

ABSTRACTS

Anti-imperialism: The Leninist Legacy and the Fate of World Revolution

JEREMY FRIEDMAN and PETER RUTLAND

The most important of Lenin's writings was, arguably, *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. That work shifted the focus from workers' struggles within one country to the dynamics of capitalism as a global system. The Leninist project thereby inextricably linked the causes of economic justice and national liberation, a fateful step in light of the transformation of the world wrought by decolonization. As capitalism stumbles through yet another global crisis today, what parts of Lenin's fevered vision remain relevant 100 years later?

Violence to Velvet: Revolutions—1917 to 2017

ROGER D. MARKWICK

From their inception, the 1917 Russian Revolutions, specifically the October Revolution, have been synonymous with Bolshevik violence. In the course of the last century, almost all observers have believed that violence was inherent in the Russian revolutions and revolutions generally. Such views have obscured what a revolution actually is. Closer examination of the October Revolution confirms violence was not its defining feature. Further, the Bolsheviks conceived October as the opening salvo of international, socialist revolution; expectations largely crushed by overwhelming counter-revolutionary violence. The discrediting of war and political violence since World War II has seen the conception of revolution as a “velvet” process of political transformation emerge, particularly in Latin America, the US, Britain, and Europe. While such movements rarely look back to the Russian Revolutions, they echo the democratic, egalitarian, and emancipatory impulses bequeathed by 1917, and raise the possibility of near non-violent socialist revolutions.

Making Sense of 1917: Towards a Global History of the Russian Revolution

MATTHEW RENDLE

It is clear that the global impact of the Russian Revolution over the last century has been immense. What is less clear, however, is the global impact *on* the revolution. Historians have appreciated that contemporaries made immediate comparisons with previous revolutions, especially the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, but considerations of broader global influences on the revolution have been rare. This article explores how historians can study these global influences, exploring the circulation of ideas and their influence on people and policies. Whilst not denying the continuing primacy of traditional “internal” factors in explaining the nature and process of the revolution, the article argues that globalizing 1917, as contemporaries did, helps historians to better understand the widespread belief in progress that fueled

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developments as people sought to create a new country, and to appreciate how people tried to make sense of the tumultuous events of revolution.

The Great Socialist Experiment? The Soviet State in its International Context

DAVID L. HOFFMANN

This essay takes the October Revolution's centennial as an occasion to consider Soviet state practices in an international context. Many features of Soviet governance reflected an interventionist ethos that first arose in western Europe and subsequently informed programs of population management around the world. From this perspective, we see that Soviet methods of rule derived not from socialist ideology but rather from pre-existing state practices. Communist Party leaders used these practices to pursue ideological goals, but both ambitions to reshape society and the means to do so originated elsewhere. This comparative approach also highlights ways the Soviet case resembled that of other late-developing countries, where educated elites similarly relied on state interventions to transform their populations. For many of them, the Soviet Union offered an alternative model of socioeconomic advancement, albeit one based on extreme state violence.

Lenin in Barcelona: the Russian Revolution and the Spanish *trienio bolchevista*, 1917–1920

ARTURO ZOFFMANN RODRIGUEZ

The Russian Revolution inaugurated a period of unprecedented social agitation in Spain, which shared notable structural similarities with Russia. The instability of this period, often referred to as the *trienio bolchevista* (three Bolshevik years), paved the way for military dictatorship in 1923, and revealed grave defects in the Spanish political and social edifice (the national question, the land question, the inefficiency and corruption of the state, the militancy of the labor movement), which would re-emerge again with even greater virulence in the 1930s. The Russian Revolution provided a powerful stimulus for these upheavals, and the myth of Bolshevism helped spur both revolution from below and counterrevolution from above. This paper will provide a synopsis of the turbulences of these years and will gauge their ulterior significance, setting them in a transnational context. In particular, the paper will assess the specific impact of the Russian Revolution in Spain.

Queer Harlem, Queer Tashkent: Langston Hughes's "Boy Dancers of Uzbekistan"

JENNIFER WILSON

In Langston Hughes's 1934 essay "Boy Dancers of Uzbekistan," (published in *Travel* magazine), the author writes mournfully about the Soviet reforms that put an end to the practice of effeminized male dancers, *bachi*, performing in the teahouses of Central Asia for exclusively male audiences; in doing so, Hughes expresses an enthusiasm for the queer contours of the *bachi* tradi-

tion. This article connects that enthusiasm with Hughes's earlier involvement in cultural efforts aimed at increasing queer visibility within the black community during the Harlem Renaissance. By situating "Boy Dancers" in this context, the underexplored role of the Russian Revolution in fostering queer solidarity among global communities of color is highlighted.

The Russian Revolution and the Instrumentalization of Death

SVETLANA MALYSHEVA

The article analyzes the instrumentalization of death during the first two decades after the 1917 Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks made use of two trends in the culture of death that took shape during the First World War. One, a cult of the dead communist "leaders and heroes," and two, the minimalist, non-religious, pragmatic treatment of the dead recommended for "ordinary" citizens, who were supposed to help build new Soviet hierarchies. As a result, by the end of the 1930s, a peculiar hybrid mass culture of death took shape that combined the surviving religious tradition with elements of the Soviet cult.

Russian Revolutions in Print: The Fate of the Ethnic Press

JOSEPH LENKART

On October 28, 1917, *Izvestiia* published V.I. Lenin's directive on printing, which articulated his vision for reshaping the printing press as the "inseparable" literary organ of the party. Although Lenin's views on printing and publishing were known to his close associates, this directive outlined a clear process upon which the party was able to base its revolutionary goal of total consolidation, thus reshaping local publishing cultures and determining the fate of the ethnic press during and after the Russian Revolution. The end goal of this process was to create an extensive publishing apparatus, which was subservient to party orthodoxy and homogeneity. This article discusses the consolidation of the ethnic press by highlighting the case of the Tatar printing press during the early Soviet period.

The Legacy of 1917 in Graphic Satire

JOHN ETTY

This essay explores political cartoons published in various journals in 1917, and investigates the legacy of that year's graphic satire. As many previous works have noted, the revolutions of 1917 brought struggles for the meaning of signs, and in political cartoons there were marked changes in subject matter and visual vocabulary. While previous studies have interpreted these developments as illustrations of political revolution, this essay, which is based on original research, will argue that the fundamental shift that began in 1917 was towards a kind of visual satirical discourse that possessed performative power. Proposing a new conceptual framework for analysis based on theories of performativity, the theoretical contribution of this essay will be to show how graphic satire reveals the performative force of cartoons, by arguing that

Soviet graphic satire's aesthetic invites readers' critical engagement with contemporary discourses, a vision that derives from the political cartoons of 1917.

5=100: Long Live the “Filologicheskaiia Revoliutsiia”

ELENA FRATTO

In his pamphlet *5=100*, published in *Knizhnyi ugol* in 1922, Boris Eikhenbaum looked back at the first few years of Formalist activity in parallel to the recent social and political upheavals, and compared the deep renovation that the OPOIAZ (Obshchestvo izucheniia poeticheskogo iazyka) circle was bringing about in the field of literary studies to the revolutions that had shaken and transformed the country in 1917. He defined the emergence of the Formal method as a *filologicheskaiia revoliutsiia*. The correlation was not just a seductive metaphor, and not only did it gesture at the principle of the scholar as a public figure—one that the Russian Formalists, with their active participation and transformation of the cultural scene of their city and country, fully embodied. With this essay I aim to unpack Eikhenbaum's concept of *filologicheskaiia revoliutsiia* in its manifold declensions—on the one hand, I will foreground the profound connections between the political turmoil of the late 1910s and the powerful recasting of methods and approaches that the Formalists brought about in the field of cultural studies; on the other, I will highlight the “permanent revolution” that their theories have set in motion by exploring their rich heritage a hundred years after 1917.

In Pursuit of a Different Revolution: Russian Populists of the Seventies Generation in 1917

BEN EKLOF and TATIANA SABUROVA

Nikolai Charushin and Vera Figner, both populists of the “1870s generation,” late in their lives played a role in the events of 1917, responding first with tempered enthusiasm, and then with trepidation over the growing chaos and polarization that led up to the Bolshevik revolution in October. Despite their efforts, such populists ended up on the losing side, and have often been criticized for misreading the situation in the country, holding naïve beliefs or hegemonic and patronizing attitudes about the peasantry and having little experience with real world politics. In fact, if their full life stories, especially the two decades before 1917, are taken into account, they and others of their generation were immersed in the activities of the *zemstvo*, local politics in general, and newspaper affairs. Their caution, moderate stances and gradualism were based not so much on inexperience as on long exposure to the peasantry and to the needs of the countryside as well as rather prescient awareness of the potential for catastrophe in the situation at that time.

Women and Gender in 1917

ROCHELLE GOLDBERG RUTHCHILD

This paper argues for greater integration of considerations of women and gender in the history of the 1917 Russian Revolutions. Two key issues have long

been discussed by historians: the spontaneity/consciousness paradigm, and the role of class in the revolution. Neither has been adequately analyzed in relation to gender. Women's suffrage has been largely neglected despite the fact that it was a significant issue throughout the year and represented a pioneering advance won by a countrywide coalition of women and men from the working class and intelligentsia, and from almost all political parties. In this centennial year, accounts of the Revolution remain one-dimensional; women remain the other.

Russia, 1917: Revolution as Demobilization and State Collapse

ERIC LOHR and JOSHUA SANBORN

Our essay proposes that while the predominant concept of revolution as driven by the mobilization of social, political, and cultural forces has value, at least as important for understanding the revolutions of 1917 was the dramatic demobilization of army, police, state, and society. We suggest that revolutions often see a conflict between affective mobilization (in which some portion of the citizenry becomes much more enthusiastic about particular social and political projects) and structural demobilization (in which the failure of major state institutions and economic enterprises makes positive social and political change nearly impossible). In early 1917, affective mobilization on behalf of the war and the regime was in decline, but structural mobilization was at its peak. The February Revolution brought a sudden radical structural demobilization. This structural demobilization both made it possible for relatively modest numbers of revolutionary forces to succeed in October 1917 and made the emergence of widespread apathy and disillusionment in 1918 much more likely.

(Good) Land and Freedom (for Former Serfs): Determinants of Peasant Unrest in European Russia, March–October 1917

EVGENY FINKEL, SCOTT GEHLBACH and DMITRII KOFANOV

What was the nature of geographic variation in peasant unrest during the Russian Revolution? What explains this variation? We discuss and compare two extant sources of information on peasant disturbances from March to October 1917, we illustrate geographic variation in the actions recorded by these sources, and we statistically identify determinants of this variation. We show that two factors robustly drive province-level variation in peasant unrest in 1917: soil quality and the historical prevalence of serfdom.

Revolutionary Economic Reasoning in the Context of Revolution: the Origins and Fate of Bolshevik Economics

DENIS MEL'NIK

By February 1917, the handful of future Bolshevik leaders of Russia were scattered all over the globe. Among the few things they had in common was a peculiar vision of the Russian economy and of global economic trends. That vision guided their revolutionary activity. Whether it was "correct" or not, they succeeded. With their grip on power secured, however, their economic

reasoning had to confront new challenges, which eventually reshaped the original approach.

February 23 and March 8: Two Holidays that Upstaged the February Revolution, 1917–1923

ELIZABETH A. WOOD

By most accounts, the Russian Revolution began on February 23, 1917 with the women's strike for bread and suffrage. Yet for the next thirteen years (until 1930), that revolutionary beginning was celebrated on March 12, after which it was expunged from the revolutionary calendar altogether. "International Women's Day" meanwhile became March 8 because of the change in the Russian calendar in 1918 (it had been 13 days behind the European calendar), and February 23 became "Red Army Day" and subsequently (in 2006), "Day of the Defender of the Fatherland." Over the course of the early 1920s, the connection between the women's strike on February 23/March 8 and the February Revolution was actively undermined in several ways. First, the February Revolution itself was dated not from the moment when women marched in the streets of Petrograd calling out the men to strike, but rather from March 12 (February 27), which was the day of the founding of the Temporary Committee of the State Duma, soon to become the Provisional Government. Second, the celebration of the two holidays of Red Army Day on February 23 and International Women's Day on March 8 created a split between men and women in their celebrations, separating them and assigning spheres to each, the army for men and the home for women. Finally, the creation of February 23 as the anniversary of the Red Army's founding seems to have deliberately upstaged both women's involvement in the 1917 Revolution and the overthrow of autocracy.

"Do It the Russian Way": Narratives of the Russian Revolution in European History Textbooks

MARHARYTA FABRYKANT

The article presents the results of narrative analysis of contemporary European history textbooks' coverage of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The sample consists of 101 textbooks from 22 European states, published between 2000 and 2015 and currently in use in secondary and high schools. The results show that the Russian Revolution, unlike most other events in Russia's history, is narrated as a story not about Russianness, but about shared European historical experiences and social issues. The article discusses the implications of this way of narrating the Russian Revolution for the perceived logic of European history.

The Russian Revolution as a Tourist Attraction

DIANE P. KOENKER

Looking at Soviet guidebooks from the 1920s to the 1960s, this essay argues that 1905 and 1917 revolutionary places as "tourist attractions" were mostly tangential to the tourist experience, although one could argue that the entire

USSR was a monument to the “revolution.” The revolution remained one destination of many possible tourist excursions, its memory one building block of many that made up the basis of Soviet citizenship. The revolution as tourist attraction did not celebrate 1917 as a *rupture*, but rather a point of entry, the moment from which the many and not the few could share in a culture of world importance.