beginning 1920s. This idea, grounded in quasi-communist ideology, opened for the Mongols new historical space of affirmative, yet compromising policies. Interest in Bolshevism was inspired mainly by the Mongols' quest for national consolidation and geopolitical concerns. As there is no record on the Mongols' engaging with Communism and Bolshevist ideology theoretically (at least till the end 1940s, when the works by Karl Marx started being translated in Mongolian in the MPR), we assume that it was the Bolshevik's revolutionary tactics of seizing power via tactical alliances with social classes that explicitly expressed national liberation interests, that looked as a pattern to be adopted by Mongolian activists.

From the history of the Comintern we know that its famous founders and leaders were anxious about world revolution and saw the revolution of October 1917 in Russia as one of the steps in this global direction. Concerned predominantly about the revolutions in the West, but soon, by the 1920s, disillusioned by their failure, the Comintern leaders focused on the *East*, creating another big utopia about socialist revolutions in the "underdeveloped" Asian societies. All acknowledged that these societies had not developed capitalist forms of social relationships necessary for creating a revolutionary situation based on the urban working class' agency. It was

in the recipes about the way-out from this specific situation that the views of the Comintern agents differed.

According to a resolution of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, held in November-December 1922, the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) was required to pay special attention to the organization of the Eastern Sections.[2] The ECCI Far-Eastern Section (with Secretariat in Irkutsk) had four sections: Mongolian-Tibetan, Chinese, Korean and Japanese. China became a priority on the "eastern front" of the Comintern, though its leaders had divergent approaches to the perspectives of Chinese revolution: Trotsky's permanent revolution theory versus the exclusive backing of communist fraction of the Kuomintang supported by Stalin.[3] For the Comintern and Bolshevik leaders, Mongolian revolution was not of primary importance and had to assist in achieving a bigger task of developing Chinese revolution.

The October revolution of 1917 put Russian communists and Bolsheviks in a special position within the Comintern structures and leadership. If the newly established structures of the Bolshevik government were lacking means to conduct propaganda along the whole periphery of the former Russian Empire, including Outer Mongolia, then the material resources were collected and provided via Comintern comrades. With years, Trotskyism was wiped away from Red Russia, and the Comintern was transforming more and more into a Soviet department. Outer Mongolia, nevertheless, retained its strategic meaning in the USSR's Far Eastern policies. It also continued playing an important role internationally, in communication with quasi-communist regimes in the *East*.

The Comintern structures were undergoing periodical changes; their functioning depended on communist parties' positions in different countries and internationally and also suffered the drawbacks of communist state-building in the USSR. However, at the first stages of Mongolian revolution, in the first part of the 1920s, and even later till the mid-1930s it was this organization that sponsored and supervised elite revolution in Outer Mongolia. It formed a quasi-communist party, according to the pattern of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks (RCP(b)). Under

2 Adibekov / Shakhnazarova: Organizatsionnaya struktura, 72.

3 For details, see: Pantsov: Mao.

the Comintern's leadership, a very weak, diffusive, ill-matched, inconsistent Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) took shape (no foreigners could be within its ranks officially). Their members took their first steps under the close guidance of the Section of the Eastern Peoples of the Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) in Irkutsk, whose functions fell under the jurisdiction of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the ECCI at the beginning of 1921.

The politics and course of the MPRP, its composition, growth, strengthening influence, and internal struggles mirrored social change in Mongolia throughout the 20th century. The pioneer revolutionaries of Mongolia were of mixed social origin, coming of upper – but marginalized – and low social class, often with religious affiliation and specifically known for their communication either with Russian White emigrants, revolutionaries, or Buryat public activists. The Section of the Eastern Peoples instructed the Mongolian delegation to Irkutsk in August 1920 on how to characterize their own social affiliation as hailing from the "working intelligentsia," a "particularly Mongolian organization," "not considerable in numbers, but compact and intellectually advanced."[4] At the same time, the recommendation to seek for the support of "wide sections of the population" was pronounced and the Mongolian revolutionaries had to "rely on the *arad,"* the people.[5]

Despite of the *arad* origin of some first Mongolian revolutionaries, the recommendation remained meaningful solely in the eyes of the Comintern agents and some supporting them Buryat activists. In Mongolian society, no political agency was prescribed to the *arad.* Against the Comintern leaders' imagination, social hierarchies and traditional respect to authority hardly allowed the expression of social protest by the *arad*

4 Minutes on the meeting of the Mongolian delegation (Danzan, Doksom, Losol, Bodoo and others) with the RCP(b) deputy representative on international affairs in Siberia and the Far East, F. I. Gapon. Interpreter: E.-D. Rinchino. Irkutsk, 17 August 1920. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 4. L. 24.

5 Protocol No. 11 of the Section for Eastern Peoples on the meeting with the Mongolian delegation (the group of the PRP) from 25 August 1920. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 4. ll. 23-33.

against the upper classes, the nobles and religious elite. These "particularities" did not seem significant in the eyes of the Comintern leaders concerned about world revolution, however, the Comintern agents working "in the field" well understood them. One of these agents, the Buryat communist Rinchingijn Elbegdorj, better known as Rinchino, who also served as informal consultant to the newly established (according to the NKVD model) Internal Defense Office, noted that recruiting the "reactionary classes" into revolution was done on purpose to instill ideological confusion and chaos in the minds of the masses, who could then be manipulated: "so that on the basis of this mix and the shift in the people's ideology we could set up a new revolutionary ideology."[6]

The Comintern tactics in Mongolia was extremely positivist in all its expressions. Even before the famous Leon Trotsky's address to his Comintern comrades in 1922 on war as "a great locomotive of history," the Comintern agents considered Soviet military assistance to be a decisive factor in the MPRP's accession to power in Urga.[7] In 1921, the Ministry of Defense of the provisional Mongolian revolutionary government was in charge of food supplies.[8] The Comintern recommended Mongolian revolutionaries to use the method of "combined war" in Central Mongolia, as well as in the West of the country, known for its rebellious attitudes against the political will in Urga and remaining immune against the revolutionary power there for a longer time. The "combined war" meant to be a combination of military activities and ideological propaganda: "taking advantage of the population's anti-Chinese movement… It is necessary to frame this movement, to insert a social content into it."[9] Inserting a social content into a struggle against the Manchu administration and the Chinese businesses in Outer Mongolia that enjoyed the privileged positions

6 Rinchino: K poslednim sobytiyam, 96.

7 Roshchin: Problemy noveyshey istorii, 40.

8 Field report on the activities of the Provisional Mongolian Revolutionary Government in Urga to the ECCI Far-Eastern Section from 21 June 1921. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 106. L. 54.

9 Field report on the activities of the Provisional Mongolian Revolutionary Government in Urga to the ECCI Far-Eastern Section, 7 November 1921. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 106. L. 141.

occurred to be not a complicated task. Without much reflection upon the meaning of "class struggle" the Chinese businesses were destroyed and their owners physically liquidated throughout the 1920s. In a couple of decades, after the WWII, the textbooks on history would elaborate this "social content" as "the struggle against the Chinese usurious capital."[10]

The representation of the "combined war" can be seen in the *Instructions* published before the Soviet military's march to Urga[11], which forbid Red Army soldiers to humiliate the Mongols' "national and religious feelings." Instead, in their "free" time Red Army officers and soldiers were responsible for involving the local population in political meetings, attracting the Mongolian nomads by the entertainments offered at the end of the programs. These early propaganda activities were spiritually sponsored and supervised by the Comintern agents. At the same time, there were five Commissioners of the People's Commissariat of International Affairs (NKID, Rus.) attached to Red Army troops in Mongolia, directly responsible for "regulating the relations between the Army moving on the foreign territory and the local population."[12] Here we come to the main contradiction in the Comintern status as an international actor.

As the Comintern was anti-systemic (not conforming to international law and strongly opposing capitalist institutions) organization, based on networks and illicit financial streams, leading underground activities in different parts of the world, it had no legal saying in official diplomatic affairs. Its leaders, especially the Bolsheviks, distinguished between "revolutionary work" and "government diplomacy". There were numerous collisions between the Comintern and the NKID. In the early 1921, the RCP(b) Central Committee charged the Comintern with the right to have its own representatives attached to the NKID. As frequent complaints followed this decision, already on 4 May 1921, the Central Committee's Political Bureau had to adopt rules to co-ordinate relations between the

10 See, for example, a textbook under the editorship of Mongolian and Soviet historians: Okladnikov / Bira (eds.): Istoriya Mongol'skoy: 258.

11 Tsibikov: Razgrom Ungernovshchiny, 122.

12 Letter of B. Shumyatskiy to G. Chicherin, written on 25 October 1921. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 9. L. 46.

NKID and the Comintern. Though these rules divided the spheres of activities of the two departments, their relationships remained in strain.[13]

The NKID had to represent the young Bolsheviks' state internationally, seek its legal recognition and launch diplomatic missions. In Outer Mongolia, it inherited the policy of the Tsar's consulates, being more sympathetic to the national moods of the Mongolian elite. It also had to navigate between this elite and China, as *de jure* Outer Mongolia remained a part of it. The Comintern agents, in their turn, were playing with Bukharin's idea of using the pan-Mongolist conception to unite all Mongolian tribes against imperialism, which he had expressed at the beginning of the 1920s.[14] As conception of pan-Mongolism, especially in such a revolutionary interpretation, was not enthusiastically met by the elites of Outer Mongolia (that stood aside from other Mongolian tribes earlier incorporated into China and Russia), the Comintern agents had to find a compromise "in the field." Moreover, any form of nationalism never found a place in the hearts of the Comintern leaders. Though the consolidation of peoples under the banner of national liberation struggle against imperialism was seen as a means of revolution, the alliance with nationalism was a tactics rather than strategy and certainly not a goal for the Comintern.

The Comintern called tirelessly for a struggle against international imperialism; its agents were explaining to the MPRP members "the essence of Italian-Yugoslavian conflict. Italian imperialist aggression in Albania and its threat to Turkey, the Polish-German war, the Anglo-French conflict in Asia Minor, the British obsession with African colonies … the suppression in Nicaragua etc."[15] As long as the "masked enemies," the culprits in the aforementioned, turned out to be "Chinese traders," the Mongolian

13 Adibekov / Shakhnazarova: Organizatsionnaya struktura, 25-26.

14 The idea is most likely to have belonged to the Buryatian Bolsheviks and been elaborated to Bukharin, who supported it. See the Resolution of the ECCI Far-Eastern Secretariat on the Mongolian question from 24 January 1927. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 293. L. 24.

15 See the Instructions by the ECCI Far-Eastern Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PRP of Outer Mongolia from 30 March 1928. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 3. D. 25, ll. 18-19.

revolutionaries seemed to demonstrate consent and used the Comintern support.

The Comintern was assisting the MPRP to establish its reign throughout the country. It believed to be in charge of changing the social structure and political elite in Mongolia. With this *sacred* mission in mind, some of its representatives often claimed their right of direct influence on the home affairs of any state. And those home affairs had to be sacrificed for the purpose of the world revolution. The over-performance and frequent arrogant behavior of the Comintern agents in Mongolia irritated Mongolian politicians. A few times they initiated calling some particularly rude Comintern advisors back to Soviet Russia. And in those anti-Comintern campaigns the NKID employees were often on Mongolian side.

For example, in the turbulent 1928, the Soviet Consul in Ulaanbaatar, A.N. Vasiliev, was supporting the "rightist" fraction in Mongolian government and claimed that the Comintern instructors should not sacrifice interstate relations and stress at critical moments the necessity of strengthening ties with the USSR, regardless of Comintern contacts and policy.[16] The opponent of Vasiliev was the head of the Eastern department of the ECCI, F. Petrov. He maintained the constant correspondence with the MPRP "leftist" member Ts. Dambadorj, upon the initiative of the latter. The Comintern recommended that the MPRP follow a "consistent leftist course," undertake an "energetic purge," engage in a "struggle against the feudal-theocratic past" and "bring more people from the province to the state and party organs."[17] However, in every resolution and Petrov's commentaries to them, the ECCI stressed the gradual realization of the chosen course, by "non-extremist methods." Dambadorj, in his turn, pit the Comintern against the "rightist threat," expressing his dissatisfaction with the "nationalist sentiment" inside the Central Committee of the MPRP. While referring to Petrov's letters, Dambadorj informed his party comrades that the Political Secretariat of the ECCI proposed to "take

16 See the Resolution of the ECCI Far-Eastern Secretariat on the Mongolian question from 24 January 1927. RGASPI. F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 293. L. 24.

17 See the Protocol No. 66 of the meeting of the ECCI Far-Eastern Secretariat on the letter by comrade Dambadorj from 19 January 1928. RGASPI. F. 495. Sch. 3. D. 55. L. 16.

a number of concrete measures" against the "rightist threat," namely, "to confiscate the property…"[18] The Political Secretariat categorically denied that it had ever instructed Dambadorj in such a way.

In 1928, the Comintern departments and agents had to defend their positions, to find, expose and explain their own "mistakes" and above all, their losing the momentum to bring communists to political rule in China. The majority of the Comintern supported the communist fraction within the Kuomintang, assuming that with the general victory of the Kuomintang the communist fraction would strengthen its position and push other rightist fractions, including the national bourgeoisie out. The opposite happened: in spring-summer 1927, the rightist fraction under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek was celebrating the Kuomintang's victories, while violently liquidating the leftists and purging the communists out from the party.[19] That fiasco in the Comintern East Asian policies had changed its course vis-à-vis Mongolia. No longer the line of G. Chicherin, the Deputy People's Commissar of International Affairs, in respect to the underground support to revolutionaries' mobilisation was doable. Before, in 1925, Chicherin answered to a proposal by the MPRP Central Committee to lead revolutionary activities in the "national minorities'", i.e. Mongolian peoples', outlying districts of China: "if the Comintern is working among the Irish people under the slogan of Irish independence this does not imply that we can address the English government with a claim for Irish independence. We are in the same position towards China regarding the question of Mongolian districts."[20]

After 1928, Stalinization of the Comintern started. The domestic concern of the USSR's security jeopardized the plans for world revolution, and the Comintern started playing lesser principle role in Mongolian affairs. The direct contact of RCP(b)-MPRP became dominant. According to the decision by the RCP(b), a special commission on the question of

18 Telegram by the Political Secretariat of the ECCI to the Central Committee of the MPRP sent 29 June 1928. RGASPI. F. 495. Sch. 3. D. 72. L. 31.

19 Pantsov: Mao, 175-259.

20 Instruction by G. Chicherin to the Political Secretariat of the ECCI composed 10 August 1925. AMIDRF. F. Referentura po Kitayu. Sch. 9. Folder 116. D. 9. L. 274.

assistance to Mongolia (attached to the ECCI) was established with a task to identify the key sectors for investments in Mongolia's economy.[21] In July 1929 Moscow and Ulaanbaatar signed the secret agreement "On the main principles of inter-relations between the USSR and the MPR," which had the Soviet assistance to Mongolia (primarily in terms of nourishing a new generation of Mongolian cadres and investments in health care, veterinary and agriculture) and Mongolia's supplies of raw materials, first of all cattle and pastoral products (meat, wool, etc.), to the USSR on the agenda.[22] The accumulated experiences of the Comintern in Mongolia were used, as its members formed the commission. Still the character of the Soviet instructions was essentially changed in Outer Mongolia, and the RCP(b) control over the Comintern – strengthened. From 1929, the Soviet Union was sending to Mongolia fewer political agents, but more specialists and technicians.

The Young Generation of Revolutionaries in Outer Mongolia, the early 1920s

In the first quarter of the 20th century pastoral economy formed the matrix of Mongolian society: pressure from limited domestic resources and external forces (trade regimes with the sedentary neighbors) led to the under-population and low population density, as well as the models of government based on aristocratic kinship hierarchies. The cult of the *qan*, the Turkic-Mongolian word for "master," as the supreme authority at the top of these hierarchies, was suppressed by the Manchu, and the legal code based on customary law was blurred by the influence of Chinese law and the Manchu suzerainty.[23] The political function of Buddhism adopted by the Mongolian *noyon*s from Tibet since the 16th century helped both secular and religious authorities to exploit and collect taxes from the ordinary

21 See the Protocol No. 1 of the meeting of the Commission on clarifying the question of assistance to Mongolia from 9 January 1929. RGASPI. F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 388, ll. 2-4.

22 Luzyanin: Rossiya – Mongolia – Kitay, 263-264.

23 Veit: Disputes over Land-use in Qing Outer Mongolia, 97-105.

nomads attached to a certain monastery and the lands within the domain of the *noyon*. These realities of social composition in Mongolia were generally in dissonance with the communist dialectics that prescribed the interests of the exploited classes to become the driving force in the revolution. However, there was another driving force to societal transformation – a remarkably quick generation change.

The studies of biographies of the Mongolian revolutionaries, who were active at the first part of the 1920s, reveal not only their predominated "*arad* origin," but their remarkably young age. In their devotion to socialist revolution under the Comintern and Bolshevik leadership they had to act not solely against the Chinese and their dominating positions in Outer Mongolia, but also against the Mongolian authorities. The normative social order that prescribed paying respect to the authority and to the elder members of the community happened to be abandoned by the young revolutionaries. This fact should not look particularly surprising, if comparative perspective is brought into light. Socially engaged activists become particularly entrenched during the periods of political crisis in any society. In a pastoralist nomadic society, such individuals have particularities. Their performance tends to be more affirmable against the background of relatively small numbers of the population, extremely low life expectancy, which all provide for a quicker generational change. At the beginning of the 1920s, practically all members of the MPRP were under 35. Still, even such a young party occurred to be not "young enough" to stimulate the revolution inside the communities of Mongolian pastoralists.

Another structure, The Union of Revolutionary Youth (URY), was established on 1 August 1921 on the initiative of Kh. Choibalsan, who in his turn was inspired to do so by the Young Communist International (YCI) and under its donations. Not only the YCI (its representative A.G. Starkov worked in Mongolia in 1921-1924), but the Comintern as well was guiding the activities of the URY (despite of the fact that the Comintern did not have its regular representative in Mongolia until 1924). The period of 1921-1924 passed as a competition between the MPRP and the URY, in which the URY pioneered the most drastic social change in Mongolia. The URY members expressed dissatisfaction with the MPRP's "slowness" on many issues, including anti-religious propaganda. The URY agents, en-

dorsed by Choibalsan for administration, established their cells throughout the country, even in the peripheries, where the power of the revolutionary government and the MPRP was still poorly established. There, they deemed to inflict "a blow to the prestige of Buddhism and theocracy,"[24] suggest that instead of studying Buddhism, the *arad* should study the European natural science (about which the young revolutionaries themselves had a rather vague idea). The URY, above all, discredited itself in the eyes of the population through the campaign that forced women to take off their plaits and hair decorations as a demonstration of their new place in a free progressive society.[25] The URY experienced significant public resistance when it tried to prevent people from attending Buddhist temples and cult and ritual performances. Moreover, traditional socio-economic relations proved persistent: the *arad* continued to fulfil their duties and pay taxes to the *noyon* and monasteries.

24 Field report on the activities of the Provisional Mongolian Revolutionary Government in Urga to the ECCI Far-Eastern Section, 7 November 1921. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 106. L. 141.

25 Roshchin: Politicheskaya istoriya, 59.

Figure 1. Meeting of the "common people's delegation" (first part of the 1930s). This photo illustrates commune-building among the *arad*. (Source: National Museum of Mongolian History, Ulaanbaatar).

In 1921-1924 the Comintern played a double game in Outer Mongolia: on the one hand, supporting the MPRP, on the other, stimulating the URY and leading it against the MPRP. Fractionation of new people's parties in Asia (the Kuomintang is another example in this respect) and expectations for the communist fractions' revolt against the other more "conservative" groups that usually stood for the united front, was the Comintern tactics till 1928 (that failed in China, as we explained in the previous section). In Outer Mongolia, the Comintern and YCI agents "seriously counted on young, brave, strong and energetic" people, "helped them out" and taught them "to raise themselves up and adapt."[26] The URY was represented by such people, while in the MPRP and the government there were "national-progressists" whose priority was Mongolia's independence. Since some of them wanted to preserve monarchic rule, they could be only temporal allies for the Comintern. The URY was in favor of a transition to a republican form of governance.

26 See the Resolution by the Collegium of the ECCI Far-Eastern Secretariat on the Mongolian questions from 17 August 1925. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 31. L. 60.

In 1924, the Republic was finally proclaimed and the URY lost its actuality and disappeared from the vanguard scene of Outer Mongolia's politics. Comintern agents had to recognize that without proper knowledge of Mongolia they had from the very beginning wrongly addressed the question on how to "raise the URY up in the spirit of struggle against the MPRP," were overly concerned with seizing power and created "mistakable leftist slogans, such as Europeanisation of culture."[27] Paradoxically, such recognition of "mistakes" was hypocritical, as well as real: for the views on tactics and practices of world revolution were continuously in flux. By counting on the URY in 1921 the Comintern and Bolshevik agents could not know where it would lead and if they make a highway in Mongolia and in China in a few years.

Still, the principle of mobilizing youth, engaging it with powers and sacrificing it to the revolutionary altar remained acute throughout the 20th century. After 1924, an ultra-leftist fraction of the MPRP would be formed to act in vanguard of social campaigns, to collect and condensate the outrage of the population and to hang the guilt on and be liquidated further. Obviously, that principle was employed not solely in Outer Mongolia and not only by the Russian Bolsheviks. The sadly known Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution by Mao Zedong were the examples of implementation of that principle on a much larger scale.

27 Letter by Ryskulov to comrades Manuil'skiy and Voitinskiy on the relationships between the PRP and the URY. Urga, 2 November 1924. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 25. L. 8.

Figure 2. At the examination (1930s). This photo depicts Mongolian pupils in a Western style classroom. One can see writings in old Mongolian script on the wall. It was replaced by a new Cyrillic-based alphabet by the Resolution of the Central Committee of the MPRP and the Union of Ministers in March 1941. (Source: National Museum of Mongolian History, Ulaanbaatar).

Buddhist Lamas and the Red Army: a New Alliance

By the beginning of the 20th century, the lamas in Outer Mongolia were the biggest (around 30% of male population), richest (a network of monasteries with their own economies connected the scattered population over a vast territory) and the most privileged strata, the most experienced administrators, educated officials (the only form of education available that time was via reciting Buddhist literature) and politicians (the higher Buddhist hierarchs, especially in the Western parts of Outer Mongolia, were known for political ambition), and the spiritual leaders of the *arad* (all the social life was centered around Buddhist rituals performed on the

occasions of birth, death, marriage, etc.). On top of all, as a result of Mongolia's autonomy of 1911-1919, but not only, in the first quarter of the 20th century, Outer Mongolia was generally associated with the figure of Bogdo Gegen. All these factors made anti-religious propaganda, as Western communists understood it, in the society like Mongolian impossible. Mongolian revolutionaries, upon the advice of the Comintern, came to power and establish their rule in alliance with the Buddhist *sangha*. The revolutionaries in their social campaigns had to make lots of amendments to the symbolism of Buddhism, in the forms it was practiced by the Mongols that time.

The court of Bogdo Gegen had already had the experience in collaborating with the White army, namely with the detachments of Baron Ungern von Sternberg, who invaded Outer Mongolia from Buryatia, gathered Mongolian troops under his command, conquered Urga, pushing the Chinese generals, their soldiers and administrators out from there, and elevated Bogdo Gegen as a symbol of Mongolian independence to the throne. The Bolsheviks and their Red Army did not seem much more different in the eyes of the Mongols wishing to escape a brutal regime of the "bloody" Baron Ungern in Urga (which did not provide him for a long-term popularity among the Mongols).[28] Ungern's forces were weakening, about which his Mongolian collaborators had little illusions. The Mongols were ready for a new "deal" with the Russian Red Army, particularly as the Mongolian Red Army was promised to be formed and financed. The image of Bogdo Gegen served as a victory banner put on top by every political group that seized power. The Bolsheviks, as will be elaborated below, let the Mongolian revolutionaries march towards socialist revolution under that yellow banner of Buddhism.

In Outer Mongolia, like in other regions of Asia, the Comintern and Soviet advisors propagated for the politics of the united front against the external *imperialist* threat. On Mongolian ground, it meant to "use the influence and power of the *Shabi*'" and "proclaim Khutagt [Bogdo Gegen]

28 For the best book on Baron Ungern, see: Yuzefovich: Samoderzhets pustyni.

a constitutional monarch"[29] to bring the MPRP to power. At the same time, the slogans of class stratification and struggle – "eliminate the inherited nobles" – were pronounced, but their launch was postponed. In fact, the assault on the lamas was already implanted into the plan for the aftermath of the united front with the lamas: "preparing the basis for our further actions in order to break the current order completely."[30] Breaking the theocratic monarchy in Outer Mongolia – or a "constitutional monarchy" how the Bolsheviks called it – implied the disposition of the representatives of the *Shabi'* department and the confiscation of monastic property, when the opportunity presented itself.

Bogdo Gegen might or might not have realized all the perspectives of such a scenario, when he put his signature and seal on the well-known *Open letter from the nobles and monks of Outer Mongolia to the representatives of the Russian government*. Although the letter proclaimed the *nation*'s intention to elevate him to the throne again (as in 1911) and trust him to rule over the faith and the state, it contained not direct, but rather philosophical considerations about the nature of the newly formed people's party. On the one hand, the letter stated that the revolutionaries proclaimed the establishment of the party and mobilized people without any directives from the government, on the other hand, Bogdo Gegen recognized the "difference of opinions" between himself and the revolutionaries and in the dialectical tradition of Buddhist theological debates noted that the difference did not mean that "he was right, and they were wrong," but "because every century had its own conditions and mission."[31]

29 See the letter by the representatives of the PRP of Outer Mongolia Bodoo, Doksom to the Mongolian-Tibetan Section of the ECII Eastern Section from 20 August 1920. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 3. L. 2.

30 See the letter by the representatives of the PRP of Outer Mongolia Bodoo, Doksom to the Mongolian-Tibetan Section of the ECII Eastern Section from 20 August 1920. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 152. D. 3. L. 2.

31 Field reports on the activities of the Provisional Mongolian Revolutionary Government in Urga to the ECCI Far-Eastern Section, 23 April 1921 and 26 May 1921. RGASPI, F. 495. Sch. 154. D. 106. ll. 24, 51.

The political alliance between the Comintern, Mongolian revolutionaries and the lamas lasted from 1921 to 1924, during which no campaigns by the revolutionary government against the lamas took place. The Bogdo Gegen remained a "living Buddha" worshiped by lamas and by the MPRP members, protected by the Red Army. The *Treaty on Oath* signed between him and the people's government on 7 July 1921 granted him unlimited rights in religious affairs only, while all political authority passed into the hands of the people's government.

Figure 3. Photo of 15-16-year old Bodgo Gegen. He was born in 1868 in Kham, Tibet into an official's family. The boy was officially recognized as a reincarnation of Bogdo Gegen in Potala, Lhasa in the presence of the 13th Dalai Lama. He arrived in Urga in 1874. (Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BogdKhan.jpg).

The population of the country associated themselves with Bogdo Gegen, while having vague ideas about the new revolutionary party. In propagating the party lamas of all ranks had to assist revolutionaries all over the territories of Outer Mongolia. Lamas went into business of establishing local party units, and in such cases the revolutionary propaganda had re-

markable success, delivered to the nomads by their teachers, spiritual tutors and doctors – lamas. With some *khutagt* the Urga rulers managed to come into agreement, to buy others or receive money from them, to support their personal and business deals and even promote lamas to new administration positions. Lamas possessed seats in the government. Some high Buddhist hierarchs acquired party membership but remained the party's downright and direct ideological opponents.

Some representatives of *sangha* recognised the MPRP platform in order to spite their competitors. Darad Nbandid Gegen from Sain Noyon Khan province (*aimag*) even wrote a brochure under the title *On the blesse truth of democracy*, in which he attacked the Bogdo Gegen, portraying him as one of "the powerful of this world" who caused the sufferings of the poor.[32] There were lamas ready to support the Republic, as long as they believed that the corporate structures of the Buddhist monasteries that exploited the greater part of the population remained untouched. More than this, despite all the revolutionary rhetoric, some high-ranking lamas kept seals (certificates) of possession of "slaves" (*khamjilgaa*)[33], which implied that exploitation of *khamjilgaa* was still practised against the proclamation of people's equality by the revolutionary government.

The political coalition between the revolutionaries and lamas in 1921-1924 was a historical fact that was subsequently buried. First, it was buried by socialist Mongolian historiography. After 1990, when national liberation slogans were hot on the agenda again, the lamas-revolutionary coalition was blurred in rehabilitation campaigns. In the 1990s, the renaissance of Buddhism, urgently called for by some political figures, hardly happened among the Mongolian population, which got accustomed to secular socialization and finding religiosity in socialist cults.[34] For the last ten years, however, as Mongolia's entering the new millennia energy boom rapidly increased state revenues and let wealth be accumulated by certain strata of the population, the new religious market has boomed and Buddhist rites got re-introduced. This situation does not potentially stimulate

32 Rinchino: O lichnostyakh, 138-139.

33 Nasanbaljir, Ts., Puntsagnorov, Ts. (eds.): Revolyutsionnye meropriyatiya, 104-105.

34 On this phenomenon, see: Morozova: Adaptive compromisers.

unconventional research on political and economic role of Buddhist *sangha* in the RM. The present Mongolian historiographies are likely to follow the previous centuries' patterns: each Buddhist school produces its own history of Buddhism (and national history) from its present-day political perspectives.

The War of Historiographies at Present: Was there a Socialist Revolution in Mongolia?

Post-colonial discourse has changed the Western-dominated approaches to the development of Asian societies in the 20th century and their encounters with socialist revolutions. The new literature (by Western and Asian researchers) not only deconstructed the view of the "colonizer," but pointed out vernacular responses to transitions of revolutionary ideas and patterns.[35] However, this process led not only to new scholarship, but to conventional re-writing of history as well. Thus, confronted with post-Cold War geopolitics, the ruling elite of the Republic of Mongolia was in need of affirmative nation-building concept with historical references to the independent *Mongol state* and *Mongol national identity*.[36] Certain realities of the socialist revolution in the 1920s that we depicted above (such as the alliance between the party and the lamas, the decisions on the devastating social campaigns reached by the Mongolian leaders or the activities of the revolutionary youth in 1921-1924) were not considered as potentially helpful to consolidate the nation in the 1990s.

Already during the perestroika in the USSR, many MPR's historians and the Institute for Social Science attached to the MPRP Central Committee applied to the newly available Soviet archives (especially the Insti-

35 Westad / Qiunn-Judge: The Third Indochina War; Kalinovsky / Radchenko: The End of the Cold War. See, for example, interpretations by Shen: Mao, Stalin and the Korean War.

36 Bat-Ochir / Otgonjargal: XX zuuny Mongol.

tute for Marxism-Leninism in Moscow) to rehabilitate Mongolian revolutionary heroes.[37] The *new* knowledge had to meet the new challenges: a bunch of brochures on biographies of Mongolian revolutionaries, documenting the *Mongolian way* against the Soviet influence, was hastily produced in the RM at the very start of the 1990s.[38] Moreover, in 1996 a volume of the Comintern documents with translations of original documents into Mongolian was released in Ulaanbaatar. Some translations did not correspond to the originals and had different meanings.[39]

While the former MPRP members paid some tribute to the socialist revolution of 1921, the members of the Democratic parties avoided "revolutionizing" Mongolia's socialism and underlined the "peaceful democratic revolution of 1990."[40] The popular historian B. Baabar went further in viewing the events of the first part of the 1920s as Russia's colonial conquest of Mongolia.[41]

The *Mongolian story* of revolution started to have more political impact after 2000, also on Western (and Russian) historians, unexpectedly

37 Reports on cooperation between the Institute for Social Science attached to the Central Committee of the MPRP and the Institute for Marxism-Leninism attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU, 1985-1988. RGASPI. F. 71. Sch. 46. D. 163.

38 Dash: Solijn Danzan; Jambalsuren: Yu. Tsedenbal.

39 The Mongolian editors of this volume (Dashdavaa / Kozlov (eds.): Komintern ba Mongol) published the Mongolian translations of the originally written in Russian Comintern resolutions, reports, minutes of the meetings, etc. The translated content implied that the guilt for the unpopular social campaigns in Mongolia in the 1920-30s (as the confiscation of the monastic property in 1931-1932) was exclusively on the Comintern and the Bolsheviks. In these texts, the Mongolian revolutionaries appeared just as victims, who had unwillingly followed orders by their 'masters.' These implications did not correspond to the originals in Russian, which witnessed for more initiatives by the Mongolian revolutionaries. Only in 2012 the Mongolists from Ulan-Ude together with the RGASPI specialists published two volumes of the Comintern documents on Mongolia in original. Bazarov / Kuras / Rozental' / Shepelev / Kudryavtsev (eds.): Mongoliya v dokumentakh Kominterna.

40 Morozova: Political Parties, 10-16.

41 Baabar: XX zuuny Mongol.

for them and still not fully realized.[42] Some Mongolian historians attempt to rewrite the history of Mongolian revolution of 1921 in such a way that the present constitutional democracy looks like having historical roots in the early 20th century.[43] Whether Western scholarship embraces this trend[44] and what impact the rapidly developing *Asian* research on Mongolia, particularly in Japan[45] and South Korea, would have, we may see in the coming years, as in 2021 the Republic of Mongolia will celebrate the 100-year anniversary of its socialist revolution.

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42 The paucity of resources for Mongol Studies in the West produces peculiar forms of Mongolian-Western co-operation, such as the support for Mongol studies in the world declared by the former RM President Ts. Elbegdorj. Within this initiative, Professorship for Mongolistik at the University of Bonn is sponsored by the Mongolian government.

43 Boldbaatar: Mongol Ulsyn, 17-19.

44 See, for example, how the Mongolian case is presented within the EU through funded projects on transregionalism and constitutionalism: CORDIS: Entangled Parliamentarisms: Constitutional Practices in Russia, Ukraine, China and Mongolia 1905-2005, https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/211817_en.html.

45 Among other international projects on Mongolia lead by Japanese scholars, a few-volumes "Handbook of Mongolia and the Mongols" edited by Yuki Konagaya (to be published by Springer in 2021) could be mentioned.

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