THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS OF 1917

The Northern Impact and Beyond

Edited by Kari Aga Myklebost,
Jens Petter Nielsen,
and Andrei Rogatchevski

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Boston
2020

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Myklebost, Kari Aga, editor. | Nielsen, Jens Petter, editor. | Rogatchevski, Andrei, editor.

Title: The Russian Revolutions of 1917: the northern impact and beyond / edited by Kari Aga Myklebost, Jens Petter Nielsen, and Andrei Rogatchevski.

Description: Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019037404 (print) | LCCN 2019037405 (ebook) | ISBN 9781644690642 (hardback) | ISBN 9781644690659 (adobe pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Russia, Northern—History—Revolution, 1917-1921. | Soviet Union—History—Revolution, 1917-1921—Influence. | Norway—History—1905-1940. | Sweden—History—Gustav V, 1907-1950.

Classification: LCC DK265.8.R83 R87 2019 (print) | LCC DK265.8.R83 (ebook) | DDC 947.084/1—dc23

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019037404
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019037405

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ISBN 978-1-64469-064-2 (hardback) | ISBN 978-1-64469-065-9 (adobe pdf)
ISBN 978-1-64469-324-7 (open access pdf)

Book design by Kryon Publishing Services. Cover design by Ivan Grave.

Published by Academic Studies Press
1577 Beacon Street
Brookline, MA 02446, USA
www.academicstudiespress.com

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Cover Picture: An Explanatory Note

In February 1920, when the Bolsheviks recaptured the city of Arkhangelsk on the White Sea, General Evgenii Miller's White North Russian government fled just in time to Northern Norway on board the icebreaker *Kozma Minin*. Together with the government, there were hundreds of White soldiers and other supporters. The icebreaker arrived safely in Tromsø and soon continued southwards along the Norwegian coast. The cover picture shows the *Kozma Minin* arriving at a harbor near Trondheim, where the Russian refugees were to submit to preliminary internment.

The photo is owned by, and reproduced courtesy of, Sverresborg Trøndelag Folkemuseum, Trondheim. Photographer: Schrøder, March 6, 1920.

Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank Professor Paul Dukes, Alice Jondorf, Jens I. H. Nielsen, and UiT The Arctic University of Norway, for their assistance with the preparation of this volume.

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Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia is Lead Curator of Central and East European Collections at the British Library. She has taught various courses related to Russian literature, language, and culture at the Russian State University for Humanities (Moscow), Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, London School of Economics and Imperial College London, and has worked as a research fellow at the Institute of World Literature (Moscow). In 2017, she published *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Death* (London: British Library Publishing, 2017).

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8, no. 2 (2015), "Russophone Periodicals in Israel," *Stanford Slavic Studies* 47 (2016), "Madness and Literature," *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach 80* (2017), and "Russian Space: Concepts, Practices, Representations," *Nordlit* 39 (2017).

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Hallvard Tjelmeland is Professor of Twentieth-Century History at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. His expertise includes regional, immigration, media, and labor movement history. Over the last fifteen years, he has written extensively on Cold War history and Norwegian-Soviet/Russian relations. Tjelmeland is participating in the program "In a World of Total War: Norway 1939–1945" and leads the research group "From North Front to Ice Front."

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A Note on Transliteration

The contributors to this volume tend to use a modified Library of Congress transliteration system, as long as it does not deviate too far from the established tradition of anglicizing Russian surnames.

Introduction

Historical anniversaries often serve as occasions for reflecting on existing readings of past events and on how perceptions of historical events have changed over time. All over the world, 2017 saw a multitude of conferences, exhibitions, and seminars devoted to the centenary of Russia's February and October revolutions. This testifies to the fact that the Russian Revolution is still considered of global importance, the reverberations of which reach far in space and time, including into our present. In Norway, several conferences were organized in commemoration of the centenary, and this book is the result of one of them. In October, 2017, UiT The Arctic University of Norway hosted an international conference—The Russian Revolutions of 1917: The Northern Impact and Beyond. The aim of this gathering was to explore the events of 1917 with a focus on the northern regions and, in particular, the impact of the revolutions on Russia's neighbor state in the northwestern corner of the empire, Norway. The conference also included contributions that reached beyond the North, opening up for more general discussion about the revolutions of 1917 and their effects in Europe, as well as in Russia. Several contributions explored the reception of the Russian revolutions of 1917 in Scandinavian states and their importance for bilateral relations between various countries.

Geographical notions are relative and their content varies with the vantage point of the subject. In this volume, "the North" refers in some contributions to the Nordic countries, in others to the High North—that is, the northernmost parts of Norway and Russia, including the adjacent border regions of the two states. The northern perspective is significant when it comes to the relation between Norway and Russia, as the two countries share not only a northern border, but also a long history of managing vast northern territories on land and at sea. Norway and Russia both consider themselves northern states, and their geographical location has played a critical role in the history of both

countries.[1] The articles in the present volume demonstrate that commemoration of the centenary of the Russian Revolution would be incomplete without an exploration of this (somewhat overlooked) northern dimension. These articles are presented in a more or less chronological order, charting various aspects of both the short- and long-term influence of the Russian Revolution within Russia, beyond its borders, and in the North as a whole.

Part one of the volume opens with the article by Vladislav I. Goldin of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk. In "The Russian Revolution and Civil War in the North: Contemporary Approaches and Understanding," Goldin argues that the civil war in the north—as in Russia at large—can be characterized as a national and international phenomenon which included many political, class, social, economic, social-cultural, cultural, ethnic-national, and other conflicts, clashes, and contradictions. The Allied intervention in northern Russia started in early 1918, and lasted until the end of 1919. The Allies helped anti-Bolshevik forces seize power in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, and initiated the main fighting against the Soviet forces. Goldin makes it clear that the withdrawal of the Allies led to the failure of the White cause in the Russian North, and that the question of Allied responsibility for the civil war in northern Russia is one of the most important in historiography. The Supreme Administration of the Northern Region could not solve the main questions which were put on the agenda: those concerning labor, peasant-agrarian issues, and the national question, etc. The administration was fully dependent on support from abroad. The Bolsheviks managed to capitalize on the Supreme Administration's problems, and skillfully carried out their propaganda offensive, accusing their opponents of unpatriotic, anti-Russian feelings and actions.

The next contribution, "The Russian Revolution in Sweden: Some Genetic and Genealogical Perspectives," is by Klas-Göran Karlsson (University of Lund, Sweden). Karlsson focuses on how Sweden influenced the Russian revolutionaries and on how the Russian Revolution, in its turn, made a lasting impression on Swedish society, politics, and culture. Conservatives—most of whom sympathized with Russia's world war enemy, Germany—completely repudiated the political changes that took place in Petrograd in March and November, 1917, and often depicted them as two stages on a downhill slide toward the decomposition of Russian society. Meanwhile, broader liberal and social democratic groups in Sweden welcomed the fall of the Romanov dynasty

1 Cf. K. A. Myklebost, J. P. Nielsen, V. V. Tevlina, A. A. Komarov (eds), *Net Severa, a est' severa: The Manifold Ideas of the North in Norway and Russia*. Moscow: URSS/LENAND, 2016.

and saw the rise to power of the Provisional Government in March, 1917, as a promising development that could promote stabilization, freedom, and democracy in Russia, and—indirectly—at home. However, when Petrograd became even more radicalized in 1917, these same liberal and social democratic groups saw a growing threat and dissociated themselves from Russia's social and political transformation. Russia in 1917 has often been used politically in Sweden as a menacing event, and constructed as bound up with events at home that resemble the revolution and the rise of the Bolsheviks.

Aspects of the immediate reception of the Russian revolutions of 1917 in Norway have been studied by Kari Aga Myklebost (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) in her article "The Idea of a Liberal Russia: The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the Norwegian Slavist Olaf Broch." Olaf Broch was a leading expert on Russia in Norway, and wrote on a regular basis for the conservative newspaper *Aftenposten* about Russian politics and society. The political liberalization in the aftermath of the 1905 Russian Revolution, with the establishment of legal political parties and the Duma, was greeted with enthusiasm by Broch. He believed this to be the start of a new era for Russia, bringing her closer to the modern states of Western Europe, in general, and neighboring Norway, in particular. With the February Revolution of 1917, these expectations were reinforced. Broch reported in *Aftenposten* on the development of the situation in Petrograd, openly supporting the political strategy of the foreign minister of the Provisional Government, Pavel Miliukov. However, he was greatly disturbed by Lenin's rhetoric and the growing popular unrest during the summer and early autumn of 1917. He received the news of the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in October with astonishment and disgust, and shared the opinion of Western Europe's establishment that the Bolsheviks were merely a temporary phenomenon. Through his widely read articles, Broch played a part in shaping the perception of the February Revolution as bloodless, glorious, and politically legitimate.

The socioeconomic aspects of the bilateral relationship between northern Norway and Arkhangelsk province during the revolutionary period are investigated by Tatiana Troshina and Ekaterina Kotlova—both of Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk—in their article "Arkhangelsk Province and Northern Norway in 1917–1920: Foreign Property and Capital after the October Revolution of 1917." The Arkhangelsk Bolsheviks nationalized the property of foreigners, among whom Norwegians were prominent. However, when the Whites came to power in Arkhangelsk they refused to pay any compensation. The Whites claimed that it was the obligation of the Bolsheviks

and that, since they had lost power, no money would be forthcoming. The situation with foreign trade became further complicated when combined with financial and currency issues. Nothing was decided in a proper manner and the reputation of foreigners plummeted among locals. Foreign ownership existed for as long as it was necessary for the Soviet state to resolve its financial problems with minimal cost. The economic difficulties of the 1920s forced the Bolsheviks to issue special decrees to allow concessions, mixed companies, and foreign shares in enterprises. In Arkhangelsk province, these concessions mostly applied to the forestry sector.

Victoria V. Tevlina of UiT The Arctic University of Norway and of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk, considers specific aspects of "Russian Emigration to Norway after the Russian Revolution and Civil War," while also reflecting on Russian migration to Scandinavia and the Russian diaspora in general. Migrants consisted of officers and government officials from the White northern government during the civil war, who had to flee when the Bolsheviks conquered Arkhangelsk; fishermen and peasant traders, who had had close links with northern Norway from before 1917; and Norwegians who had settled in Russia. The postrevolutionary wave of Russian emigration is undoubtedly a peculiar chapter in the history of Russo-Norwegian relations, despite its modest size.

Åsmund Egge (University of Oslo, Norway) analyses "Soviet Diplomacy in Norway and Sweden in the Interwar Years," focusing specifically on the role of Alexandra Kollontai. Kollontai was head of the Soviet diplomatic representation, first in Norway (1923–30, except for 1926–27 when she was in Mexico) and then Sweden (1930–1945), and an important figure for bilateral relations between the aforementioned states. Among her achievements were Norway's de jure recognition of the Bolshevik government and the establishment of trade agreements between the two countries. Egge's article looks at the dualistic nature of Soviet diplomacy—on the one hand, its wish to foment world revolution and, and on the other, its need to establish and consolidate normal diplomatic relations. Against this backdrop, Egge discusses the degree to which Kollontai affected relations between states. The article concludes that Kollontai was an outstanding diplomat, who gained respect and admiration as both a professional and an individual.

Ole Martin Rønning (The Norwegian Labor Movement Archives and Library, Oslo) is the author of "Apprentices of the World Revolution: Norwegian Communists at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ) and the International Lenin School, 1926–1937." Rønning examines

Norwegian participation at educational institutions for foreign communists in the Soviet Union during the interwar years, known as the international cadre schools. The objective of these schools was to strengthen the international communist movement and secure Soviet leadership. The article describes the formation and development of the cadre schools, and how the schools molded the political ideals and identity of its students. The cadre schools are seen through the lens of Scandinavian and especially Norwegian participation. The article also includes a section discussing the influence of former cadre school students within the Norwegian Communist Party up until the late 1960s. The article concludes that the cadre schools did play a role in establishing and maintaining a communist movement in Norway that was loyal to the Soviet Union.

Hallvard Tjelmeland (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) examines "The Impact of the October Revolution on the North-Norwegian Labor Movement"—that is, the counties of Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark. The scholar identifies pockets of left-wing radicalism and pro-Soviet/Russian sympathy throughout the region—for instance, in Southern Varanger in eastern Finnmark, in Hammerfest in western Finnmark, in Tromsø and Harstad in Troms county, and in mining communities, such as Salangen in Troms, and Sulitjelma, and Rana in Nordland. Pro-revolutionary, or revolution-inspired, sentiments manifested themselves, for example, in journalism, industrial actions, and a high proportion of voting for the political left, from the late 1910s to the present (with periodical variations in intensity and geographical spread).

Opening part two, Andrei Rogatchevski of UiT The Arctic University of Norway directs the volume's focus away from northern Norway to the Urals, and from revolutionary practices and feelings to the representation of the Russian Revolution on the big screen. His "Avant-garde Artists vs. Reindeer Herders: The Kazym Rebellion in Aleksei Fedorchenko's *Angels of the Revolution* (2014)" analyzes a memorable, heavily fictionalized, and mythologized art house film about the early 1930s Kazym rebellion of the Khanty and Nentsy against the Soviet policy of collectivization. Rogatchevski explains why such a mythologization is necessary, as opposed to a straightforward documentary about a little known but significant episode in the anti-communist struggle of indigenous people in Siberia.

The Russian Revolution led to mass emigration. In her article "1917: The Evolution of Russian Émigré Views to the Revolution," Catherine Andreyev (University of Oxford) summarizes various émigré attitudes to the revolution, from the *Vekhi* collection (edited in 1909 by Mikhail Gershenzon) to Mensheviks, and from Eurasianists and Solidarists to the Peasant Russia and

Changing Signposts movements. Having emigrated, major participants in the upheavals of 1917 tended to concentrate on the events of that year and often sought to justify their own actions, as well as criticize the actions of their opponents. Further, new émigré groups arose, which found arguments about what happened in 1917 inadequate and wanted to add new elements to the debate. Despite the diversity of opinion among émigrés concerning how they should relate to the USSR, and about what they valued within Russian culture, a fundamental continuity can be observed between prerevolutionary ideas and those which arose after emigration. Andreyev concludes that while it is still too early for us, perhaps, to judge the full meaning of the revolution, it was a central concern of those who had to leave Russia after 1917.

The article by Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia (The British Library) "Russian Revolutions Exhibited: Behind the Scenes" shares the author's thoughts on the 2017 exhibition *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myth* at the British Library, of which she was a lead curator. The exhibition was shown in commemoration of the centennial of the Russian revolutions, aimed at a broad and for the most part British audience, and drew most of its material from the British Library's collections. One of the ambitions of the exhibition was to contribute to the broader historiographical trend of viewing the Russian revolutions as part of a longer chronology that includes both the First World War and the Russian Civil War. Rogatchevskaia explains the curatorial decisions that were made, in terms of both the objects chosen for the exhibition and the aesthetic reasons behind their placement. The article also discusses responses from visitors and reviewers, and puts the exhibition into the wider context of similar projects commemorating the Russian Revolution.

Jens Petter Nielsen of UiT The Arctic University of Norway concludes the volume with "The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Kremlin's Policy of Remembrance." His research question is: what kind of remembrance policy underlies the Kremlin leadership's management of the history of the Russian Revolution? It is not difficult to understand that after the breakdown of the Soviet Union the new, post-Soviet leadership in Russia needed a reinterpretation of the Russian Revolution. In the wake of the total rejection of historical materialism, it had to find a way to connect the country's past with the present. Putin wants to locate his new regime within the tradition of Russia as a great power, and underline the benevolent part played by the state in Russian history. Putin's problem, however, is that the Russian Revolution, which devastated the tsarist state and the Russian Empire, does not fit into this picture of historical continuity. At the end

of his article, nevertheless, Nielsen suggests that the October Revolution could have still been included in Putin's metanarrative of Russia's history, without weakening the continuity of the great power tradition.

The choice and treatment of the subjects outlined above make it clear that a hundred years after the Russian Revolution there are still new things to say about it. We hope this volume will encourage further studies of the topic.

Kari Aga Myklebost, Jens Petter Nielsen,
Andrei Rogatchevski

Part One

The Northern Impact

The Russian Revolution and Civil War in the North: Contemporary Approaches and Understanding

Vladislav Goldin
(Northern [Arctic] Federal University, Arkhangelsk)

The aim of this article is to analyze the particulars of the development of the Russian Revolution and Civil War in the North. The term "North" (that is, the European north of Russia) implies the territory of three provinces within the administrative borders of the Russian Empire in 1917—the Arkhangelsk, Vologda, and Olonets provinces. This vast and varied territory, large enough to contain several European countries, had a population of approximately 2.7 million by 1917. Today, it includes the Komi and Karelian republics, as well as the Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, and Vologda provinces.

There is a large historiography devoted to the Russian Revolution and Civil War in the North. Since the 1920s, more than a hundred books on this subject have been published, dozens of dissertations defended, and several thousand articles issued in the USSR/Russia and abroad.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian North was a huge and sparsely populated region with immense natural resources. It was a border region with close commercial and cultural contact with foreign countries and their populations. Russian northerners had their own specific way of life and an established, unique, and productive culture. The main features of the northern mentality were independence, freethinking, and a tradition of mutual assistance. There was a democratic outlook, a sense of fearlessness and tranquility, and no inclination to apply brute force for eliminating contradictions and conflicts.

In order to characterize the social and economic situation in the North before the Revolution of 1917, it is important to stress that notwithstanding rapid industrial development elsewhere (industrial production in 1917 was

twice that of 1900), the North was mainly rural. More than 90 percent of the population (although less than 90 percent in the province of Arkhangelsk) lived in the countryside. Agriculture was one of many sources of livelihood for the northern peasantry. Hunting and fishing, seasonal work, numerous handicrafts producing goods for sale, lumbering and sawing of timber, peddling goods, and so forth, could be seen in different combinations from one area to another. Most northern peasants lived in social communities (*obshchina*). Northern state peasants had no experience of the evils of landlordism and were less susceptible to radicalism before and after 1917.

There were about 35,000 industrial workers in the large factories of the North, including 24,000 working at sawmills before 1914. Approximately 25,000 worked on northern railroads, and after the Murman railway was built this group grew rapidly during the First World War. Port workers, especially those evacuated from Latvia throughout the war, played an important role in the revolutionary events in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. The total number of non-industrial workers in the three northern provinces was more than 380,000.[1]

The leaders of the local elite, entrepreneurs, and the intelligentsia believed that government policy in the North was too centralized, and that it was unable to recognize the peculiar needs of the northern economy and society. They demanded a modernization of the North and more control over local affairs through institutions of local self-government. Their relations with the government were uneasy in many respects. Nevertheless, the political situation in the North, before and during the Great War according to police accounts, was stable. The influence of the revolutionary parties was limited and did not seriously disturb the local authorities and police either before or during the war.

The news about the February Revolution of 1917 and the overthrow of the tsar reached the North via telegraph and was warmly welcomed by the different social groups of the population. There were many meetings, demonstrations, and solidarity marches. The Festival of the Revolution was celebrated in Arkhangelsk on March 10 with the participation of 20,000 to 40,000 people from different social strata. The first, short period of the revolution was characterized in the North, as in the whole country, by joy, dreams, and hopes, with mass public activities and the establishment of many new institutions and organizations.

1 Mikhail I. Shumilov, *Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia na Severe Rossii* (Petrozavodsk: Kareliia, 1973), 26–27.

In March 1917, Soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies were organized in the towns of the region and later Soviets of peasants' deputies were established in the countryside. The coalition of SRs (Socialist Revolutionaries) and Mensheviks dominated most of the northern Soviets almost entirely in 1917. In the first days and weeks of the revolution, ideas of class compromise were popular, along with cooperation among different social and political groups and organizations. As a result, in March 1917 Arkhangelsk, Vologda, and certain other towns, were each given their own committee of public security. These committees included representatives of self-government, public and business organizations, and Soviets that had recently been formed. In June 1917 the Provisional Government finally established a zemstvo[2] for the first time in Arkhangelsk province.

Soldiers and sailors were at the heart of political life in the Northern Region, as well as in Russia as a whole. There were 43,000 of them in the North, and they founded their own organizations in 1917: the Central Committee of the Arctic Flotilla; the Central Committee of the Army; and the Central Committee of Soldiers' Delegates in Arkhangelsk. These organizations (especially the Central Committee of the Arctic Flotilla) were radical, with a strong Bolshevik element. They demanded that Soviets take control of local affairs and lead the revolution to the next stage. Alongside these developments, there was also growth in trade unions, workers' factory committees, and the cooperative movement in the North.

Local political parties were rather small in the North. There were about eighteen hundred SRs in Vologda province at the end of summer 1917 and a few hundred of them in Arkhangelsk and Olonets provinces. There were approximately nine hundred Kadets (Constitutional Democrats) in Vologda province and even fewer in Arkhangelsk and Olonets provinces.[3] There were a few hundred Bolsheviks in the northern provinces.

Possibilities for regional policy and politics expanded greatly after the fall of the tsar. Different political and social organizations began to

2 Zemstvo was an institution of local self-government created on an elected basis and instituted during the reforms of 1860s and during the few next decades in Imperial Russia. However, these bodies were not instituted in all provinces of the state. In the North, they were instituted in the Vologda and Olonets provinces and not in the Arkhangelsk province because the composition of its population was considered too democratic.

3 Shumilov, *Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia*, 78, 107; Andrei N. Egorov, "Kadetskie organizatsii Vologodskoi gubernii v 1917–1918 gg.," in *Evropeiskii Sever: istoriia i sovremennost'* (Petrozavodsk: KNTs AN SSSR 1990), 43.

realize their own aspirations in the North in 1917, as well as in Russia at large, and to work out their own programs. All this had both positive and negative consequences. No effective system of governance was established by the Provisional Government (after the destruction of the old tsarist one)—neither at state, regional, nor local level. All over Russia, including the North, many organs and organizations tried to put pressure on governance or even govern. The final result was poor.

After the short first stage of revolution—with its joy and celebration—a destructive phase began. In Russia, and in the North especially, there were numerous growing crises. There were problems with the supply of food and industrial goods; the standard of living was falling; and there was dissatisfaction with the authorities. However, no bloody conflicts arose in the northern provinces in 1917, and political struggle was carried out by peaceful means.

The news about the Bolsheviks' accession to power in Petrograd was followed by discussions in the Northern regional and local institutions, zemstvo municipal self-governing bodies, and Soviets in the northern provinces. Most of them did not support the new central power. Only a few Soviets in small towns such as Murmansk, Soroka, Kandalaksha, Sukhona, and Sokol recognized the Bolshevik government immediately. An acute political contest for power became a reality in most northern towns.

Most of the population lived in small and widely dispersed settlements that were isolated from each other. People suffered from a lack of information about political processes and took a position of "wait and see." Among the northern, moderate socialists, the ideas of "democratic power, including all the shades of political parties, united in the Soviets" and a "homogeneous" government were popular. But these proposals were rejected by the Bolsheviks. The relations between the various Russian socialist groups became ever more irreconcilable.

The elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917 were a clear indicator of the political preferences of the northerners. The SRs won in the countryside, but in the towns the majority of the population generally voted for the Bolsheviks (Arkhangelsk; Murmansk), or Kadets (Vologda; Velikii Ustiug). On the whole, 73 percent of northerners voted for the SRs, 15 percent for the Bolsheviks, 7.3 percent for the Kadets, and 0.9 percent for the Mensheviks.[4] In total, eight SRs, one independent (who went over to the Bolsheviks), and one Bolshevik were elected as deputies of the Constituent Assembly.

4 Leonid M. Spirin, *Klassy i partii v grazhdanskoi voine v Rossii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1968), 416; Iurii M. Rappoport, *Osushchestvlenie ekonomicheskoi politiki Kommunisticheskoi partii v usloviiakh Evropeiskogo Severa, 1917–1925* (Leningrad: LGU, 1964), 12.

Since the end of 1917, the influence of the Soviets and the position the Bolsheviks had in them had been increasing. By the spring of 1918 the Bolsheviks, in alliance with the left SRs, were already in control of all provincial and most municipal and district Soviets in the North. Their position was not firm, however. Most of the population, primarily the peasants, again took a neutral "wait and see" position. In the end, the status of the new authorities depended on their ability to find a way out of the deep crisis into which the country and the Northern Region had plunged.

The origins and beginning of international intervention and the civil war in the North were connected with the small port town of Murmansk and its neighboring territory, Murman. These events (of 1917 to the first half of 1918) were not only of regional, but also of national and international importance, and became a significant milestone in the history of intervention and the Russian Civil War.

For a long time, the Murman coast had been a sparsely settled region with a population of a few thousand people. This changed during the Great War. The recently constructed town of Murmansk became the only ice-free port in European Russia that was suitable for landing Allied war supplies. The railway that connected the port with the capital was completed at the end of 1916. Murmansk also became a major Russian naval base in the High North and served as a base for the Allied (mostly British) navy, which had been stationed in the waters of the Barents and White Seas since 1915. The navy's task was to protect the vital northern sea lanes against floating mines and attacks by German submarines. British Rear Admiral Thomas W. Kemp was commander of the naval squadron.

The strategic importance of Murman explains why the Entente coalition countries, primarily Britain, wished to strengthen their hand in the area. A secret Anglo-French agreement on the division of spheres of influence in the south of Russia was signed in Paris on 23 December 1917. It was also agreed that the Russian North would be a British sphere of influence. British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur F. Balfour, wrote in January to the consul general of the British Embassy in Petrograd, Francis O. Lindley, that the British government considered their continued presence in the northern area to be desirable and "had no intention of withdrawing the naval forces at Murmansk." Frederick C. Poole, the British general and chief of the Russia Supply Committee in Petrograd, wrote to London in January 1918: "Of all the schemes I have heard, the one I like best is to boost up the Northern Federation—with Arkhangelsk as center. There we could easily

consolidate the Government—one Man of War in the harbor would do that. We could reap a rich harvest in timber and railway concessions and control the two Northern Ports."[5]

At the end of 1917, the population of Murmansk numbered about 13,000 and consisted almost entirely of newcomers: railroad and construction workers and their families, as well as soldiers and sailors. This was a transient population that did not intend to stay in the area. The Murmansk Soviet was predominantly unaffiliated to a party, but was the first in the North to acknowledge the Bolshevik government in Petrograd (on 26 October 1917). The main military commander of the Murmansk Fortified Region (Glavnomur), Rear Admiral Kazimir F. Ketlinskii, driven by the need to maintain both defense and order, supported this decision. The Bolshevik influence was considerable in the main public organizations: Murmansk Sovzheldor (the local committee of the Union of Murman Railwaymen) and Centromur (the Central Committee of the Murmansk Flotilla).

During the first half of 1918, the general situation in Murman transformed profoundly for the following reasons, among others: the demobilization of the soldiers and sailors; the departure of the construction workers; the murder of Ketlinskii; a change of the structure, status, and staff of the Murmansk Soviet; a growing dependence on Allied provisions; a political and military crisis involving primarily Britain and Germany; and territorial claims of the White Finns and their raids on the region.

The Entente representatives did their best to strengthen both their own significance and the ambitions of separatists in the region. Naval officer Georgy M. Veselago, executive secretary of both the People's Collegium and the Murmansk Soviet, and his anti-Bolshevik companions in arms (former general Nikolai I. Zvegintsev, chief of the local military forces, Vladimir M. Bramson, head of the Department of Civil Governance, etc.), favored the gradual self-isolation of the region from the Bolshevik government. They wished to create in Murman a separate regional administration (independent of Arkhangelsk and Moscow) under Entente protection.

Allied intervention in North Russia, initially in Murman, began in a unique international situation. The interests of the warring coalitions—the Entente countries, and the Central Powers, represented primarily by Great Britain and Germany—were pushed relentlessly there. Furthermore, it is necessary

5 Andrew Rothshtein, *When Britain Invaded Soviet Russia: The Consul who Rebelled* (London: Journeyman Press, 1979), 60–61.

to take into consideration the Finnish Civil War (January–May 1918), where the White Finns were supported by Germany and the Red Finns by Bolshevik Russia. The objectives of the White Finns and Germany concerning North Russia (Murman and Karelia, especially) were obvious.

Several documents and events during the first week of March 1918 illustrate the different and contradictory interests, trends, and tendencies that guided the situation in Murman and the Russian North as a whole:

1. The treaty of March 1 between the Bolshevik government and the Finnish Socialist Workers government;
2. The so-called "Oral Agreement" of March 2 between the Murmansk Soviet and military representatives of the Entente. (The necessity of accepting Allied assistance to defend Murman against the threat of the White Finnish invasion was sanctioned by the people's commissar Lev D. Trotskii in his telegram of March 1);
3. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 3 between Bolshevik Russia and the Central Powers;
4. The landing of the German forces on the Aland Islands on March 5—the prologue to the major German intervention in Finland a month later;
5. The landing of the first detachment of British Royal Marines in Murmansk on March 6;
6. The agreement of March 7 on cooperation between Germany and the White Finns.

It was the beginning of the "Great Game" in Murman, with participation by Soviet Russia, regional and local authorities, the Entente countries, Germany, socialist Finland, and White Finland. All the participants tried to realize their own goals. The Allies hoped to organize intervention in Russia "by invitation" or "with consent" of the Bolshevik government and to thereby reestablish the Eastern Front. Germany wanted the Russian government to adhere to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and had intentions to occupy or control the Murmansk area, the northern Russian ports, and the Murmansk railway. It also wanted to push the Entente naval ships and military forces out of the Russian North. The Red Finns hoped to include western Murman and eastern (Russian) Karelia in the Finnish Socialist People's Republic as a result of an agreement with the Bolshevik government. The White Finns dreamed about a Great Finland ranging from the Arctic up to the Baltic Sea, and began military raids in spring 1918, to seize Murman and eastern Karelia. Hoping to bide their

time until the commencement of world revolution—which they believed was imminent—the Bolshevik leaders dealt evenhandedly with both the German coalition and the Entente, as well as tried to prevent them from fighting on Russian soil.

In spring and June 1918, the Allies, headed by Britain, strengthened their sway in Murman step-by-step. They sent warships and landing troops, and supported local anti-Bolshevik elements and their separatist ambitions. The Allies and their Russian associates tried to justify their increased military presence in Murman as a necessary response to the White Finnish and German threat to the region—especially after the victory of the White Finns in the civil war in Finland, which had been predetermined by German intervention.

The Entente forces, together with Soviet military detachments, engaged in fighting with the White Finns, who had invaded the border territories of Murman in spring and early June 1918, thus expanding their power and influence in the Russian North. At the beginning of June 1918, the Supreme War Council decided on an Allied military intervention in North Russia, portraying it as an anti-German move. General Poole, who was an ardent advocate of the Allied military intervention in northern Russia, actively participated in its planning and preparation. He arrived in Murmansk on May 24 as head of the British mission, and was appointed commander in chief of the Allied forces in Russia by the Supreme War Council at the beginning of June.

The Bolshevik government saw the growing danger of the Entente's anti-Bolshevik and anti-Russian character, but had no forces to prevent it. The government tried instead to use political and diplomatic means to protest against Allied activity in Murman and insisted, unsuccessfully, that the Murmansk Soviet do the same. On June 30, 1918, however, the Murmansk regional Soviet refused to execute these orders from Moscow and demanded withdrawal of the Entente troops. This meant a rupture with the Bolshevik government. The chairman of the Murmansk Soviet, Aleksei M. Uirev, was declared "an enemy of the people and an outlaw."[6] On July 6, the so-called "Temporary Agreement" for cooperation was signed between the presidium of the Murmansk regional Soviet and the representatives of Great Britain, France, and the US. In reality, an occupation regime was established in Murman, and all spheres of life were controlled by the interventionists.

The Murman events of the summer of 1918 marked the beginning of the Russian Civil War in the North. The Entente intervention, initially proclaimed

6 *Izvestiia VTsIK* [News of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee], July 2, 1918.

as anti-German, became in fact anti-Bolshevik and an undeclared war against Bolshevik Russia. The plans for moving most of the Czechoslovak Legion to the North failed, however, as a result of its anti-Bolshevik mutiny at the end of May. It meant the collapse of the initial Allied plans. A lack of sufficient military forces for the Russian North was a big challenge for the Allied countries and their military command.[7]

While the genesis of the civil war in the Russian North was connected in large part with the Entente intervention in Murman, it had numerous other causes: the deterioration of the socioeconomic and political situation both in the country at large and in the North; some extraordinary measures implemented by the Bolshevik authorities; and the persecution of the opposition and limitation of its activities. Conflict was also exacerbated by the use of illegal political and military methods by the Bolsheviks' rivals.

The Russian anti-Bolshevik organizations prepared a coup d'état in Arkhangelsk in collaboration with the Entente military representatives and diplomats. The coup in Arkhangelsk on August 2, 1918 took place simultaneously with the arrival of the Allied fleet and military intervention. These events, and the beginning of a full-scale military intervention, signaled a new stage in the civil war in Russia. Without the Allied interposition, the anti-Bolshevik struggle in the North would hardly have taken the form of civil war.

On August 2, the Supreme Administration of the Northern Region was formed in Arkhangelsk, headed by Nikolai V. Chaikovskii, a veteran of the Russian revolutionary movement, and one of the leaders of the Popular Socialist Party and the Union for the Regeneration of Russia. The Supreme Administration consisted mostly of SRs, and its first ten decrees began with the phrase, "For the sake of the Motherland and the achievements of the

7 The Czechoslovak Legion, originally an all-volunteer battalion, consisted of ethnic Czechs and Slovaks residing in the Russian Empire. In the summer of 1917, it was allowed to also include Czechoslovak prisoners of war. From 1917, the Czechoslovak Legion took part in the fighting in Ukraine, together with the Russian Army. On 25 March 1918, an agreement was signed between the Bolshevik authorities and representatives of the Czechoslovak National Council about the evacuation of the Czechoslovak Legion through Vladivostok to France. However, on May 2 the Supreme War Council of the Entente decided to use the Czechoslovak detachments as a nucleus of Entente forces in the intervention in the Russian North. This plan ran aground due to the anti-Bolshevik uprising of the Czechoslovak Legion, which was strung out along the Trans-Siberian Railway from Penza to Vladivostok at the end of May 1918. The Czechoslovak Legion became the main force of the Allied intervention in Siberia and the Far East, and contributed to the full-scale Civil War in Russia.

revolution."[8] Chaikovskii wrote in a letter from Arkhangelsk to Paris that "the program of the Supreme Administration aimed at restoring the democratic order of 1917."[9]

The real power, however, was in the hands of General Poole. He controlled the main spheres of life in the city and region, and acted without reference to, or respect for, the Supreme Administration. In short, he mistrusted the socialist government and supported right-wing organizations. Chaikovskii tried to appeal to the Allied diplomats who arrived in Arkhangelsk on August 9, but without definite results.

On the night of September 5 and 6, 1918, the group of officers headed by the commander of Russian military forces of the Northern Region, Captain Georgii E. Chaplin, arrested the members of the Supreme Administration and sent them into exile at the Solovetskii monastery located by the White Sea. This coup was organized by right-wing circles. After mass protests and intercession by Allied diplomats, the ministers were released and returned to Arkhangelsk. But the prestige of the Supreme Administration was severely undermined after the Chaplin putsch, and this event was highly important for the anti-Bolshevik movement and the subsequent course of events in the civil war in the Russian North. This experience demonstrated the sharp conflicts within the anti-Bolshevik movement, and the inability of its different factions to work together. The moderate socialists, who alone enjoyed wide popular support, were condemned by right-wing groups and the Allied military command for having carried out the policies of discredited former prime minister Kerenskii (*kerenshchina*). On the other hand, the anti-Bolshevik socialists mistrusted the ex-tsarist officers, who alone could organize a real military force for the struggle against the new regime. The Supreme Administration did not receive the support of the Allied military administration.

At the beginning of October 1918, Chaikovskii formed the Provisional Government of the Northern Region to replace the Supreme Administration, and was the only socialist in the new government. The term "Provisional" in the title of the government instead of "Supreme" was in recognition of the limited powers of the Russian authorities. The government asked its opponents "to give up local and class interests" and "to suspend the parties' difference of opinions" for the sake of "salvation of the Motherland," and to work jointly

8 *Vestnik Verkhovnogo Upravleniia Severnoi Oblasti* [Herald of the Supreme Administration of the Northern Region], August 10, 1918

9 State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). F. 5805, Op. 1, D. 132, L. 5.

with the Allies.[10] But it was nearly impossible to carry out this political course during the civil war. The majority of the population was indifferent to the government's promises and policies, and more interested in ending than in continuing the war.

The military situation in the North was very complicated. Initial plans for military intervention failed. They could reach neither Moscow nor Vologda on the Railroad Front, and seized only Obozerskaia station, located seventy miles to the south of Arkhangelsk. The attempt to reach Kotlas on the North Dvina Front also failed. The organization of the local armed forces had a poor start. A volunteer enrollment into the so-called Russian People's Army produced only 1,000 volunteers in August, and only 250 of them were sent to the front.[11] An attempt at mass conscription failed. The local population had no wish to fight. At the same time, the Bolshevik resistance to the Allied intervention was growing. In September 1918, the Sixth Army was formed—under the command of former colonel Vladimir M. Gittis and former general Alexander A. Samoilo—to confront the interventionists.

The Allied intervention was anti-Bolshevik in character. It was not possible to describe it as a defense of the local population against the Germans, as there were none in the North. The situation worsened after the end of the First World War. Following the Armistice, it was not possible for the Allies to justify their activity using political, military, and strategic considerations connected with the Great War. Their anti-Bolshevik political and ideological motives were obvious, as were their geopolitical and economic intentions: control over the strategically important Russian border region (its ports, communications, and local economies); the acquisition of goods and raw materials (often without any consent from the local Russian authorities); and gaining concessions.

There were 23,516 foreign officers and soldiers, and only 7,156 (mostly mobilized Russians), in the armed forces of the Northern Region at the end of 1918.[12] All of them were under the British commander in chief, General William E. Ironside, who replaced General Poole in this position in October 1918. The number of Bolshevik forces ranged from 15,000 to 18,000 in the winter of 1918–1919.

Despite the official decision on the withdrawal of the Allied forces, the British war minister, Winston Churchill, did his best to convert the

10 *Vestnik Verkhovnogo Upravleniia Severnoi Oblasti*, October 9, 1918.

11 GARF. F. 16, Op. 1, D. L, 52. 54.

12 *Army. The Evacuation of North Russia. 1919* (London H. M. Stationary Office, 1920), 19–20.

evacuation into a full-scale offensive operation in the North, as soon as weather permitted. He dispatched fresh British reinforcements—two brigades of the Russian Relief Force—to Arkhangelsk in May–June 1919. Churchill planned to attack in the direction of Kotlas and thus join with Admiral Kolchak's White forces.[13] But mutinies in the White Army of the Northern Region led to the decision to evacuate from the Russian North in the summer of 1919. The Allied command held that the continuation of the war without their support was senseless, and suggested the evacuation of the White forces. However, the commander in chief of the Northern Front, General Evgenii K. Miller, rejected this advice. He bet on White victories on the other main fronts of the Russian Civil War.

After the evacuation of the Entente troops, the leadership of the anti-Bolshevik Northern Region tried to look for new allies. All attempts, however, were unsuccessful: The Finns, who had dreamed of a Great Finland at the expense of Russia's northwestern territories, occupied the Pechenga area which had been controlled by the White Russians; and Karelian separatists seized some areas near the border with Finland (and with the help of the Finns) and tried to establish independent republics with their own governments.

The economic situation in the Northern Region worsened rapidly from late 1919 to early 1920. The government had always been dependent on foreign support. It needed foodstuffs and coal, for example, but suffered from a shortage of foreign currency and could not pay for supplies from abroad. The government tried to force the local population, primarily the business community, to increase its contribution to the war effort through volunteer actions. It also imposed special measures, such as strict regulations and a demand for exporters to surrender all foreign currency in exchange for Russian currency. All these measures failed to seriously improve the situation, and instead led to dissatisfaction among businessmen in both the North and abroad. The result was that the government lost support as its social base weakened. At the same time, the lower classes demanded improvements to their social and economic circumstances, and an end to the Civil War.

In February 1920, the White Northern Front collapsed because of army mutinies. The leadership and command of the Northern Region and Northern

13 Alexander Vasilevich Kolchak (1874–1920), a polar explorer and commander of the Imperial Russian Navy. During the Russian Civil War, he was proclaimed the Supreme Ruler and Commander in Chief of All Russian Land and Sea Forces. In other words, he was the leader of anti-Bolshevik Russia. His residence and his government were based in Omsk. In January 1920, he was arrested and later executed by the Bolsheviks.

Front, as well as some groups of soldiers and civilians, managed to escape to Norway or Finland. This was the end of the Northern Front and civil war in northern Russia.

The civil war in the North, then—like the Russian Civil War as a whole—was a series, or complex, of conflicts:

1. between the Entente forces and the Bolsheviks, 1918–1919;
2. between Red Army and White Army detachments, 1918–1920;
3. between the Finnish "volunteers," who invaded Murman and Karelia, and the Bolshevik armed detachments supported by Entente sections, March–June 1918;
4. between the Reds and the Finns, 1918–1919;
5. between the Entente forces, together with the Finnish Legion and Karelian regiment (both of which were organized by the Allies), against the Finnish volunteers and the Karelian separatists, 1918–1919;
6. between the Karelian separatists supported by the White Finns and the Russian Whites, 1918–1920;
7. between the Karelian separatists and the supporters of Bolshevik power, 1918–1920;
8. mutinies, rebellions, and underground movements behind the front-lines of the Whites and Reds;
9. the activities of the White and Red partisan detachments.

Although the leaders of the Entente countries rejected responsibility for the civil war in North Russia, the Allies laid the groundwork for anti-Bolsheviks taking power in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, and initiated the main fighting against the new regime's forces. The withdrawal of Allied forces led to the failure of the White cause in the North.

Disunity in the anti-Bolshevik movement was one of the main reasons for its defeat in the Russian Civil War. There were a number of conflicts within the opposition camp in northern Russia: between the Allied countries as participants of the intervention; between the military command and diplomatic corps of the Entente countries in the North; between the Allied countries, the Northern Region, and the White Finns; between the Allied military command and the administration of the Northern Region; and between different anti-Bolshevik political groups in the North. The White authorities could not solve the main questions that were put on the agenda—those concerning workers, peasantry, agriculture, and relations between the local and the national. They were fully

dependent on support from abroad. The Bolsheviks skillfully capitalized on these failings, and carried out an effective propaganda offensive that accused their opponents of unpatriotic, anti-Russian, feelings and actions.

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The Russian Revolution in Sweden: Some Genetic and Genealogical Perspectives

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The upheavals in Petrograd in 1917 took place within Sweden's range and reach. For many Swedes, the events were ominously close. While Sweden—a neutral country—was not directly involved in the First World War, the conflict caused food shortages that led to strikes and hunger riots as far as the western shore of the Baltic Sea. Growing class antagonisms and the conservative Swedish political parties' persistent opposition to democracy were other driving forces behind popular discontent. No doubt, the situation in Petrograd provided demonstrators on the streets of Stockholm with inspiration. In the radical newspapers, the mounted military and police ordered out to confront them were called "Stockholm Cossacks." Sweden has never been closer to a social revolution than in the years 1917–1918.

In Swedish society, the Russian Revolution aroused contradictory feelings. Conservatives, most of them with sympathies for Russia's world war enemy, Germany, totally repudiated the March and November political changes in Petrograd, often depicting them as two stops on a downhill slope towards the decomposition of Russian society. The events in Russia confirmed the general historical lesson that revolutions devour their own children, a conservative newspaper warned.[1] Meanwhile, broader liberal and social democratic groups in Sweden, positioned in favor of the Entente powers, welcomed the fall of the Romanov dynasty, and saw the rise to power of the Provisional Government in March 1917, as a promising development that could promote stabilization, freedom, and democracy in Russia, and indirectly also at home. However, when conditions in the Russian capital once more radicalized later in 1917, these groups sensed a growing threat and expressed their dissociation from the new Russian social and political trends.

1 "Krigströtthet," *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, November 12, 1917.

For smaller radical groups in Sweden—many of them syndicalists who played an active role in Swedish demonstrations and riots, others belonging to the left wing of the Social Democratic Party—the news from Petrograd promised a better future for Russia, Sweden, and the world. As in most other European countries, an ideological rift between the reformist majority and the revolutionary minority within social democracy had grown stronger, and in May 1917, the radical opposition split from the Social Democratic Party to create the Social Democratic Left Party. After the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd in November, the antagonism between political groups increased. While for the reformists the Russian Revolution was not a model suitable for Sweden, they nevertheless saw it as an opportunity to put pressure on non-socialist groups to carry out political and social reforms—primarily universal suffrage and an eight-hour working day. The radicals, on the contrary, wanted Sweden to follow in the footsteps of the Russian revolutionaries and join the Bolsheviks' efforts to put an end to war and injustice.

In the Swedish case, however, the relation to Russia was not only ideological and political. There was a large group of people whose life and future was immediately and tangibly connected to the Russian Revolution. It consisted of Swedes who lived in Petrograd, many of whom were long-term inhabitants. Some of the first Swedish St. Petersburg inhabitants were prisoners from the Great Nordic War of 1700–1721. They had been forced to take an active part in the construction of Peter's new city. Some of them remained in Russia when they were set free after the 1721 Nystad peace agreement. It has been noted that in the prerevolutionary St. Petersburg period, when the Russian capital was "a huge sieve of humankind, a city of comers and goers" in the Baltic Sea area, Swedes were also more peacefully drawn to the metropolis.[2] However, in contrast to the Finns and Estonians from the absolute vicinity of Russia who migrated to St. Petersburg in large numbers, Swedish emigration was more of an "urban long-distance transfer of small specialist groups," people mainly connected to Sweden's "genius" industries—Nobel, ASEA, L. M. Ericsson, Alfa-Laval, and the ball bearing industry SKF.[3] In short, prerevolutionary Russia was an important economic market for Swedish trade and industry, especially in the economically expansive decades before the outbreak of the First World War. For the lives of the Swedes in Petrograd, generally a diminishing body that

2 See David Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772–1993: Europe's Northern Periphery in an Age of Change* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 166.

3 Max Engman, *Peterburgska vägar* (Helsinki: Schildts, 1995), 30.

in 1910 amounted to less than a thousand individuals, the Russian Revolution would have dramatic consequences.[4]

A GENETIC HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

For an historian, there are essentially two ways of analyzing the connections between the Russian Revolution and Sweden. The first perspective is *genetic*—which means that it is prospective, oriented towards causes and effects, roots and developments. It focuses on how Sweden and Swedes influenced the Russian Revolution and revolutionaries, and on how the Russian Revolution in its turn made a more or less lasting impression on Swedish society, politics, and culture. As Matthew Rendle has recently argued, one can study the influences *on* as well as *of* the revolution, regarding it as both a coherent *and* entangled history.[5]

About the first aspect we know quite a lot thanks to Hans Björkegren, whose book *Ryska posten* provides us with an excellent, ideologically unbiased overview of the Russian revolutionaries' underground activities in the Nordic countries between 1906 and 1917. This was the period in which Sweden introduced the first Aliens' Act, followed by a passport and visa regime in 1918. Björkegren demonstrates that "Red" postmen in Sweden served radical socialist circles in Russia with printed propaganda, letters, publication opportunities, weapons, refuge, escape routes, medicine, and money. He also provides evidence that Stockholm already swarmed with Russian revolutionaries in 1906, when the Russian Social Democrats held their secret fourth congress in the Swedish capital. This was more than a decade before the departure of the imperfectly sealed train that took Lenin from Switzerland to revolutionary Petrograd through the length of Sweden, from Trelleborg in the south to Haparanda in the north, and the third and final Zimmerwald antiwar conference that took place in Stockholm in September 1917. With the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914, both Haparanda and Torneå, the latter on the Finnish side of the border between Sweden and Russian Finland, became what Björkegren calls "Europe's eye of the needle." This was the only open Russian mainland connection with the European continent, and large

4 For the numbers, see Natalia Iukhneva, "Shvedy v Peterburge v kontse XIX–nachale XX vekov," in *Shvedy na beregakh Nevy. Sbornik statei*, ed. Aleksandr Kobak et al. (Stockholm: Swedish Institute, 1998), 110–111. If Swedes from Finland are included, the number trebles.

5 Matthew Rendle, "Making Sense of 1917: Towards a Global History of the Russian Revolution," *Slavic Review* 76, no. 3 (2017): 610.

numbers of people, goods, and post suddenly started to cross the border.[6] After reading Björkegren's book, there can be little doubt that the traditional notion of St. Petersburg as Russia's window towards the West must be supplemented with the idea that Sweden became another Russian European window in the turbulent period of revolution and war.

Aleksander Kan offers an important but less impartial addition to this history in his work on what he calls the "home Bolsheviks" of Sweden, identified as the radical socialists mentioned above. Straightforwardly, but without the results of a comparative analysis, he concludes that Swedish socialists and communists, "bold, talented, and colorful," had better contact with and insight into Russian and Soviet political developments than any other Europeans on the political left.[7] Radical Swedes early realized the beneficial political role that Lenin would have, Kan argues, and they were so keen on his April 1917 theses on the need for a revolutionary war in Europe that they accepted and welcomed developments even before the Russian Bolsheviks did.[8]

Our knowledge of the second genetic aspect—that is, how the revolution influenced Sweden long after 1917—is more uneven and varied. This is not surprising, since such a transnational connection is hard to chisel out and analyze. Naturally, the more immediate repercussions are easier to mark than the long-term effects. Some general perspectives can nevertheless be suggested. As in many other European countries, the Russian Revolution probably triggered an interest among non-socialist politicians, even conservatives, frightened by Lev Trotskii's ominous idea of a world revolution, to force the pace of political and social reforms in order to avoid a repetition of the Russian case at home. As late as 1970, Hjalmar Mehr, a Social Democratic Stockholm politician whose father was a Russian, Jewish Menshevik who escaped the tsar's secret police, the *Okhrana*, by taking refuge in Sweden after the 1905 Revolution, confidently declared: "It is an historical fact that to a great extent, the emergence of democracy in Sweden was a result of the revolutions in Europe, in particular obviously of the Russian Revolution."[9]

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6 Quotation from Hans Björkegren, *Ryska posten. De ryska revolutionärerna i Norden 1906–1917* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1985), 130. See also 130–133.

7 Aleksander Kan, *Hemmabolsjevikerna. Den svenska socialdemokratin, ryska bolsjeviker och mensjeviker under världskriget och revolutionsåren 1914–1920* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2005), 22, 45.

8 Ibid., 116, 119.

9 Quoted from ibid., 23.

However, whether the Swedish franchise reforms in the period 1918–1921 and the parliamentary ruling in favor of an eight-hour working day in 1919 can, or should be, mechanically attributed to events in Russia is doubtful. This apparently simple connection needs to be questioned. The end of the First World War, and the insistence on political rights as a "repayment" for the military contributions made by men and women all over Europe, was obviously another triggering event, even though Sweden did not take part in the war. Besides, the revolutionary connection tends to conceal the fact that the struggle for franchise reforms had been in progress for decades and had grown into a mass movement, not least among women. The only thing that stands clear is that Swedish political development after 1917 did not follow the Russian, nondemocratic road. In Sweden, a liberal government with several social democratic ministers—a government with a reformist political and social agenda—had already taken office a few weeks before the Bolshevik November coup. It goes without saying that this Swedish government would have preferred the "bourgeois" Provisional Government of March 1917, to stay in power.

In general, the Bolshevik coup served to alienate most Swedes. To be sure, fear of Russia and Russians was not a new phenomenon in Sweden. For centuries, Russia and Russians had constituted the "significant other" for many Swedes. According to Gunnar Åselius, the years leading up to the First World War represented a culmination of a long history of Russophobia in leading Swedish circles.[10] However, it would be wrong to attribute Swedish attitudes towards Russia and Russians solely to this tradition. Certainly, the Bolsheviks' threat of a world revolution generated a widespread fear, but when the Russian violence also "infected" Sweden, the fear increased. In 1919, three bodies of murdered Russians found in Lake Norrviken outside Stockholm affected Swedish opinion. It turned out that the brutal assassinations, carried out by a group of Russian refugees called *Ryssligan* (or the "Russian Ring"), led by the mystical Mohammed Beck Hadjetlaché who identified himself as a Cossack colonel, had connections to both the White and the Red side of the Russian Revolution. The motives are still obscure after all these years, but the murders were given a great deal of publicity in the Swedish press, and surely added to notions of an imminent "Russian danger" in Sweden.[11]

10 Gunnar Åselius, *The "Russian Menace" to Sweden: The Belief System of a Small Power Security Élite in the Age of Imperialism* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 7.

11 Svante Lundberg, *Ryssligan. Flyktingarna från öst och morden i Bollstanäs 1919* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2004).

As discussed above, all the Swedish political parties, except for the radical socialists, were critical of the Bolshevik takeover. The division of the Social Democratic Party into two factions in the early months of 1917, and the formal split in May when the radicals founded the Social Democratic Left Party (renamed in 1921 the Swedish Communist Party), obviously paralleled the first part of the Russian Revolution, when the tsar was dethroned and the Provisional Government and the Soviets ruled in tandem. This raises the question whether the causes of the split can be attributed to events in Russia. Again, a simple answer should be avoided.

The reformists and the revolutionaries evaluated the Russian turmoil in diametrically different ways. The first group, members of the Social Democratic Party as well as individuals with social democratic ideals, unanimously condemned the Bolsheviks' destruction of Russia's young and fragile democracy. In their opinion, the dictatorship of the proletariat had turned into the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party leadership. The term "revolution," used positively to denote the March events, from October increasingly implied a distortion of socialism.[12] The Bolsheviks' use of Red Terror to stay in power was strongly rejected. Similarities to the derailment of the French Revolution, and its transformation into a terror regime, were frequently drawn. The Bolshevik leaders were depicted as "Russia's Jacobins."[13]

As Håkan Blomqvist has proposed, Swedish social democrats, swollen with what he calls "evolutionary assurance," believed that socialism only could develop in a mature capitalist, industrial society, and therefore not in revolutionary Russia. There, socialism always risked becoming compromised before it could establish itself. If socialism was forced through, it was inevitable, social democrats held, that the Revolution would turn into a Bolshevik despotism that displayed "barbarian," "Asiatic," or even "tsarist Russian" traits. The Russian Revolution was not carried out by class-conscious workers (the ideal), but by peasant soldiers, and other marginalized social groups, who had reacted to injustice and misery spontaneously and in an excess of violence. With their revolution, the Bolsheviks challenged social democratic ideological DNA, as Blomqvist puts it.[14] A contemporary observer working in Russia, the radical

12 Karin Jonsson, *Fångna i begreppen? Revolution, tid och politik i svensk socialistisk press 1917–1924* (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2017), 255–261.

13 Martin Alm, "Ryska revolutionen i svenska ögon 1917–1920," in Kristian Gerner and Klas-Göran Karlsson, eds., *Rysk spegel. Svenska berättelser om Sovjetunionen—och om Sverige* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2008), 124–126.

14 Håkan Blomqvist, "'Socialismus Asiaticus.' Bolsjevismen som orientaliskt hot för svenska socialdemokrater," in Håkan Blomqvist and Lars Ekdahl, eds., *Kommunismen hot och löfte.*

socialist journalist and diplomat Nils Lindh, complained in the same vein in 1918 that the Bolsheviks were trying to lead history up the garden path ("draga historien vid näsan"). Just one year earlier, Lindh had still been confident that the Russian Revolution was "an honest attempt to catch up with and pass the comrades on a shortcut."[15]

What is more, Blomqvist has contended that the social democratic attitudes to the Russian revolutionary experience not only departed from a Marxist, class-based understanding of the phases of historical development, but in some notable cases also from biological ideas of racial development. The idea was that Aryan, Germanic Swedes were superior in terms of organization and culture to less developed and more violent nations, such as Russia. According to Arthur Engberg, a leading Swedish social democrat but also a prominent antisemite, the Russian Revolution should be understood as Jewry's struggle to subordinate Russians to Jewish power and to conquer the world for the Jews. To be sure, Engberg was not alone among social democrats in Sweden and in other European countries to regard the Russian Revolution as an expression of a "Jewish spirit."[16]

The second group—left-socialists and communists—defended Bolshevik ideas and politics at home. The Revolution was about their own political legitimacy, as well as the legitimacy of the new Russia. They praised the Bolsheviks for not only talking about socialism, but also having taken it seriously and acted to realize it. The Bolsheviks had fulfilled Marx's famous dictum that history should not only be understood but also changed.

In 1918, the revolutionary socialist agitator Kata Dalström, stated that "[h]umanity owes the greatest debt of gratitude to the Bolsheviks, *the only ones* who have demonstrated that they *will, can, and dare to* seriously set about realizing the 'social revolution.' That is, from the world of *utopia* move out onto the territory of reality the socialist dreams for which all of us who take socialism seriously had dreamt and longed."[17] Narratives about revolutionary Russia had

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Arbetarrörelsen i skuggan av Sovjetunionen 1917–1991 (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2002), 13–38.

15 Quoted from Peter Westlund, "'Sanningen' om Sovjetunionen. Rysslandskännaren Nils Linds möte med öst åren 1917–1938," in Tom Olsson and Patrik Åker, eds., *Jag har sett framtiden … och den fungerar inte. Journalisterna och främlingarna i öst* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2002), 25, 30.

16 Håkan Blomqvist, *Nation, ras och civilisation i svensk arbetarrörelse före nazismen* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2006), 344–350.

17 Kata Dalström, *Arbetarklassens Ryssland. Något om de sociala och kulturella reformerna i sovjetrepubliken* (Stockholm: Fram, 1918), 20.

severe limitations. Focusing on the war and the counterrevolutionary terror of the Whites, the Red Terror was reduced to a legitimate response to a precarious situation. At times, it entirely disappeared from radical debate. Thus, the execution of the Romanovs in the summer of 1918 was not recognized.

Paraphrasing the great prerevolutionary Russian historian Vasilii Kliuchevskii, Fredrik Ström (a Swedish left-socialist) posited that "the history of the Russian people is the history of its revolutions."[18] From 1919 to 1924, Ström served as a consul for the new Russian republic in Sweden. As the legation also served as the Comintern's Stockholm bureau, the consulate effectively assisted in facilitating Bolshevik colonization of new territories, including Sweden. Together with tens of thousands of other Western political and intellectual "pilgrims," Kata Dalström and several other left activists travelled to Petrograd to experience what they regarded as the start of the world communist revolution. Some of them kept their faith even after having seen the Russian reality and realizing that world revolution would not arise. Others, among them Dalström, gradually became more critical of the new Soviet power.

There was also movement in the other direction. Both Red and White Russians travelled to Sweden during the Revolution and in its aftermath, but for many of them Sweden became a transit country rather than a permanent place of residence.[19] Swedes from the colony in St. Petersburg also took part in this migration. Most of them, alarmed by the hunger, turbulence, and violence, and fearful for their lives, left for Sweden in 1917–1918. When the Swedish embassy vacated Petrograd in December 1918, after a political decision to formally break off relations with the new Russia, those Swedes who remained lost all diplomatic protection. Swedish property was expropriated in the postrevolutionary nationalization process. A Russian inquiry commission in Sweden, officially established in 1919 to safeguard Swedish economic interests in Russia, was unsuccessful in its work. Thus, the Russian Revolution meant that human, economic, and political relations were abruptly cut off. In 1921, only 140 Swedes remained in Petrograd.[20]

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18 Fredrik Ström, *Ryska revolutionens historia i sammandrag* (Stockholm: Ryska revolutionens historias förlag, 1924), 11.

19 See Anna Borovskaia, *Russkaia emigratsiia v Shvetsii: Problemy vzaimootnoshenii diaspory, gosudarstva i obshchestva, 1918–1940* (St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2017).

20 Bengt Jangfeldt, *Svenska vägar till St. Petersburg. Kapitel ur historien om svenskarna vid Nevans stränder* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1998), 298.

However, not all Swedes broke ties with Russia. Swedish businessmen, representing industrial and financial enterprises as well as state institutions, saw Russia as an interesting market with the potential to grow in spite of—or even thanks to—the turbulent political and military conditions there. In May 1920, Sweden and Russia concluded an official agreement, named after the Russian commissar for trade and industry Leonid Krasin, for the export of Swedish products (such as locomotives and weapons) to Russia. These were badly needed in a country torn apart by civil war, and could be delivered now that the Entente powers had lifted their blockade in early 1920. The trade agreement also meant diplomatic recognition for the isolated state. For Sweden, it was just good business, and for individuals with a radical worldview an ideologically and politically charitable action. Apart from Fredrik Ström, an important economic intermediary was the "Red" Swedish banker Olof Aschberg, who had started his mediation activities by dispersing German money to Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917, and by helping them to melt confiscated gold in Stockholm. Aschberg and his bank had ended up on an Entente blacklist because of these activities, but he rapidly set up a new bank so that he could go on doing business with the Bolsheviks. As a token of his appreciation, Lenin gave the enterprising Aschberg exclusive rights to manage the Bolshevik government's financial affairs in Scandinavia and Germany. In 1922, the Swede founded Bolshevik Russia's first international bank, Roskombank.[21]

The Swedish agreement was not signed by Swedish state authorities but by an export organization representing major engineering companies. Nevertheless, it certainly benefitted from the fact that Sweden, for the first time in history, had a fully Social Democratic government. While the Social Democrats certainly did not cherish the Revolution and its revolutionaries, they did share an ideological fellowship with Bolshevik communism. Furthermore, a too unequivocally negative stance towards Soviet Russia would have undermined the legitimacy of some of the Social Democratic government's goals. Representatives on the Swedish side argued that trade with Soviet Russia served peace and stability. Attempts to defeat the Bolsheviks with military force had failed. The solution, then, was to establish economic relations with the isolated Bolshevik state, thereby changing Russia from within by reintegrating it into Europe.[22] On 15 March 1924, the Swedish government recognized the

21 Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Revolution, A New History* (London: Profile, 2017), 336–342.

22 Helene Carlbäck-Isotalo, *Att byta erkännande mot handel. Svensk-ryska handelsförbindelser 1921–1924* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1997), 50.

Soviet Union, and on the same day an official trade agreement was signed by the two states.

What Aleksander Kan terms "socialist research"—that is, research on socialism carried out by social democrats, socialists, and communists—has focused less on concrete connections between Sweden and Russia than on the Revolution's influence on Sweden. The always difficult and highly politicized question is how the Russian Revolution impacted the Swedish labor movement and political parties on the left. Non-socialist historians propose that the left-socialist and communist parties rapidly went through a process of "bolshevization." They succumbed to Leninism, Comintern pressure, and Soviet supremacy in terms of organizational adjustment, ideological accommodation, and economic dependence. Contrary to Kan's insistence on a close relationship between Russian and Swedish socialists in this period, most other socialist historians hold that there was less Bolshevik influence on Swedish political development. Jan Bolin maintains that rather than following Bolshevik and Leninist ideas about creating a communist party—democratic centralism and strong party discipline, for example—left-socialists in Sweden placed importance on the logic of industrial capitalism that the party was initially meant to counteract. As a consequence, the Swedish political context (in particular, the lack of a sufficient grassroots movement) is considered more important than the international, Comintern dimension.[23]

Other socialist researchers propose that the outright anticommunism and anti-Bolshevism born out of a repudiation of the Russian Revolution is more important for Swedish political development. These writers argue that the Swedish labor movement, comprised of social democrats as well as supporters of the radical left, lost power by not following in the footsteps of the Russian revolutionaries, and by having been defeated by the anticommunists.[24] The idea of a Swedish anticommunism has been described by Kristian Gerner as a myth. He has revealed the great variation, from the very beginning the Russian events, of reactions among Swedish observers—from apology to severe criticism, from appreciation of Russian women's emancipation to condemnation of the lack of democracy. Many critics of the revolution had a deep sympathy for Russian culture and took keen interest in everyday life in Russia and the early

23 Jan Bolin, *Parti av ny typ? Skapandet av ett svenskt kommunistiskt parti 1917–1933* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2004), 133–197.

24 Werner Schmidt, *Kommunismens rötter i första världskrigets historiska rum. En studie kring arbetarrörelsens historiska misslyckande* (Stockholm and Stehag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 1996), 11–12.

Soviet Union, he maintains, but they were often less impressed by the Russian state's political development from 1917 onwards.[25]

A GENEALOGICAL HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The second historical perspective that can illuminate the relationship between Sweden and the Russian Revolution is genealogical. Contrary to the genetic approach, the genealogical perspective is self-consciously retrospective in that it starts out from the questions and problems that arise from our own historical moment. Such a perspective is not, however, completely spontaneous and arbitrary. When we turn to history, we follow in the footsteps of earlier representations of an event and forge separate instances of retrospection into a narrative path. Experience, memory, lessons learned, and the use of history are concepts related to a genealogical perspective, as are recognition, guilt, and legitimacy. Borderline events that are of special interest for our collective search for meaning in the past are: events that irrevocably changed the world we live in and that we tend to repeatedly term "turning-points"; "crossroads"; and "alternatives." The revolution in Petrograd in 1917 is one such borderline event. As noted by Frederick Corney in his book on the making of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the Soviet Union in the decade after the revolution, the revolutionary narrative early on became a one of foundation and legitimation, useful not only for those with political power in the Kremlin, but also for broad sections of the Soviet population in search of existential and cultural orientation and sense-making. For many decades, the Great October Revolution was depicted as the peripeteia of not only Russian but world history. Furthermore, as Corney underlines, the revolutionary borderline event had a worldwide reach, for those who have cherished it or, quite the reverse, have regarded it as a serious threat against their societies.[26]

Unsurprisingly, the Russian Revolution has been interpreted, represented, and used as a borderline history in Swedish society and discourse ever since the end of the revolution. Sometimes it has been a cause of celebration or remembrance; at other times it has been used for comparison when similar events

25 Kristian Gerner, "Sovjetryssland med svenska ögon," in Max Engman, ed., *Väst möter öst. Norden och Ryssland genom historien* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1996), 307–333, Kristian Gerner, "Svenskars syn på Sovjetryssland: myten om antisovjetismen," in Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander, eds., *Östersjö eller Västerhav? Föreställningar om tid och rum i Östersjöområdet* (Karlskrona: Östersjöinstitutet, 2000), 33–46.

26 Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004).

have occurred. While the former are often, but not always, cultural manifestations, the latter are examples of a political appropriation of history in which borderline phenomena of the past are connected to what are perceived as urgent later problems. The approach to history strongly emphasizes continuity over time, and at the same time minimizes differences. Due to lack of space, only a few examples of this use of history will be presented here.

Generally, the "Swedish Bolshevik Revolution" has often been represented as either a promise or a threat. The Russian Revolution has often been used politically as a menacing event, and coupled with phenomena in contemporary life that allegedly resemble the revolution and the Bolshevik regime. Thus, in 1928 there was a "Cossack" election to the second chamber of the Swedish parliament. Rightist opponents to the Social Democrats were alarmed by the party's temporary electoral cooperation with the Communist Party, and with the thesis of its finance minister—Ernst Wigforss—that poverty shared is acceptable, while poverty in an unequal society is intolerable. The social democratic politics of increased taxation was called "outright Bolshevik," and on imaginative election posters a vote for the left was considered equated with a vote for Russian revolutionaries. On political posters, Cossacks—again represented both as violent instruments of power and as essentially Russian—were accompanied by language that emphasized the threat and called for political mobilization: "Your forefathers once saved Sweden from [the Danish king] Kristian the Tyrant. It is time to remake your great achievement. Any person who gives his or her vote to the worker's party votes for the overthrow of society and the introduction of Bolshevism. Save the Fatherland!"[27] In their newspapers, the radical left noted that the campaign "stimulated citizens' fear of the Russians."[28] The 1928 election brought out many more voters than usually, and was a great success for the political right. This indicates the strength of anticommunist attitudes among interwar Swedes.

Accusations of "bolshevization" have also tended to accompany the great economic debates of the postwar era. In 1948, as a response to war experiences and the labor movement's postwar program, and in a heated election campaign that ended the *Burgfried* of the war years, argument raged about the desirability of a planned economy in Sweden. Those against the idea of

27 Political poster, quoted in Rune Johansson, "Samlande, lättförståelig och eggande? Kosacker, kultur och kvinnor i valaffischer från 1928," in Lars M. Andersson, Lars Berggren, and Ulf Zander, eds., *Mer än tusen ord. Bilden och de historiska vetenskaperna* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001), 234.

28 Ibid., 223–243.

an economy in which the state would have an increased influence on the planning, organization, and production of Swedish industry, contended that the radical politics of socialization and its concomitant displacement of individual, liberal freedom in Swedish society would inevitably lead to an autocratic state. One non-socialist Swedish newspaper was worried that Sweden was bound to succumb to "a radical transformation of our present economic system."[29] There were times when Swedish social democracy was anxious to draw a clear boundary with the Bolshevik system in Russia, wrote another, but with "the Red Army's successes in Eastern Europe" the line between social democracy and communism has now been blurred. Historical perspectives were, as in the Cossack election case, used to bring postwar Sweden closer to communist and totalitarian Russia: "The Swedish people has not carried heavy individual and economic burdens on its back for six years simply to allow its freedom to be choked by the kind of state that, while it starts with 'economic democracy' and 'planned economy,' ends with totalitarian rule over spiritual and material life." At that time, both sides complained about the others' "alarmist propaganda."[30]

In 1976, the Labor Movement For Employee Funds proposed placing some of the profits made by large companies into a public trust. Their further recommendation that wage earners dominate company boards rankled many non-socialist voters. Even in this case, more or less explicit comparisons between Swedish *fondsocialism* and the nationalizations imposed in communist Russia were made to mobilize non-socialist opinion. Whereas social democrats tied their policy of economic democracy to Swedes' needs and demands for increased participation in, and influence on, working conditions, non-socialists insisted that economic democracy would transform Sweden into an Eastern European Bloc state. The non-socialist argument was obviously successful, and the Social Democratic Party was punished by voters, and in 1976 there was an epoch-making change of government. From 4 October 1983, demonstrators marched against *fondsocialism*. Jokingly, but also with some seriousness, the demonstrations, organized by worried and angry representatives of small business owners, were called the "October Revolution."

These genealogical patterns have not been consistent and continuous. As mentioned, the Russian Revolution has been met by a traditional blend of promise and fear, but also with a certain lack of interest in the last few decades. In history textbooks, a particular chronological structure has been established.

29 Ibid.

30 For the debate, see Leif Lewin, *Planhushållningsdebatten* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 241–262.

Until the Second World War, the narrative of the Russian Revolution was generally negative and critical, underscoring the lack of democracy and the abundance of violence that followed. The events that caused the greatest disruptions in twentieth-century Europe were, one textbook stated, the reparations imposed on Germany after the First World War and the Russian Revolution. There was much empathy for the victims of the revolution, the Romanovs, and the tsarist elite. Fear of a communist world revolution was conspicuous: "The Bolsheviks in Russia try to find supporters in other countries and work single-mindedly to light the revolutionary fire all over the world." The word "Bolshevik," according to same leading interwar textbook, "is derived from a word that means 'more'; because they were more destructive and subversive than the moderate socialists."[31]

After the war, with a longer temporal distance and a victorious Soviet Union, schoolbook images of the Russian Revolution quickly changed. Its violent aspects faded away, the image of Lenin became more positive, and the economic and social dimensions of the Revolution received more appreciative attention. Furthermore, the tsarist order was presented in a much darker light. In the radical 1960s and 1970s, these revisions sometimes turned into apologetic narratives, reminiscent of the ideas of the radical socialists immediately after the revolution.[32]

These pre- and post-1945 narratives roughly correspond to the two approaches that have dominated scholarly historiography on the Russian Revolution. They are known the "Pipes" and the "Fitzpatrick" narratives, named after two renowned historians with radically differing interpretations of the Petrograd events.[33] The first tells the story of a failed, and evil, revolution that was hijacked by ideological fanatics willing to override all human considerations to create a new, utopian society that soon became dystopian. The second, on the other hand, regards 1917 as a popular revolution that brought an end to repression and injustice in Russia, and promised a better future for the oppressed of the world.

The textbook narratives had their counterparts among interwar intellectuals and travelers to the new Russia. Some of these people were "fellow

31 J. R. Pallin and Gustaf Jacobson, *Lärobok i allmän historia för realskolan* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1925), 209.

32 For a conspicuous example, see Håkan Olsson, *Historia i världen. Studium 80* (Nacka: Esselte, 1981), 152–153. For a general analysis, see Klas-Göran Karlsson, "Ryska revolutionen i svenska historieläroböcker 1920–1985," *Historielärarnas Förenings Årsskrift* (1985/1986): 44–59.

33 See Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899–1919* (London: Harvill, 1990), and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

travelers," while others took up critical attitudes to the new rulers. In 1925, looking back on the Bolshevik Revolution, one of the most qualified observers, the liberal Copenhagen professor of Slavic languages Anton Karlgren, noted the existence of two Russian revolutions: the first was a genuine, but brief, "dictatorship of the proletariat," useful "as long as the task was to crush the old Russia into bits and pieces;"[34] the other was conducted by the party élite on the principle of top-down centralism. Karlgren's conclusion was that the two revolutions seldom met. The representatives of the first revolution did not participate in social and political life, and they were strictly controlled by the communist leaders who has reaped the fruits of the revolution.[35]

In Swedish scholarly discourse, the Russian Revolution is not a mainstream area of study. Whether this is due to a lack of linguistic skills, cultural distance, fear of the politicized nature of the topic, or something else is unclear. Swedish historians normally write about Swedish history in Swedish, which means that most scholarship on the subject deals only with aspects of the Swedish perception or reception of the events of 1917.[36] Jubilees are always good opportunities to remember borderline historical events. In 1967, in a radical political climate, the Marxist Gunnar Gunnarson published a revolutionary chronicle of the events that had unfolded fifty years earlier. He proudly declared: "The old, 'holy' Russia made room for something new, something no one had ever seen in history—a society built on the joint ownership of the means of production and based on the "dictatorship of the proletariat" proclaimed by Lenin."[37] A few biographies of Lenin, ranging from Stefan Lindgren's hagiographic portrait to Kjell Albin Abrahamson's deeply anti-Leninist *Great Was Lenin … : A Mass Murderer and His Coup*, were published quite recently.[38]

In Sweden, the centenary of the Russian Revolution roused neither negative interpretations of the past nor optimistic expectations for the future. The Petrograd events of 1917 have lost their meaning as borderline history, and have been laid to rest by most Swedish historians. An historian should not indulge in rigid interpretations, but there are many indications that what the

34 Anton Karlgren, *Bolsjevikernas Ryssland* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1925), 10.

35 Ibid., 9–21.

36 A notable exception is my own doctoral thesis on the objectives of history teaching in Russia and the Soviet Union 1900–1940: *Historieundervisning i klassisk ram. En didaktisk studie av historieämnets målfrågor i den ryska och sovjetiska skolan 1900–1940* (Lund: Dialogos, 1987).

37 Gunnar Gunnarson, *Ryssland 1917. En revolutionskrönika månad för månad* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1967), 9–11.

38 Stefan Lindgren, *Lenin* (Stockholm: Fischer, 1999), Kjell-Albin Abrahamson, *Stor var Lenin … : En massmördare och hans statskupp* (Stockholm: Hjalmarsson & Högberg, 2017).

American communist John Reed called the *Ten days that Shook the World* have stopped shaking a hundred years later.[39]

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39 John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (Auckland: The Floating Press, 1919).

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The Idea of a Liberal Russia: The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the Norwegian Slavist Olaf Broch

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In Norway, a substantial amount of historical research has been conducted on the reception of the Russian Revolution by the labor press and the impact of 1917 on the Norwegian labor movement. Considerably less has been written on the reception by other parts of the Norwegian press.[1] This article will take a closer look at how the revolutionary events were presented on the pages of the leading Norwegian conservative newspaper *Aftenposten*, with a special focus on the articles of professor of Slavonic languages Olaf Broch (1867–1961).[2] During the momentous months of 1917 in Russia, Broch wrote several substantial pieces on the unfolding political drama for the newspaper. As *Aftenposten* did not have a correspondent in Russia during the First World War, the newspaper relied on telegrams and on reports in the

1 On the radicalization of the Norwegian labor movement by the Russian Revolution, see Øyvind Bjørnson, *På klassekampens grunn* (1900–1920), Arbeiderbevegelsens historie i Norge, vol. 2. (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag 1990); Åsmund Egge, "Norsk arbeiderbevegelses forhold til Sovjetunionen," in *Norge-Russland. Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, ed. Daniela Büchten et.al. (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press 2004), 336–346; Åsmund Egge og Terje Halvorsen, " . . . 'kriteriet på en kommunist er hans forhold til Sovjetunionen.' De norsk-sovjetiske partirelasjoner 1917–1991," *Arbeiderhistorie* (2002), 9–32; Åsmund Egge, "Aleksandra Kollontaj og norsk arbeiderbevegelse 1915–1930," in *Revolusjon, kjærlighet, diplomati. Aleksandra Kollontaj og Norden*, ed. Yngvild Sørbye (Oslo: Unipub 2008), 55–82; Jorunn Bjørgum, *Martin Tranmæl og radikaliseringen av norsk arbeiderbevegelse 1906–1918* (Oslo: UiO, 1996). Cf. also special issue of the journal *Arbeiderhistorie* 1 (2017), devoted to the centenary of the Russian Revolution. For case studies on the reception of the Revolution in other parts of the Norwegian press, see *Den russiske revolusjon og norsk presse. Mediehistorisk Tidsskrift* 2, no. 28 (2017), accessed 5 April 2018, http://www.pressetidsskrift.no/tidsskrift/mediehistorisk-tidsskrift-nr-2-28-2017/.

2 This article is part of an ongoing book project by the author, which will result in a biography of Olaf Broch and his manifold relations with Russia.

Swedish, British, and French press. It also leaned heavily on the insights of Olaf Broch, who read Russian newspapers such as the liberal *Novoe Vremia* regularly, and who received news through letters from a wide network of Russian friends, colleagues, and acquaintances.

Olaf Broch was one of the foremost experts on Russian language, history, and literature in Norway in the first half of the twentieth century.[3] After studying with some of the leading Slavists in Moscow, Leipzig, and Vienna during the 1880s and 1890s, Broch was appointed Professor of Slavonic Languages at the University of Christiania (today's University of Oslo) in 1900, when he was only thirty-three years old. The professorship was the first position of its kind in Norway, and Broch remained here until his retirement in 1937.

Today, Olaf Broch is referred to as the founding father of Slavonic studies in Scandinavia. He wrote several groundbreaking studies of Slavonic languages and phonetics, and educated a handful of students who later became prominent Slavists. His main academic work appeared in 1910, *Ocherk fiziologii slavianskoi rechi* (German edition: *Slavische Phonetik*, 1911), which was part of Vatroslav Jagic's multivolume edition on Slavonic languages published in the immediate prewar years. Up until the outbreak of the First World War, Broch travelled regularly in the Russian Empire as well as in other parts of the Slavonic world, conducting linguistic fieldwork and studying popular culture. Throughout his career, he corresponded with Russian university colleagues and academicians. He was elected to the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters in the late 1890s, acting as general secretary of the Academy from 1924 to 1945. Broch made a substantial effort to maintain relations with the Russian learned world across the political antagonisms of the interwar and war years.

Along with his academic work, Broch lectured extensively outside the university and wrote on a regular basis for the Norwegian press and journals on Russian history and culture, as well as on the burning political issues of the day. He also translated *Anna Karenina* and *The Brothers Karamazov* into

3 Cf. Vladimir Karelin and Kari Aga Myklebost, "Professor Olaf Brok i ego russkii mir," *Istoriia. Problemy istorii Skandinavsko-Baltiiskogo regiona* 4 (58), vol. 8 (2017); Kari Aga Myklebost, "Drømmen om det frisinnede Russland", in Kari Aga Myklebost and Jens Petter Nielsen, eds., *Norge og Russland: Et særegent naboskap. Ottar* 1/2017, Nr. 314 (Tromsø Museum-Universitetsmuseet), 30–36; Jan Ivar Bjørnflaten et al. (ed.), *A Centenary of Slavic Studies in Norway. The Olaf Broch Symposium. The Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters* (Oslo: n.p., 1998); Erik Egeberg, "Forskerprofil Olaf Broch," *Årbok 2003 for Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi* (Oslo: Novus forlag 2004), 223–236; Tamara Lönngren, "'Drug i pomoshchnik chelovechestva': perepiska norvezhskogo slavista Olafa Broka," *Vestnik Alians-Arkheo* 12 (2015): 82–97.

Norwegian, thereby introducing some of the leading Russian authors to the Norwegian reading public. His first newspaper articles appeared in 1898, and by 1917 he was one of Norway's major authorities on Russia.[4] This status was largely due to Broch's wide network in Russia which, in addition to academicians, consisted of figures of political, cultural, and diplomatic importance.[5]

Like most Western Europeans up until the February Revolution, Broch believed that Russia was oppressed by the autocratic rule of the tsar. With the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904, Broch wrote in *Aftenposten* on the changing popular mood in Russia—its shift from an initial wave of patriotism at the beginning of the war to increased unrest as the Russian fleet suffered defeat in the Far East. The final defeat caused the 1905 Revolution, and Broch reported in *Aftenposten* on the October Manifesto that Tsar Nicholas II published in the wake of the revolution, the formation of legal political parties, and the establishment of a parliament, the first Duma. Broch's articles were well informed, and a strong enthusiasm for the liberal developments in Russian politics shone through. With the convention in 1906 of the parliament, in which different political parties—such as the Constitutional Democrats—were represented, Russia was gradually moving away from autocratic rule towards a certain level of separation of powers. Still, the tsar kept a strong grip, ensuring for himself the right to dissolve parliament, appoint ministers, and control the greater part of state finances.

According to Broch, the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets) and their leader Pavel Miliukov were the leading political force in Russia. Broch sympathized deeply with the liberal political agenda of the Kadets and their quest to bring about a new constitutional order through reform, with parliamentarism as a core principle.[6] When the tsar dissolved the first Duma after only a few months, accusing it of illegal actions, Broch was infuriated and

4 A bibliography of Broch's newspaper and journal articles before 1940 can be found in *Norsk bibliografisk bibliotek*, vol. 3, no. 5 (Oslo: Fabritius & Sønner 1937–1945), 158–162.

5 Broch's archive is located at The Norwegian National Library in Oslo, and contains letters to and from a broad circle of Russian actors, cf. K. N. Gulkevich, *Pis'ma k Olafu Broku 1916–1923*, ed. V. A. Karelin et al. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017); Tamara Lönngren, "' . . . proshu ne zabyt', chto est' u Vas drug': Olaf Brok i Aleksei Aleksandrovich Shakhmatov," *Slovo. Journal of Slavic Languages, Literatures and Cultures* 56 (2015): 37–57; Jan Ivar Bjørnflaten, "Iz istorii slavistiki v Norvegii: O perepiske inostrannykh slavistov s professorom Olafom Brokom," *Slavica Litteraria* 15, suppl. 2 (2012): 61–68.

6 For a thorough study on the political project of Miliukov, see Melissa K. Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia, 1880–1918* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1996).

predicted popular riots of hitherto unknown dimensions in Russia. It was too late to return to a purely autocratic system, he wrote, as the Russian sense of justice had already changed and the political empowerment of the population had grown. This was obvious, Broch argued, from studying the Russian press, where freedom of speech now dominated political debate.[7] While his predictions of broad popular riots did not come true until the next decade, he maintained his belief that liberal reform would prevail in Russia. Broch himself was a liberal conservative, and believed that the introduction of parliamentarism would free the Russian people from autocratic oppression and bring the country onto a path towards modernization that resembled the societal development of Norway and other Western states. As we shall see, this perspective deeply informed his reports on the events of 1917 in Russia.

A REVOLUTION OF UNEXPECTED LIGHTNESS

News on the outcome of the February Revolution reached Christiania immediately.[8] The day after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, Olaf Broch presented the event all over the front page of *Aftenposten*. The heading read: "An historic event of world importance."[9] With the help of the generals, the leading forces of the Duma had persuaded the tsar to abdicate after days of demonstrations in the streets of Petrograd and increasingly forceful demands for bread, land, and peace. As regiments of soldiers joined the demonstrations, the tsar had realized the gravity of the situation and decided to step down. A temporary committee, established by the Duma, had arrested the ministers of the tsar's cabinet and proclaimed its plan to organize a provisional government, secure civil rights, conduct elections for a new constituent assembly, and to implement the principle of parliamentarism in Russia.

In *Aftenposten*, Broch emphasized that the revolution had taken place without bloodshed or violence—and he characterized the events leading up to the tsar's abdication as "a natural evolution. We have only seldom seen such a short timespan proving so clearly the incompetence of an antiquated government system." By "incompetence," Broch referred to the tsar's bad performance as head of the Russian military forces, as well as his reluctance to cooperate with, or make use of, the political capacities of the Duma. Broch expressed his

7 Cf. Myklebost, "Drømmen om det frisinnede Russland," 30–36.

8 Dates are given according to the modern Russian calendar throughout the article; thus the February Revolution is dated from March 8 to March 15, 1917.

9 *Aftenposten* 135, March 15, 1917: "En verdenshistorisk begivenhed."

strong belief that the Provisional Government represented a viable way forward for Russia and that it would solve enormous problems facing the empire.

Broch's article was full of enthusiastic phrases describing what he saw as democratic winds blowing over Russia. The world had witnessed a peaceful transition of power, he claimed, which was the result of broad support in the Russian population for the actions of the Duma: "It seems that the radical change that this event implies is accomplished with unexpected lightness. This shows us that the event was ripe as a pear, and did not even need to be picked—it simply fell down by itself." He continued: "The parliamentary system which is now introduced in Russia is not the result of a single political party program. It is the result of an almost unanimous claim from the politically empowered part of the population. . . . Amnesty [for political prisoners], full habeas corpus [an end to unlawful detention or imprisonment], justice before the law, and the introduction of communal self-rule maybe within days—all this is singing over Russia, as a message about the full spring that the country has been longing and fighting for, for so long."

A main factor explaining the successful and, according to Broch, peaceful power transition, was that not only the military units of Petrograd but also the Russian army at the Eastern Front supported the Duma. Broch predicted that the political events in the capital would bring new hope to the Russian armed forces and secure victory for the Entente powers. "Knowing that they are now fighting for a new and free Russia, the educated elements of the armed forces will be lifted on a wave of enthusiasm. The renowned spirit of self-sacrifice and thirst for action among the Russian youth will gain wingspan like never before."[10] The article was illustrated with a photograph of the beautiful Tauride Palace where the Duma was convened, a view of Petrograd's main street Nevskii Prospekt where trams, horses, and people passed peacefully, and portraits of some of the main political figures in the old and the new government.

This was the immediate reception in *Aftenposten* of the February Revolution. Broch's deep admiration for the political project of the liberal forces of the Duma, now represented in the Provisional Government, was clearly visible in the report. Broch mentioned neither the popular demands for an end to the war in the streets of Petrograd, nor the devastating effects of the war upon the Russian population. During 1915 and 1916, people suffered increasingly because of inflation and supply shortages, especially in the big cities, and war casualties were extremely high. By the end of 1916, 3.6 million

10 *Aftenposten* 135, March 15, 1917: "Revolutionen i Rusland."

soldiers had died or were seriously injured in battles on the Eastern Front.[11] Still, Broch seemed confident that the political turn of events would instill the soldiers at the front with a renewed will to fight.

Broch's optimistic view was supported by an interview, published on the very next page of *Aftenposten*, with an anonymous but allegedly distinguished Russian citizen who was presently in Christiania. The interviewee agreed that the February Revolution would accelerate victory for the Entente: "This will be the first consequence of the revolution," the interviewee predicted.[12] Still, he disagreed with Broch about the motivations of the people partaking in the revolutionary events. According to the interviewee, it was not the idea of a constitutional political system that had made people riot, but their contempt for the pro-German position of the tsar's government, as well as the impoverished state of the population due to the war. "To try and make the masses of the Russian people understand the principles of parliamentarism is of no use. . . . It was the dissatisfaction with the old government's foreign policy that overthrew it." Due to the German origin of Tsarina Alexandra Fedorovna, as well as the high number of tsarist officials of German-Baltic descent, a popular understanding had arisen that the tsar's government and bureaucracy consisted of foreign, German elements imported to Russia and alien to the Russian people. Such ideas were fed by a flow of anti-tsarist pamphlets during the war, peaking in the winter of 1916–1917, that portrayed the tsarist court as corrupted by German influence and decadence.[13] According to these pamphlets, the tsarist authorities did not really want war with Germany, and had secretly worked to diminish the efforts of the Russian army on the Eastern Front. This had resulted in a protracted and devastating war for Russia.

Thus, three different views of the driving forces behind the February Revolution were aired in *Aftenposten* on 15 March 1917: the democratic, liberal vision advanced by Broch, implying that the Russian population had a strong "urge for liberty"; the war-weariness of the population and the demands for a fast conclusion of the war; and lastly, the hatred for the perceived "Germanness" and decadence of the tsarist authorities. Nevertheless, it was Broch's political vision and the idea of the Russian people demonstrating for freedom in the

11 Cf. Åsmund Egge, "Den Russiske Revolusjon," in *Store norske leksikon*, accessed 5 April 2018, https://snl.no/Den_russiske_revolusjon.

12 *Aftenposten* 135, March 15, 1917: "En fremtrædende russer udtaler sig til 'Aftenposten' om situationen."

13 Cf. Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy. The Russian Revolution* (London: The Bodley Head 2017), 348 ff.

form of constitutional rule that filled the whole front page of the newspaper. There was little doubt as to which perception of the events in Russia resonated most with the conservative *Aftenposten*. As we know today, all three currents played a part in the February Revolution, but in March 1917, it was still not clear which current would be dominant in the long run. The situation was not as settled as Broch claimed.

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION ACCORDING TO THE LABOR PRESS

The ideology behind Broch's and *Aftenposten*'s stance towards Russia in 1917 becomes even clearer if we turn to reports on the February Revolution in the labor press. Here, a more violent and dangerous course of events was depicted. On March 10, the newspaper *Social-Demokraten* reported that there had been a week (starting on 8 March) of upheavals and street fights in several Russian cities and industrial centers. Petrograd was like a combat zone, with people raiding magazines and many shot and wounded or killed by armed forces.[14] Rumor had it that revolutionaries had blown up the railroad bridge across the Neva river, but official reports were lacking. The tsar had ordered the dissolution of the Duma, and *Social-Demokraten* stated that "the avalanche of revolutionary forces that is now on the move" would be very hard to stop.[15] On March 15, the newspaper reported on the Duma seizing power and establishing order again. However, the paper observed that a strong revolutionary mood still dominated the streets of Petrograd. The journalist went on to explain in detail the multitude of factions and motivations within the revolutionary camp, from the Socialist Revolutionaries to the nihilists. Overall, the situation was described as more open-ended than in *Aftenposten*. According to *Social-Demokraten*, the revolution was not yet complete, the war was still on—and even if the garrison in Petrograd had declared loyalty to the new Provisional Government, it was still uncertain if the Russian army at the front would do the same.[16]

In hindsight, it is easy to see that *Social-Demokraten* was closer to the truth than *Aftenposten*. In the first three days of the revolution (March 8–10) it is estimated that 450,000 people took to the streets in Petrograd, at first in rather orderly demonstrations shouting for bread. On the second and third day, the slogans turned more political, and red flags and banners appeared.

14 *Social-Demokraten*, March 13, 1917: "Revolutionær bevægelse i Rusland."

15 *Social-Demokraten*, March 14, 1917: "Den revolutionære bevægelse i Rusland."

16 *Social-Demokraten*, March 15, 1917: "Fuldstændig revolution i Rusland. Zarens regjering arrestert."

The crowd's slogans were dominated by explicit demands, such as "Down with the Tsar!" and "Down with the War!" As the soldiers of the Petrograd garrisons mutinied and some 8,000 prisoners were released, the level of violence increased, and the tsar was subsequently forced to abdicate. According to some historians, more people were killed and injured—many by pure accident because of the chaos—during the riots in March than in the Bolshevik coup some months later.[17]

One reason why reports on the violence were scarce in *Aftenposten* was that official telegrams giving credible information were lacking—and the newspaper chose not to communicate what it labelled as unreliable sensational notes. We can assume that the enthusiasm of Broch was conditioned in part by the limited information on the situation in Russia seeping through to the outer world.[18] Moreover, he was politically inclined to emphasize the legitimacy of the liberal forces in the Duma seizing power. Ever since the 1905 Revolution, he had followed developments in Russian politics closely, believing strongly in the Duma as an institution and in the constitutional reform program of the Kadets. In the days and weeks following the abdication of the tsar, Broch increasingly saw the revolution as bloodless and hoped for a peaceful transition to a liberal political system. Several of the ministerial positions in the Provisional Government were taken up by liberal Kadets, and the government issued manifestos containing promises of rapid reform. The Kadet leader Pavel Miliukov became minister for foreign affairs.

The labor press, also for ideological reasons, seems to have been more willing to print rumors, especially when they spoke of revolutionary conditions. The reports in *Social-Demokraten* from Petrograd relied heavily on eyewitness accounts from people who had just arrived in Scandinavia from Russia. These were printed without critical remarks, even if the paper had little chance to verify the accounts. The Norwegian labor movement had promoted revolutionary ideas before February, 1917, and was strongly radicalized by the events in Russia. The editor of *Social-Demokraten* in 1917, Jacob Vidnes,

17 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 321.

18 Broch noted in his article on March 15 that no regular telegrams had been received from Petrograd since March 11, and this led him to assume that great changes were taking place—but the flow of rumors from Russia over the last months had taught him to be cautious and wait for reliable information. The message from Petrograd telegram bureau on March 15 was the first official report in several days. On telegram bureaus and news information in Norway during World War I, see Jens Petter Nielsen (ed.), *Russland kommer nærmere. Norge og Russland 1814–1917* (Oslo: Pax forlag, 2014), 529–532.

did not belong to the most radical wing of the Norwegian Labor Party, but he still emphasized the revolutionary character of the February Revolution, quite in line with general opinion within the labor movement. In contrast to this, in *Aftenposten* the revolution was hailed as bourgeois in nature, and its revolutionary currents downplayed.

WAR ALLIANCES AND TRADE INTERESTS

At this stage, the differences in *Aftenposten*'s and *Social-Demokrate*'s reports on Russian developments were not particularly marked. A genuine divergence, however, developed in the summer and early fall, and increased drastically after the Bolshevik seizure of power in November, 1917. In March of that year, both newspapers had joined in the widespread enthusiasm in Norway following the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. In Norway, the tsar had long been a symbol of oppression and outdated autocracy for conservatives, radicals, and liberals alike. In the days following the abdication, *Aftenposten* reported on the establishment of the Provisional Government and its promises of civil rights, on growing popular demands in Russia for a republic, on the abolishment of the death penalty, and the release of political prisoners. The paper also printed greetings from Great Britain to the Russian people. In only a few reports were there hints of anxiety about the continuing revolutionary currents among the Russian population.[19]

Aftenposten's depiction of the February Revolution as a victory for Russian liberal forces was quite in line with the general reception of the events in the press of the neutral, small Scandinavian states, as well as in the press of the Entente allies. In Great Britain, the February Revolution was celebrated as the fulfilment of a hope long nurtured. Now Russia had freed herself from autocracy, she would embark upon a road to liberal democracy— parliamentarism, the separation of powers, and civil liberties. Russia was to be part of modern Europe, the British press proclaimed.[20] The Provisional Government's foreign minister, Pavel Miliukov (the leader of the Kadets), declared that Russia would strictly observe

19 *Aftenposten* 16, March 24, 1917, various reports.

20 Cf. *The Daily Mirror*, March 24, 1917. On the reception in Sweden, see Martin Alm, "Ryska revolutionen i svenska ögon 1917–1920," in *Rysk spegel. Svenska berättelser om Sovjetunionen—och om Sverige*, ed. Kristian Gerner & Klas-Göran Karlsson (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2008), 113–149; in Denmark, see various contributions in S. Aa. Christensen and H. Gotlieb (eds.), *Danmark og Rusland i 500 år* (København: Det Sikkerheds-og Nedrustningspolitiske Udvalg 1993).

all existing international treaty obligations and devote herself to the achievement of victory in the war if the Allies and the United States formally recognized the government as Russia's legitimate authority.[21]

The enthusiastic reception of the revolution in Western Europe was to a certain degree a product of the war alliances. Tsarist Russia before 1917 was seen as a stronghold of despotism, and after Russia joined the Entente in the autumn of 1914 the argument that the Entente was waging a righteous war against the authoritarian and militaristic empires of Central Europe became somewhat shaken. After the downfall of tsarist power in February, 1917, Russia became a more credible ally of the Western states. Russia's partners were now hoping for her to develop democratic institutions, and thus make uniform the ideological front against the Central Powers.[22]

The positive reception of the February Revolution in the British and French press quickly filtered through to neutral, but Entente-friendly, Norway. Russian political exiles to Western Europe contributed to this reception. *Aftenposten* reported from London that meetings in the Russian émigré community were characterized by "an immense enthusiasm for the new order of things in Russia," and that they expected the effect to be a strengthening of the democratic movement in Europe as a whole and the suppression of militarism.[23] The Norwegian foreign minister joined in the optimism. After a meeting with imperial Russia's envoy to Norway, Konstantin Gulkevich noted that the same principles and ideas that were at the foundation of Norway's constitution would now guide Russia's political development.[24]

The growing interest of the Norwegian export industry in the Russian market also conditioned the positive reception of the February Revolution. In the decade before the outbreak of the First Word War, along with the other Scandinavian countries and Germany, Norway had invested eagerly in Russia. After the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway in 1905, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic legations abroad were established. The new Norwegian legation in St. Petersburg and envoy Nikolai Chr. Grove Prebensen saw supporting Norwegian investments in Russia as

21 Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov*, 251.

22 Cf. Alm, "Ryska revolutionen," 128.

23 Aftenposten 216, May 1, 1917: "Revolutionen i Rusland og russerne i England."

24 Sven Holtsmark (ed.), *Norge og Sovjetunionen 1917–1955. En utenrikspolitisk dokumentasjon* (Oslo: Cappelen forlag 1995), 27.

their foremost task.[25] The outbreak of the war resulted in increased profit from foreign trade for the neutral Scandinavian states, as Germany was no longer a competitor. Norwegian investments in the Russian market grew during the years of conflict, and entrepreneurs prepared themselves for "the war after the War"—the economic race for the Russian market that was expected to start as soon as the conflict ended.[26]

AN ANTICIPATED REVOLUTION

Even though the February Revolution was front-page news, it was not entirely unexpected. The idea of an imminent bourgeois revolution in Russia had been introduced to the Norwegian public prior to February, 1917. During the First World War, the neutral small states of Norway and Sweden constituted the so-called "Scandinavian corridor," a travel route between Russia and the Allies. From 1914, a number of Russian politicians, intellectuals, businessmen, and others journeyed through Stockholm and Christiania. In the spring of 1916, and again in the autumn, Pavel Miliukov visited Norway as part of a delegation tasked with strengthening the perception of Russia as a credible member of the Entente by emphasizing the progressive elements of the Duma. At the same time, Russia's envoy to Norway, Konstantin Gulkevich, seized this opportunity and cooperated with Olaf Broch to arrange two public lectures by Miliukov in Christiania in September, 1916.[27] For Gulkevich, the lectures were part of a broader effort to enhance the image of Russia in Norway and to fight the old idea of a Russian menace towards Norway. Miliukov lectured on how Russian political and religious development over the centuries should be understood as an integral part of European history, not as a deviation from European developments.[28] Among the audience were the Norwegian Prime Minister Gunnar

25 Kari Aga Myklebost, "Nikolai Prebensen and Norway's first legation in Russia, 1906–1920" in *Caution & Compliance. Norwegian-Russian Diplomatic Relations 1814–2014*, ed. Kari Aga Myklebost and Stian Bones, (Stamsund: Orkana Akademisk 2012), 71–86.

26 Cf. Bent Jensen, "Det ny Amerika." Rusland og dansk erhvervsliv før 1917" in *Danmark og Rusland i 500 år*, ed. S. Aa. Christensen and H. Gotlieb (København: Det Sikkerheds-og Nedrustningspolitiske Udvalg 1993), 241–261; Nielsen, *Russland kommer nærmere*, 501–524.

27 K. N. Gulkevich, *Pis'ma k Olafu Broku 1916–1923*, 19–22; Paul Miliukov, *Political memoirs 1905–1917* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 370. On Gulkevich's period as Russia's envoy to Norway, see Nielsen, Russland kommer nærmere, 505–507.

28 *Aftenposten* 471, September 4, 1916: "Dumaens liberale fører om Ruslands ydre og indre politik"; *Aftenposten* 481, September 19 1916: "Russland og Europa. Professor Miljukov";

Knudsen and several prominent Russian citizens in Christiania. With the help of Broch, the lectures were printed in the journal *Samtiden*, and *Aftenposten* covered Miliukov's visit in an interview where the leader of the Kadets explained his view of the ongoing war. According to Miliukov, the Entente was fighting a defensive war against German militarism and aggression. He rejected the question of war-weariness among Russian soldiers, and underscored that it was necessary to defeat Germany to secure a lasting peace in Europe. He was confident that a liberal era awaited Russia after victory was achieved. Miliukov talked at length about how he envisaged that the land question and other burning policy issues in Russia could be solved by way of progressive reform.[29]

Owing to Miliukov's visit and its coverage by *Aftenposten*, the idea of a liberal Russia soon to manifest itself spread among the Norwegian public. During the winter of 1916–1917, the newspaper *Tidens Tegn* joined in the promotion of progressive Russia. Gulkevich organized a trip to Petrograd for one of the paper's journalists, to cover the political status quo of Russia, and especially the discussions in the Duma. The trip resulted in a series of articles printed in January, 1917, depicting "a constitutional maturation" in the Duma during 1915 and 1916, with progressive forces leading Russia slowly but steadily towards parliamentarism. "The great significance of the liberation movement in Russia today is that it has reached those layers of society which so far have been the pillars of state bureaucracy. . . . The liberation movement can be held up [by the tsar's reaction], but it can no longer be stopped," the journalist concluded, only weeks before the February Revolution.[30]

THE NATIONALITY QUESTION

During the spring of 1917, Olaf Broch was filled with admiration for the Provisional Government's promises of a new nationality policy. Broch knew and appreciated the national and linguistic diversity of the Russian Empire from fieldwork and study trips in his earlier years, and considered this a

Aftenposten 482, September 19, 1916, "Verdenskrigens aarsag"; Paul Miljukov, "Russland og Europa," *Samtiden* (1916): 445–463; 495–510.

29 *Aftenposten* 471, September 14, 1916: "Dumaens liberale fører om Ruslands ydre og indre politik"; *Aftenposten* 481, September 19, 1916: "Russland og Europa. Professor Miljukov"; *Aftenposten* 482, September 19, 1916: "Verdenskrigens aarsag"; Paul Miljukov, "Russland og Europa," *Samtiden* (1916): 445–463, 495–510.

30 *Tidens Tegn* 14, January 15, 1917: "Rusland under forvandlingens lov." Cf. also Nielsen, *Russland kommer nærmere*, 532–534.

key political issue to be handled by the new authorities.[31] Imperial Russia consisted of almost 200 different linguistic and religious groups, and "the nationality question" had become increasingly troublesome for the tsarist authorities during the last decades of the nineteenth century, as national movements gained support in various corners of the empire, not least in the western borderlands. Demands for national autonomy also made up part of the revolutionary currents in the spring of 1917, and a basic new principle was implemented immediately after the formation of the Provisional Government: a recognition of all national and religious groups within the empire as equal in terms of civil rights.

As the government started to act on its liberal program, Broch reported eagerly in *Aftenposten*. In April, he presented to his readers the Provisional Government's declaration on cultural autonomy for all nationalities within the empire. Broch emphasized that "the immediate and radical [granting of full civil rights to all citizens] shows us that this is a question of conscience for liberal Russia; it simply considers equal civil rights for different national and religious groups as human rights."[32] This policy demonstrated the "patriotic nationalism" of the Russian liberal movement, wrote Broch, in stark contrast to the national chauvinism and assimilative policy towards minority groups in autocratic states such as old, tsarist Russia. According to Broch, the tentative promises about how the national question would be handled from now on were perhaps the strongest proof that Russia was about to become part of the modern, progressive world.

Broch predicted a future federal structure for the new Russian state, and pointed out that this was an idea with certain historical roots in Russia. It was first discussed by the Decembrists in the 1820s, only to resurface again with the progressive intelligentsia in around 1848. Finally, at the founding of the party in 1905, it was made part of the Kadet political program. The core idea had been the same all along: the centralism of the Russian Empire should yield to a federal structure that would better serve the interests of the multinational Russian population. And with the February Revolution, the time had come to put the idea into practice: "For, whereas old Russia saw the heterogenic character of the population as a threat and persecuted every sign of separatism, real or imagined, progressive Russia sees this variety as richness, and is ready to treat it in a just way," Broch wrote. He pointed out how leading liberals had

31 Cf. Myklebost, "Drømmen om det frisinnede Russland," 33–34.

32 *Aftenposten* 167, April 1, 1917: "Det nye Rusland og nationalismen."

already welcomed Ukraine's demands for linguistic and cultural independence, and argued that Russia to some extent already consisted of linguistic and ethnographic core areas, which could make up the basis for a federal structure. Still, Broch admitted that this was not an easy political project to promote in war-torn Russia, where Great Russian national currents were most alive in some regions. It could not be taken for granted that a majority of the Russian population would support the idea. Moreover, Russia contained a multitude of regions with mixed populations and no obvious national or linguistic borders. The development of a solid federal structure had to be considered a long-term project, and the process could not be hastened, Broch stated.

Even if Broch had to admit that a federal structure seemed utopian at present, he argued that Russian progressive forces represented nothing less than an avant-garde in the nationality question, promoting political solutions that were sorely needed in all of Europe:

> Not only Russia needs new political ideas . . . in the wake of this devastating war. . . . Just as nationalism can be of great cultural value, it can be a destructive force when used in economic struggles, as well as morally despicable when practiced to suppress other people. . . . Liberal Russia . . . holds a more cosmopolitan and wider view [on nationality]. Of course, we cannot expect federal structures to appear in Russia while the country is still at war. We who believe in Russia and the future of her people must even hope that a certain "imperialism" will hold the country together, as long as enemies are threatening at the country's borders. A Russian chaos would be a disaster for all of Europe. But there comes a time after the war. And then we will see the development of a more liberal, higher Russian view on nationalism, on the organization of the state and its tasks, to the benefit of all humanity.[33]

TOWARDS OCTOBER

To Broch and the readers of *Aftenposten*, the case of neighboring Finland in the aftermath of the February Revolution was of special interest. Finland had been part of the Russian Empire—as a grand duchy—with certain autonomous rights since 1809. As national sentiment and claims of increased autonomy grew in Finland during the second half of the nineteenth century, tsarist Russia

33 Ibid.

implemented a harsh policy of Russification, resulting in increased nationalist resistance and demands for independence. In Norway, there was strong sympathy with the Finnish struggle against Russian autocracy.

In an article on the Provisional Government's nationality policy, Broch revealed that he had asked Miliukov about his position on the "Finnish question" when he visited Norway in 1916. Miliukov, wrote Broch, had answered that the question had to be thoroughly discussed between Russia and Finland as equal partners. To Broch, this was an indication that the Provisional Government understood the importance of the matter, and that it would take steps in a liberal direction in due time. One week later, *Aftenposten* printed an interview with Miliukov on the front page, where he—now acting as Foreign Minister—declared that a new era had dawned in Russia. The Russian people had matured politically, and the old order was crushed once and for all, Miliukov declared. He then touched briefly upon the nationality question, confirming that the future would see political freedom for all of Russia's nationalities. Miliukov's main message to *Aftenposten* was that Norway's old idea of the Russian menace could now be buried once and for all, and as soon as the war was over, trade relations between Scandinavia and Russia would blossom like never before.[34]

Miliukov's plans for the future of Russia were soon destroyed by events. Two weeks after his interview in *Aftenposten*, there was a new wave of demonstrations in Petrograd, demanding the immediate withdrawal of Russia from the war. The demonstrations were caused by a secret note written by Miliukov on the continued war aims of the government and its commitment to fight Germany. Miliukov's war policy was highly controversial within the government, and several ministers sought to remove him from office in the weeks following the disclosure of the secret note.[35] His policy was also strongly condemned by the Petrograd Soviet, and the situation in the city seemed increasingly unstable. Broch was clearly worried by the rising tensions and published a short piece in *Aftenposten* on a speech given on May 1 by Georgy Plekhanov, the acclaimed founding father of Russian socialism. Broch cited Plekhanov's call for moderation and patience, and argued that the Provisional Government needed time to prove its worth. Broch ended his article with a sigh: "It remains to been seen what impact the words of the old leader can make."[36]

34 *Aftenposten* 176, April 8, 1917: "Det nye Russland og Norden."
35 Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov*, 252–255.
36 *Aftenposten* 245, May 17, 1917: "Rusland. Til belysning af stillingen."

The very next day, Miliukov was forced to resign as minister of foreign affairs, after only eight weeks in the position. At the same time, several members of the Petrograd Soviet joined the government.[37] During the summer, the continued disagreements within the government on the war issue led to increased support for the Bolsheviks, the only political party of note that was willing to sign an immediate and unconditional peace treaty with Germany. Moreover, the patriotic nationalism of liberal Russia that Broch had praised so eagerly in April was severely compromised. When the Finnish Diet in July declared autonomy from Russia, the Provisional Government responded by dissolving it. New Russia clearly could not afford national liberation movements in the middle of the war.

In early November, Broch wrote in *Aftenposten* defending this act of the Provisional Government, and argued that the elections in Finland in October had proved that the majority of the Finnish population supported the conservatives and their call for order and stability, rather than autonomy, in the current situation. Moreover, Broch emphasized that sympathy for Finland had declined sharply among Entente liberals over the last months due to young Finns joining the Germans in their fight against Russia. The good will of Russia regarding Finland's future autonomy fully depended upon Finnish loyalty in the ongoing war. This was quite fair and could not be disputed, Broch seemed to argue between the lines.[38] Similar viewpoints were advanced in other parts of the conservative Norwegian press, although critical voices defending Finnish autonomy were also present, even in *Aftenposten*.[39]

In *Aftenposten*'s columns, the enthusiasm of March and April had been replaced through the summer and early autumn by worried reports on political instability and unrest on the streets of Russia's big cities. In mid-June, Broch published a harsh attack on what he called the mob rule of present Russia, and described Lenin as the great negative light of the day.[40] Broch had joined what had now become an outright fight for liberal Russia against the propaganda and mobilization of the Bolsheviks.

Only days later, *Aftenposten* reported that the socialists had won the local elections in Petrograd whereas the Kadets had lost support.[41] From Broch's point

37 Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov*, 255–259.

38 *Aftenposten* 558, November 2, 1917: "Rusland og Finland. Den russiske regjerings forslag. Af professor Olaf Broch."

39 Cf. *Aftenposten* 569, November 9, 1917: "Finland og Rusland. Af professor Teodor Odhner."

40 *Aftenposten* 296, June 16, 1917: "Pøbelvælde og retssans."

41 *Aftenposten* 315, June 27, 1917: "Russiske breve til Aftenposten. Socialisternes sier ved kommunevalget i Petrograd."

of view, the destabilizing forces were gaining terrain. Still, he did not express doubts about his belief in liberal Russia, at least not in public. Moreover, he maintained his view that Russia's continued war efforts within the Entente was proof of the country's true progressiveness. Broch could neither accept nor understand the demands for Russia's withdrawal from the war that were stated so loudly by the demonstrators and supported by the Bolsheviks. The powerful image of Germany as the enemy, and the ideological portrayal of the war by the Entente and in liberal Russian circles, dominated Broch's perception of the situation.

Like many others in Western Europe who sympathized with liberal Russia and the ideas of the initial Provisional Government, Broch waited and hoped for the situation to be solved by Germany's military defeat. Within the Entente, victory was believed to be imminent, especially after the US entered the war in April, 1917. During the summer, Broch made plans to travel to Petrograd and even to send his eldest son on a study trip to Russia for a year. The plan was abandoned as late as the middle of September. Envoy Gulkevich, who had helped with the practical arrangements for the trip, agreed with Broch that it was wise to temporarily put the plan aside, although he held strong hopes that "circumstances will soon allow him [Broch's son] to carry through his study trip."[42] In a series of letters in the summer of 1917, Gulkevich assured Broch that there was reason to be optimistic and hold on to the idea that "order would defeat anarchy" in Russia.[43]

The unwavering faith of Olaf Broch throughout 1917 in the ideas and policies of liberal Russia must be understood in the light of the dominant position on the war issue of the time, and the strong ideological differences between the two alliances in the conflict. To Broch, as to Norwegian liberal and conservative opinion in general, peace and stability in Europe depended upon the defeat of Germany and her allies. After the February Revolution and the downfall of tsarist power, Russia attained an increased ideological importance in this fight. And compared to the great cause of the war, the suffering of the Russian people and their demands for peace seem to have made little impact on Broch. He perceived this suffering primarily as a result of the Bolsheviks stirring up popular unrest and encouraging mob rule.

The war years had also brought Russia closer to Norway than ever before. This manifested itself in growing trade relations, in the building of a railroad to Murman which brought even higher expectations of trading opportunities,

42 K. N. Gulkevich, *Pis'ma k Olafu Broku 1916–1923*, 29 ff.

43 Ibid., 23–30.

and also in the plans for a bilateral agreement on hydropower installations on the border river of Pasvik. Gulkevich's efforts to enhance Russia's standing in Norwegian public opinion also seemed to bear fruit.[44] Altogether, this must have strengthened Broch's belief that things were developing in the right direction. Russia was really on the brink of liberalization, and the future held the bright promise of increased contacts between Russia and Western Europe.

Moreover, Broch's viewpoint should probably be understood in the light of the situation in Norwegian domestic politics—the deepening political divide in Norway between the growing labor movement and the establishment. In Norway, more than in any other Scandinavian country, revolutionary currents within the labor movement were strong. During the war, antimilitarism had become a main cause within the Norwegian labor movement, as well as in the West as a whole, and the wish to end the war was closely associated with Europe's revolutionary elements. In late March, one of the leading Bolsheviks, Alexandra Kollontai, spoke at a meeting of the Christiania Workers' Association. He asserted that the war was an imperialist conflict and promised that the Bolsheviks would withdraw the Russian army as soon as they took power in Russia.[45] For Russian liberals, as well as Olaf Broch, giving in to the calls for a peace treaty must have seemed the same as giving in to the revolutionary forces.

CONCLUSION

Through his articles, and in cooperation with the Russian envoy to Norway, Konstantin Gulkevich, Olaf Broch contributed to the myth of "the glorious February Revolution" as a bloodless revolution. As historians have pointed out, this was a liberal myth that was required by Miliukov and the progressive forces of the first Provisional Government in order to legitimize its fragile power.[46] Still, we must assume that it was more than a myth to the progressive actors involved. In Norway, Olaf Broch was one of the foremost and most sincere proponents of this perception of Russian politics—and one of Miliukov's keenest supporters. After the Bolshevik seizure of power, Broch repeatedly wrote on what he saw as the Bolshevik's speculative program, and on how they—despite their name—represented only an extremist part of Russian socialism. He argued that they should be considered a temporary phenomenon. According to Broch, the Bolsheviks

44 Cf. Nielsen, *Russland kommer nærmere*, 525–541.
45 Ibid., 543.
46 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 321, 351 ff.

would disappear again as suddenly as they had appeared on the main stage of world politics. As time would prove, this was not to be the case.

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Arkhangelsk Province and Northern Norway in 1917–1920: Foreign Property and Capital after the October Revolution of 1917

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In the large body of work on Russian-Norwegian relations in the North, much has been written about border issues between the two countries, Russian settlements in eastern Finnmark, northern fisheries, the Pomor trade, and numerous other topics. Contact between Russia and Norway, and between northern Russia and northern Norway, has always been of interest to historians in both countries. Nevertheless, some issues have still not been sufficiently studied, or studied from only one perspective. Such issues include events related to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The revolutionary period in Russia led to considerable changes in Norwegian-Russian relations. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were cut off between 1917 and 1924. Some Norwegians stayed in the Russian North after 1917. Many of them worked for Norwegian or international business in the area and did not leave until the situation became critical for them and their families. In this article, we present some sources that highlight the story of Norwegians and citizens of other northern countries in Arkhangelsk province, and the situation with their property after 1917. The data is obtained from documents contained in archives in Arkhangelsk and Moscow.

The aim of the study is to reconstruct the life of foreigners in the Russian North during the revolutionary and postrevolutionary period through the prism of the political, economic, and cultural transformations that took place

This study was funded by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, grant No.18-09-00237.

in 1917–1920. We give priority to the fate of foreign property in the Russian North. This subject was chosen because of its potential to add to our understanding of the changes that occurred in postrevolutionary Russia and, at the same time, to enable easier tracking of the fate of foreign owners in northern Russia. The property issue was one of crucial importance in Communist Party ideology. At that time, the nationalization of resources and of the means of production led to the creation of new social relations and culture.

The years 1917–1920 are in focus in the present article because this was the period that saw the switch in power and the introduction of new legislation. The revolution of October 1917 triggered the changes. The revolution was followed by the civil war and the Western intervention which became a true battle for power in the country. In the end, the Bolsheviks prevailed. By the beginning of the 1920s, the territory of Arkhangelsk province had become "Red" and a new social, economic, and political order had been established, as well as a new culture.

Having crushed the old regime and social relations, the new authorities understood the importance of money for the survival of their authority and the new Soviet Russia. Nationalization and war communism helped significantly, but not enough to maintain power and rebuild the country. The issue of foreign property and foreign capital was of great importance, and caused an ideological paradox. On the one hand, communist ideology required nationalization of all foreign property; but on the other, foreign money was needed because of the difficult financial situation and inability of the economy to function on new, communist principles.

THE BACKGROUND

The proximity of Russians and Norwegians in the North had long led to close cultural and economic contact, and quite a few intermarriages. People of both countries had a great deal in common, despite religious and political differences. There are many examples of mutual assistance and conflict, but Russian-Norwegian diplomatic relations were benevolent by the beginning of the twentieth century. At the same time, tensions occurred in daily life over trade, fishing, and matters concerning colonization.[1] One more interesting

1 See K. Zaikov and A. Tamitskii, "Lapp Crafts in the History of the Russian–Norwegian Borderland in 1855–1900," *Bylye Gody* 45, no. 3 (2017), 915–927; and K. Zaikov and T. Troshina, "Local Society between Empire and Nation-State: The Russian–Norwegian Borderland in the Context of Bilateral International Relations in the Far North, 1855–1905." *Ab Imperio* 4 (2017): 140–145.

phenomenon existed at the time: poor people from neighboring Norwegian areas were hired by Russian Pomors. In the eighteenth century, Russian Pomors "handed over" their workers (Finns, Swedes, and Norwegians) as recruits to the Russian Army, instead of their own sons. Thus, Russian military commanders observed that

> the Arkhangelsk recruitment office sent people "who are native Swedes" to the army; they entered the service "through various deceits of our border peasants" in the Kem region … ; they were turned into recruits for their sons under Russian names, inasmuch as it was forbidden to accept foreigners to the Russian army since 1798.[2]

In time, peasants from Scandinavian countries began to establish themselves on the Kola Peninsula. Often, they were more prosperous than the locals. Perhaps this can be explained by their belonging to a different culture with its attendant attitudes to work—Scandinavian people were mostly protestant, after all—or it could be that they were able get more from the land and could seize the best territory.

A "them and us" dichotomy is clear when we analyze the contact between the local and the foreign populations. Three elements are important in this connection. The first has to do with ethnicity (whether a person was native or not native, Russian or foreign); the second, the country of origin (whether a person was from Russia, from a particular area of the country, or from a foreign country); the third element relates to the social and economic status of a person. All these issues were combined with negative stereotypes that existed for political reasons (for example, views of the Russian Empire and its citizens),[3] because of social and economic factors, or due to good or bad interactions with the "other." This probably explains why mutual deception in relation to the "other" was not considered shameful.

All in all, it is possible to say that the background of the issue is informed by three factors. The first is the history of Russian-Norwegian relations—the entwinement of peaceful and friendly interaction with conflicts primarily on personal grounds. The second factor is the October Revolution, which made the conflicts in Russian-Norwegian relations more visible due to the political

2 Russian State Military-Historical Archive (RGVA), F. 1, Op. 1, v. 1, D. 1647, L. 1–9.

3 See Jens P. Nielsen and Kari A. Myklebost, "Russlands rolle i det norske nasjonale prosjektet 1814–1855," in *Russland kommer nærmere. Norge og Russland 1814–1917*, ed. Jens P. Nielsen (Oslo: Pax Forlag 2014), 110–123.

divisions between the two countries, and which had significant consequences for ordinary people. The third important factor is the perception of the "other" in both countries and its transformation over time. We will now focus more on the Russian view of this situation by examining Russian sources and materials.

BREAKING THE BALANCE

The 1917 Revolution broke the relative balance of Norwegian-Russian relations. It was a revolt against modernization. The state, its power, and its institutions were perceived as *destructive* "modernizers." This differentiates the Russian Revolution from other European revolutions, which were rebellions against archaic forms of social, political, and economic structures, and were directed towards modernization.

While the revolution destroyed old and repressive archaic principles of the state, old conflicts resumed. According to archival materials, at the end of 1917 and in 1918, the number of conflicts between Pomors and the "colonists" increased (the documents have no information about who these "colonists" were; probably they were more prosperous neighbors or foreigners). The revolution made it possible to give an ideological form to these conflicts and to justify them, as if it was a struggle of the "poor" against the "rich."

In 1917, land committees (committees on the resolution of questions on the possession and use of land) seized privately owned land, as well as fishing grounds, and other privately owned property. The temporary abolition of Soviet power in northern Russia in 1918–1920 did not improve the situation, as people did not want to return the land.[4]

At the same time, the new government in Russia had to be cautious with foreign property, because of the need to attract foreign capital to prevent the complete collapse of the economy. The need for foreign capital made itself felt immediately after the Bolsheviks gained power, and foreign companies were not the first to be nationalized. In Arkhangelsk province, nationalization happened after 1920, when the Bolsheviks expelled the "Whites" and interventionists from the area.

Foreign investments appeared in the national economy after the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the general economic and legal conditions of concessions on November 23, 1920. Foreign capital in Russia had three forms: pure concessions; mixed companies; and foreign shares in

4 The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 5236, No. 1, D. 23, L. 8.

Soviet enterprises. The most common were the first two. The second form was dominant in the north and existed in the timber industry there. Joint stock companies were organized, where the state owned a certain part.

One of the most famous private Norwegian companies in Arkhangelsk province was Prytz & Co., owned by Frederik Prytz in 1913. Many rich and famous people were among its stockholders, such as the polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen.[5] A Swedish timber factory owned by Alfred Lidbeck had existed on Pechora River since 1901. It was bought by the Norwegian Martin Olsen, who established a factory called Stella Polare. All these factories had a significant impact on the economy of Arkhangelsk province. Their owners had important positions in local governing bodies or worked as consuls for their countries (for example, F. Prytz),[6] and played an important role in establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet government after 1920.[7]

The period between 1917 and 1920 was a time of turmoil. The Bolsheviks were replaced by the Whites in 1918 and then returned to power in 1920. The balance was broken and the future seemed to be unclear. In 1917–1920, Arkhangelsk province was the only region in the European part of Russia that shared a border with a neutral state—Norway. Not only were enterprises owned by citizens of neutral states located there, Arkhangelsk province also had an indigenous population, Murman colonists, and foreign entrepreneurs who had lived and worked in Arkhangelsk province for many years and had Russian citizenship.

Although after the 1920s the new authorities knew what to do with the locals and their property (that is, Russians, indigenous peoples, and other representatives of the peoples of the former Russian Empire), they did not know what to do with foreign property and its owners. Some of them had acquired Russian citizenship—they had lived in the North of Russia for generations and considered themselves Russians or at least Russian citizens. Economic difficulties made the Soviet government issue special decrees and allow concessions, mixed companies, or foreign shares in enterprises. In northern Russia, these

5 E. P. Bozhko, *Potomki "anglitskikh i sveiskikh nemtsev" na russkom Severe*, accessed 18 January 2018, http://paetz.ru/?page_id=4973.

6 A. V. Repnevskii, *Norvezhskii diplomat Frederik Priutz v revolutsionnom Petrograde 1918 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1999), accessed 18 January 2018, https://voencomuezd.livejournal.com/1382932.html.

7 See V. V. Tevlina, "Deiatelnost' norvezhskikh lesopromyshlennikov v Severnoi Rossii i Sibiri v 1890–1920-e gody," in *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia na Evropeiskom severe i v Arktike v pervoi chetverti 20 veka*, ed. V. Goldin and T. Troshina (Arkhangelsk: SAFU, 2015), 218–229.

concessions were applied most actively to the forestry sector. The next part of this essay explains how this happened.

THE 1917 REVOLUTION: FOREIGN CAPITAL AND PROPERTY IN THE RUSSIAN NORTH

How did foreigners manage during the October Revolution of 1917? What happened to foreign capital in Arkhangelsk province in 1917 and in the first months of 1918? These questions are of tantamount importance for our study.

Foreigners in the territory of Arkhangelsk province were mostly timber merchants and fishermen. At the beginning of the First World War, the sawmills stopped, and many foreign businessmen left the timber market. At the end of 1917, conflicts were caused by the nationalization of factories and vehicles. Foreign entrepreneurs fought for their property. They referred to the fact that they were foreign citizens and argued that revolutionary laws did not apply to them.

In conditions of legal anarchy, this was not always the case. It should also be considered that in 1917, after the introduction of an eight-hour working day, an increase in wages, problems with raw materials, and raised taxes, many entrepreneurs were ready to declare a lockout. For them, nationalization with compensation was the best way out.

It is interesting that after the liquidation of Soviet power in Arkhangelsk province in August 1918 by the Whites, many foreign entrepreneurs tried to regain the property that had been nationalized in 1917. These attempts came up against the refusals of the government of the northern region to pay compensation. The government referred to the fact that nationalization had been carried out by a previous government—the Bolsheviks. The result was Norwegians raiding parties that sought to take back property (if it had been seized in remote areas, far from cities and close to the border). Below is the October 1919 response to a request from the head of the Aleksandrovsky district:

> Armed detachments of Norwegians come here, dismantle small houses, take them out to motorboats and take them to their home, to Norway. Confidence in impunity has reached the point that the Norwegians attempted to take the iron barge belonging to the naval department from Vaida-Guba, for which purpose they brought new jacks and other tools from Norway.[8]

8 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 17 (Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 12, L. 128 (Response to the request to the Head of Murmansk Region from the Head of Aleksandrovsk District, October 1919).

Before nationalization, entrepreneurs were ready to announce lockouts at their factories because they lacked raw materials. In the first months of the revolution, peasants from the southern districts of Arkhangelsk and Vologda provinces prevented the cutting of timber—the raw material for sawmills. They wanted to receive compensation for cutting wood as long as they believed that the wood belonged to them. A new law allowed peasants to introduce additional taxes for entrepreneurs. It was assumed that the funds would be used for the social good of the village, such as the maintenance of schools and medical institutions.

But peasants often abused this right and caused problems for representatives of the new government. Peasants came up with a range of explanations to protect their interests. For instance, if the owner of the company or purchasing agent had a "foreign surname" or foreign citizenship, peasants justified their actions as a fear that the wood would end up with an enemy of the state. In correspondence between the commissar of the Provisional Government for the Kargopol region (*uiezd*) and the district (*volost'*) administration, the village governor writes:

> The timberman has prepared the wood and now rafts it to Onega. The population of Kenozero volost' have their doubts as to where this timber will go from Onega, as Wager is of non-Russian origin." The Commissar answers: " … you cannot obstruct Wager. Wager is a Swedish subject."[9]

The failure to harvest logs and a sharp increase in the price of wood was not the only cause of the crisis in the sawmill industry. In 1917, no contracts were concluded for the export of timber and sawn timber for the following year. The reason was that after the Bolsheviks had taken over national government, all commercial banks closed. Narodnyi Bank refused to engage in export operations because it had no foreign agents who could take care of the sale. In 1918, England stopped buying wood from Russia and started purchasing it in Norway at a cheaper price (in 1917, the "standard" cost was twenty-three pounds and in 1918 eighteen pounds).[10] In the 1920s, Russia returned to foreign markets with great difficulty by dropping its wood prices and using forced labor in logging.

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9 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 1988, Op. 1, D. 41, L. 99. Andreas Wager was a Norwegian-Russian sawmill entrepreneur, active in Northern Russia in the beginning of the twentieth century.

10 Ibid., F. 177 (SNX), Op. 2, D. 3 (Forestry Section. April–June 1918), L. 7.

Another issue concerning relations between the populations of northern Russia and Norway was fish trade (or the exchange of Norwegian fish for Russian grain or flour). During the First World War, Russia had lost the Norwegian market. Archival documents show that Norway had no need for goods brought from Russia, especially grain: fish was sold to the Germans and all necessary goods were imported from the overseas colonies of England and the US.

What was the reason for this? Why did northern Russians stop trading with Norway during the war? One reason is that shipping was dangerous. Vessels were destroyed by mines and there were cases of seizure of merchant ships by German submarines. Gradually, the Pomors became accustomed to these dangers, and during the navigation season in 1915, approximately 150 Pomor ships sailed to Norway for fish. In 1916, the supply of Norwegian fish was reduced because part of the Pomor fleet and some of the shipowners and sailors were drafted into the Russian Army.

In addition, Pomors began to let their vessels as housing to workers who built the railway and port facilities. In these desolate places it was difficult to find housing for many workers. Therefore, even the holds of steamers and Pomor sailing vessels were used. Many Pomors aspired to get a job doing construction work, which was better paid. It was more profitable than sailing to Norway. Furthermore, Norwegian seafarers preferred to transport more cargo with a higher freight rate to and from Arkhangelsk—for construction works, for example.

During the war, a ban was imposed on the export of grain from Russia. Later, fixed prices for food were introduced. As a result, Pomor people had nothing to offer the Norwegians in exchange for fish. The Pomors were forced to take out loans to buy fish. Under war conditions, however, inflation began to develop. The ruble became cheaper and the Pomors sold Norwegian fish at a loss. Many Pomors could not pay their debts and lost their mortgaged ships.

At this period, Russian rubles were transported to Norway on ships. Norwegians raised the price for fish, not always realizing that Russian money was losing its purchasing power in Russia. The money of the Russian Empire was annulled by the Soviet government. Norwegian companies that traded with Pomors in Russian money were in a difficult situation.

At the end of 1917, a Norwegian cargo ship belonging to the Ob Company was on its way to Petrograd via Arkhangelsk. The revolutionary authorities in Arkhangelsk confiscated all these goods for their region after receiving formal permission from the central government. In November 1918, when a White

government had taken over in Arkhangelsk, the Norwegian legation applied for compensation to the Soviet government. A joint commission was set up. It was chaired by I. Epstein, an attorney of the Norwegian legation. The total amount of the confiscated property was estimated at seven million Norwegian kroner. It turned out that there was no Norwegian currency in the Commissariat of Finance. After approvals in December 1918, Norwegians received the equivalent of this amount—20.4 million rubles. But extremely high inflation made this sum insignificant.[11]

By the end of 1917, the difficult food situation forced Russia to abolish a number of bans on the export of goods from the country. However, it now became clear that the Norwegian market had already been lost. The place of Russian goods was taken by goods from the British and American colonies. The situation changed after the Germans introduced unrestricted submarine warfare. Cargoes from the colonies were difficult to deliver. In Russia, there was a need for fish, but there was neither currency nor the necessary goods for barter trade.

In postrevolutionary Russia there was no control over the goods delivered to the markets. The "Norwegian program for the Pomor trade in 1919" makes it clear that the Norwegian side was very unhappy with the quality of products delivered from Russia—dairy products and flax. Norwegians refused to buy the traditional goods of tar, turpentine, and so forth, because the uncontrolled trade of previous years had eliminated the need for them completely.[12] The same document noted that Pomors would be allowed to export fish from Norway only if it would be beneficial for Norwegians. It is necessary to understand what was meant by the benefits from goods provided from Russia. Norway was interested in food, which was completely lacking in Russia itself.

The Norwegian government created favorable conditions for Pomors. They could buy fish in Norway and sell their products (flax, hemp, and pitch) at a fixed price. As a result, the needs of Norwegians for Russian goods were completely satisfied. This created new difficulties in the purchase of fish. The White government admitted that there were no goods for exchange, and the rate of Russian money fell after its annulment by the Soviet government (in 1919, one Norwegian krone cost four rubles and one pound was

11 Russian State Archive of Economics (RGAE), F. 7733, Op. 1, D. 7927, L. 1–5.

12 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 3090 (Department of Trade and Industry of the Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D.169 (Organization of Pomor trade in 1919), L. 1.

worth sixty-five rubles).[13] Most of the banknotes were circulated only abroad. The "Northern rubles" issued by the Bank of England could be used for foreign trade operations, but only under the strict control of the British.[14] The government of northern Russia had already allocated currency (krone) for these purposes. There were cases when, having received a loan in foreign currency, merchants left Russia and did not return.

The years 1917–1918 saw many policy changes. By the time of the revolutionary events of 1917, foreign companies in Arkhangelsk province were ready to close down. The Bolshevik nationalization was not as bad for them as the option of losing everything for other reasons. Foreign owners, mostly Norwegians, tried to gain compensation for their nationalized property. The situation was as follows: property was considered nationalized, but the issue of compensation was an open one. At this point, the political environment changed again: the Bolsheviks were replaced by the Whites, who established their own government and spread their authority over Arkhangelsk province. There was, then, no money and no chance to save the situation. The forestry industry was in confusion. Where should it go? What should it do? Foreign trade was also complicated on account of the political uncertainty in Russia, currency problems, and the poor quality of goods. The decisions taken on these issues by the Whites also opened new opportunities for fraudulent activity. Nothing was decided in a proper manner, therefore.

THE BOLSHEVIKS RETURN: FOREIGN PROPERTY AND CAPITAL IN ARKHANGELSK PROVINCE BY THE 1920s

In a short period of time, in the years 1917–1920, several governments replaced each other in Arkhangelsk province, and both foreign policy and property laws changed several times. The Bolsheviks, who were back in power in the area, gave Arkhangelsk the task of procuring fish in Norway on a grand scale—that is, for the whole country.[15] The Soviet authorities successfully used the trade with Norway and attracted private capital for this. At that time, the export of food was prohibited in Norway, but it was possible to exchange

13 Ibid., F. 3090 (Department of Trade and Industry of the Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 169 (Organization of Pomor trade in 1919), L. 10.

14 Ibid., F. 17 (Foreign Affairs Department of the Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 11 (Correspondence with the White Guard embassies abroad, August 1918 to May 1919), L. 5–7.

15 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 177 (SNKh), Op. 2, D. 3 (Forestry Section. April–June 1918), L. 7.

it for goods such as pitch, resin, and wood. Arrangements were overseen by the Danishevskii[16] export firm on behalf of the Soviet government. The businessman Epimakh Moguchii, under the mandate of the Arkhangelsk Province Executive Committee, traveled to Norway to negotiate all the exchange operations. As a fish procurement agent in Norway, he was released from the labor mobilization imposed on the bourgeoisie after the Revolution.[17]

The restoration of Soviet authority in Arkhangelsk province was accompanied by the transfer of part of the territory (Pechenga) to Finland in accordance with the Peace of Riga treaty. Finland offered no objection to Russia's trade with Norway. Nevertheless, this significantly complicated trade links across the land border.[18]

The interventionists left Arkhangelsk in the summer of 1919 and the "Whites" in February 1920. Individuals who could prove their foreign citizenship or "opted" citizenship (that is, citizenship of the states that had emerged after the destruction of the Russian Empire) could also leave Russia. Most of these people were owners of trade companies and factories that had been immediately nationalized by the Soviet authorities.

The natural desire of these people to regain their property created an impression among the public of Arkhangelsk province that foreigners intended to steal Russian land. The provincial authorities had no opportunity to control the border with Norway during the civil war. One document reported that some "unreliable" Norwegians, united in armed groups, exported

> food supplies … systematically plundered timber from the coast and coal from the island of Kildin, carried out fishing and sea mammal hunting in our waters… . With the onset of winter and the establishment of the sledge routes, they slaughtered reindeer and exported reindeer meat.[19]

In 1917–1918, the people of Arkhangelsk province gossiped about Norway's possible intention to take advantage of Russia's troubles and declare its jurisdiction over the islands of the Arctic Ocean and some other uninhabited

16 Ibid.

17 It is interesting that both Danishevskii and Moguchii themselves suffered from events relating to the Revolution. Later, their property was subjected to nationalization or—more accurately—plunder by local peasants. The provincial government was powerless to help them.

18 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 352, Op. 1, D. 186.

19 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 17 (Provisional Government of the Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 12, L. 128 (Response to the request from the Head of Aleksandrovsky District to the Head of Murmansk Region, October 1919).

territories. Similar suspicions fell on the expeditionary activity of Norwegian polar explorers.[20] The public's distrust also undermined the offer—made by Soviet government since 1919—of northern forests and fisheries to foreign concessions.

The lack of a fleet to protect waters in the northern seas helped to expand illegal fishing and hunting by Norwegian fishermen. In the spring of 1921, three fishing vessels were arrested. The captains were fined, but they insisted on their right to fish and did not agree with the decision of the court. Those arrested were released without a fine, but the catch was confiscated.[21]

The north of Russia still needed food, and it could only be obtained from neutral Norway. Immediately after the end of the civil war in northern Russia in the winter of 1920, the Arkhangelsk authorities informed all the foreign trade partners of the Whites that "the coup had been peaceful." These trade partners calmed down and began to send food purchased by the former authorities.[22] A telegram about the establishment of trade relations with the new government in Arkhangelsk province came from Norway. In February 1920, the Arkhangelsk provincial government decided to organize a "foreign trade department" and a special "economic commission" responsible for relations with foreign countries.[23]

Despite the existing monopoly for foreign trade in Soviet Russia, the initiative by the Arkhangelsk authorities received support. In Arkhangelsk, a branch of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade was established to trade the goods produced in several northern provinces of European and Asian Russia (Arkhangelsk, Severo-Dvinskaia, Vologda, Viatka, Perm, Ekaterinburg, Tiumen, and Murmansk).[24]

Foreign trade in this turbulent time had many risks. In the spring of 1920, a steamer with coal was detained in Tromsø at the request of its former owner, who had emigrated there. In response, the co-owners, Beliaevskii and Olsen, were taken into custody in Arkhangelsk, until "the coal was delivered to Arkhangelsk under the contract."[25] In 1921, timber sent to Holland was seized.

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20 See T. I. Troshina, "'Za Edinuiu i Nedelimuiu': Usiliia gosudarstvennykh i obshchestvennykh institutov Severnoi Oblasti po protivodeistviiu territorial'nomu razdrobleniiu i ekonomicheskoi zavisimosti Arkhangel'skoi gubernii," in Goldin and Troshina, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia na Evropeiskom Severe*, 229–244.

21 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 352, Op. 1, D. 294, L. 46, 350–360.

22 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 353, Op. 1, D. 4, L. 1, 2.

23 Ibid.

24 *Otchet Arkhangel'skogo gubernskogo ekonomicheskogo soveta Sovnarkomu i Sovetu Truda i Oborony (za period s 1 aprelia po 1 oktiabria 1922 g.)* (Arkhangelsk, 1923), 86.

25 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. r-353, Op. 1, D. 35, L. 17.

The owners, Alcius and Stewart, were informed by an official from Severoles about the redirection of their timber cargo. The new buyer helped to resolve the problem with the seized wood.[26] In summer 1921, the local authorities tried to solve the food problem:

> The Arkhangelsk provincial committee [*Arkhgubkom*] decided to send a trade delegation to Norway to sell the wood (which remained from the former owners in considerable quantities) and buy fish. The delegation consisted of three people. There was no visa, no suitable vessel. There was a boat for catching smugglers, but no one dared to sign on to it as a captain. The navigator agreed to take us to Vardø. But, as it turned out, he did not know the way and was not good at orienting himself at sea. A storm began.[27]

They reached Vardø with great difficulty. An "exchange of goods" began: the logs were thrown from the Russian boat, and in turn they received cod.[28]

The delegation then negotiated with the local administration and, as a result, gained a barter agreement. The provincial government began to exchange grain for other goods it needed. However, Nikolai Kulakov, the chairman of the Province Executive Committee, had to stand trial for such an amateur performance.[29] In the 1920s, punishments for economic crimes were not strict, and Kulakov soon returned to his former place of work.

The risky actions of the Bolshevik provincial authorities caused a food crisis. Thus, Commissar Yauronzolyn, "at his own peril and risk," allowed the residents of the northern areas of the Mezen District (where food shortages were particularly serious) "to send sailboats with wood to Norway and buy fish there; so, they did."[30] The revival of the "Pomor trade" with Norway[31] in the

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26 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 1005 (Verkhovnyi tribunal VTsIK), Op. 1-a, D. 381 (Delo o nalozhenii aresta na les, otpravlennyi iz Arkhangel´ska v Gollandiiu), L. 16.

27 State Archives of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), Department of documents of socio-political history, F. 8660, Op. 3, D. 121 (Memoirs of G. Gurvich).

28 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 1005 (Verkhovnyi tribunal VTsIK), Op. 1-a, D. 381 (Delo o nalozhenii aresta na les, otpravlennyi iz Arkhangel´ska v Gollandiiu), L. 16.

29 State Archives of the Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), Department of documents of socio-political history, F. 1, Op. 1, D. 299 (V gubernskaia konferentsiia RKPb. Dekabr' 1921 g. Otchet o rabote Gubispolkoma I. Bogovogo), L. 30g.

30 "Mezentsy trades," *Severnaia bednota*, October 3, 1921.

31 State Archives of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), Department of documents of socio-political history, F. 1, Op. 1, D. 299, L. 31v, 32b.

early 1920s was largely possible due to "connivance" on the part of the provincial authorities.

The reason why the Pomors did not fish was the lack of necessary tools and equipment. Economic disruption in the country led to a lack of tools for logging. The dearth of tools and means of production in all sectors of production in the country led to the concession policy (although this is a matter requiring special consideration) and made it possible for some foreign owners to retain their property in Russia for some years after the political changes in the country. Nevertheless, the situation was difficult. It was not only because of communist ideology, which considered foreigners a threat to the regime, but also a result of the economic collapse in the country. The White government in Arkhangelsk province during the civil war made people very suspicious of foreigners, and multiplied old fears that impacted on interpersonal and interethnic relations. This made the destruction of economic and cultural ties between Russia and Norway complete and difficult to restore. Later on, when the New Economic Policy came to an end, traditional contacts between the population of neighboring countries were further interrupted.

CONCLUSION

Everything that happened in the political history of Russia from 1917 into the 1920s broke the balance of relations in trade and property that had existed there for centuries. The European north of Russia had a complex ethnic, social, and economic status. By 1917, foreign companies in Arkhangelsk province were ready to announce a lockout. The Bolsheviks' nationalization policy was not as bad for the foreigners as the option of losing everything due to bad market conditions. The Whites refused to pay any compensation, saying that it was the obligation of the Bolsheviks and that, since the communists were not in power, no money would be paid. The situation with foreign trade was also complicated when combined with financial and currency problems. The decisions taken by the Whites on these questions opened up new opportunities for fraudulent activity. Nothing, then, was decided in a proper manner, and the image of foreigners diminished in the eyes of locals. This had negative consequences for the fate of foreign property.

Foreign ownership existed as long as it was necessary for the state to resolve its financial difficulties with minimal cost. The economic uncertainty in the 1920s forced the state to issue special decrees and to allow concessions, mixed companies, or foreign shares in enterprises. In Arkhangelsk province,

these concessions were mostly applicable to the forestry sector. The demise of the New Economic Policy in 1927–1928 led to the disappearance of foreign property in Arkhangelsk province as well as in all the remaining territories of the Soviet state.

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Russian Emigration to Norway after the Russian Revolution and Civil War

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Russian people emigrating to Norway and, indeed, other countries, too, is a fairly typical phenomenon that can be observed throughout the twentieth century as a consequence of socioeconomic, political, and cultural upheavals in their homeland. Norway has been Russia's neighbor in the North since time immemorial, but has only had an officially established border, almost two hundred km in length, since 1826. This means that Norway and Russia are neighbors of several centuries' standing.[1] This article deals with Russian emigration to Norway, which to a great extent went across this northern boundary between the two countries—but not just the northern boundary. The analysis of each of the three major and minor waves of emigration by Russians to Norway over nearly a hundred years is an important task, but not a simple one. Russian emigration to Norway fits into the broader picture of the Russian diaspora, and is a branch of the larger Russian migration to Scandinavia in general. This particular branch has been studied, but far from sufficiently.[2]

In essence, the three waves of emigration to Norway coincide, more or less, with the three periods of development of the Russian state: pre-revolutionary (1900–1917); Soviet (1917–1991); and post-Soviet Russia (beginning of

1 Konstantin Zaikov and Jens Petter Nielsen, "Mot en ny grense. Traktaten av 1826," in *Russland kommer nærmere. Norge og Russland 1814–1917*, ed. Jens Petter Nielsen (Oslo: Pax Forlag AS, 2014), 58–59.

2 See Bjørg Morken, *Kvite russiske emigranter i Norge. Master thesis in history* (Oslo: The University of Oslo, 1984); Vladislav I. Goldin, Tatiana P. Teterevleva, and Nikolai N. Tsvetnov, "Russkaia emigratsiia v Norvegii (1918–1940)," in *Strakh i ozhidaniia. Rossiia i Norvegiia v XX veke*, ed. Vladislav I. Goldin and Jens Petter Nielsen (Arkhangelsk: Izdatel'stvo Pomorskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1997); Aleksandr M. Kadakin (ed.), *Russkie v Skandinavii: Daniia, Norvegiia, Shvetsiia [Pravitel'stvennaia komissiia po delam sootechestvennikov za rubezhom]* (Tallin: Avelista OU, 2008).

1990s until today).[3] In the present article, however, we are going to concentrate on the first wave that took place immediately after the turbulent events of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the civil war that followed. It was during this time that Norway, and its northern region in particular, first encountered the problem of accepting a large number of emigrants from Russia. In actual fact, it was Norway's first refugee problem.

A wide range of people arrived, most of them with their families—including people from categories that had earlier never shown any propensity for leaving their own country:

1. Representatives from commercial and industrial circles who wanted to leave after the troops from the Entente countries had evacuated from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk in September 1919 (see Vladislav Goldin's article in this book);
2. Officers, government officials of the Russian Northern province, and military commanders from the Northern Front who left Arkhangelsk on the icebreaker *Kozma Minin* on 1 February 1920;
3. Fishermen and tradesmen from the White Sea area who had had close trade links with Norway from before the Russian Revolution;
4. Norwegians who for a long period had lived and worked in Russia and had become familiar with the culture, had learnt the language and even taken Russian citizenship. For example, among this category of emigrants were the owners of sawmills in Arkhangelsk and Onega and their workers;
5. Scientists, people from the arts community, and social activists from different political parties and cities across the country (particularly from northern towns).[4]

In the late 1930s, another group of migrants were those who had left Russia after 1917 for Turkey and the Balkans. Because these countries were unable to cope with the large influx of refugees from Russia in the long run, people were later sent to other countries, and some of them were accepted by Norway.

3 As for the post-Soviet Russian emigration to Norway, see Victoria V. Tevlina, *From Russia to Norway and to its North. Real and Potential Migration: Children, Adults, Families* (Arkhangelsk: Pravda Severa, 2015).

4 See Tatyana P. Teterevleva, "Russkie emigranty v Norvegii (1917–1930 gg.)," in *Rossiia-Norvegiia. Skvoz veka i granitsy*, ed. Daniela Büchten, Tatiana Jackson, Jens Petter Nielsen (Moscow: Khudozhnik i kniga, 2004), 183–184; Sven G. Holtsmark (ed.), *Naboer i frykt og forventning. Norge og Russland 1917–2014* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2015), 198–203.

The majority of the Russian emigrants who arrived in the first years after the revolution took up residence in and around Kristiania (present-day Oslo), the Norwegian capital, while only a small fraction settled in the north of Norway. After the Second World War, groups of Russian emigrants who had lived for many years in China and Yugoslavia, but for political reasons could not stay there, also received permission from Norway and other countries to settle. In total, approximately 700 former Russian citizens, who had initially left Russia due to the Bolshevik Revolution, settled permanently in Norway.

Of course, this number seems insignificant if one considers that after the 1917 Revolution approximately 700,000 people left Russia for various countries around the world.[5] That means that only one in a thousand Russian emigrants settled in Norway, despite the fact that Russia and Norway shared a common border. The largest group that came to Norway consisted of those who evacuated from Arkhangelsk on board the *Kozma Minin*, a voyage which has been called "one of the most bizarre episodes in Arctic marine history."[6] This group included the entire government of the Russian Northern province, many officers, and other people who had tied their fate to the White cause. Altogether, around 1,000 individuals were aboard the ship, and approximately 300 of them were women and children.

Only one tenth of them came to stay in Norway on a permanent basis. A few went back to Russia, but most of the people on board the icebreaker continued southwards in Europe, either immediately after arriving in Norway or after a period of internment. They headed to the large centers of Russian emigration— Berlin, Prague, and Paris—which soon became the capitals of Russian emigration. France was particularly attractive, since this was the only large country in Europe with a real shortfall in labor supply.[7]

It seems reasonable to expect that many more refugees from Russia would have chosen to settle in Norway, especially in northern Norway, which had long-established trade links with the White Sea area and Arkhangelsk. This was the so-called Pomor trade, which essentially took the form of the barter of Russian grain, flour, and forest products for Norwegian fish. In all, 300–400 Pomor vessels, and several thousand sailors and traders, visited the coast of Finnmark, the northernmost county of Norway, to barter with the

5 Katrin Guseff, *Russkaia emigratsiia vo Frantsii. Sotsial'naia istoriia (1920–1939)* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014), 62–63.

6 William Barr, "General Miller's flight from Arkhangel'sk, February 1920," in *Polar Record* 20 (1980): 119–125.

7 Guseff, *Russkaia emigratsiia vo Frantsii*, 103–124.

local population in the summer. We know that between 1860 and the First World War, many Norwegians—maybe as many as 1,000—established themselves or tried to establish themselves on the Russian Murman coast bordering Norway. However, the Russian Pomors—that is, the native population in the White Sea area—showed no inclination to settle in Norway, even if they had a good opportunity to do so because of the Pomor trade. Very few Pomors decided to "defect" from Russia to Norway during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Characteristically, after the Russian Revolution, fewer than fifty Pomors settled as emigrants in Finnmark. Only one or two Russians established themselves in the largest fishing villages, and we never saw a Russian "colony" in northern Norway to compare with the size of the Norwegian settlement on the Murman coast.[8] Part of the explanation for this could be that the Pomors, who had earlier engaged in the trade with northern Norway, belonged to a stratum of the population that was apolitical: sailors, peasants, and peasant traders. They were probably less affected by the revolution than those who came to Norway on board the *Kozma Minin*. However, many Russian Sami living in the border zone (Skolt Sami) had to seek refuge on the Norwegian side of the border in 1918, due to the war which was underway in the Pechenga (Petsamo) area. A group of Finnish activists were trying to take control over this part of Russia.[9] The Skolts, who were Russian Orthodox believers, later returned to their homeland.[10]

One reason for the fact that rather few Russian fugitives chose to settle in Norway was that the Norwegian authorities followed fairly strict rules for accepting emigrants, and one of the regulations was that emigrants were not allowed to live in Oslo or the vicinity. Obviously, it was not too tempting to move to Norway, which is evident from the fact that out of 200 Russians that the Norwegian government was ready to receive from Finland in 1919, only one family used this opportunity. On the other hand, the regulations were maintained somewhat flexibly by the Norwegian authorities. The prohibition against settling in Oslo and its neighboring municipalities were not enforced in

8 Nielsen, *Russland kommer nærmere*, 219–253.

9 From 1920, Petsamo became part of the new, independent Finland and remained so until 1944.

10 Marianne Neerland Soleim, "Russian emigration from Murmansk to Varanger before and after the revolution (1800–1920)," in *Rossiia. Murman. 1917: Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem (7–8 noiabria 2017 g.)*, ed. Julia P. Bardileva and Maria B. Ilicheva (Krasnoiarsk: "Nauchno-innovatsionnyi tsentr," 2018), 162.

practice, and more than half of Russian emigrants took up residence there. Not a single Russian was returned to Russia by the Norwegian authorities.[11]

Despite their small numbers, Russians in Norway tried to maintain their cultural community, to retain their traditions, and to acquaint Norwegians with Russian culture. A few months after their arrival, in April 1920, there were ecstatic reviews in the Norwegian newspapers about a concert that had been given by Russian refugees in Kristiania: "It is impressive that among the Russians there are so many people with good voices and an artistic education," stated one newspaper in the capital, adding that the concert bore witness to the intensity and freshness of current musical life in Russia.[12] Almost straight after the concert, the Russian émigré musician, Boris Borisov (Hoffmann), established the subsequently highly acclaimed Norwegian Balalaika Orchestra, which came to consist predominantly of Norwegian musicians who were fascinated by the Russian instrument. Spectacular concerts became an almost annual occurrence in Oslo. For example, a program from a concert in 1927 shows how a touring émigré Cossack choir performed with Issay Dobrowen, a famous Russian composer and musician who was living in Norway.[13]

Almost immediately after arriving in their new country, Russians established organizations that would keep them connected with one another. In 1919, *Russkoe sodruzhestvo* (Russian Fellowship) was founded, principally a closed club for former high-ranking "White" officers and people who had previously worked in the Russian diplomatic mission in Kristiania. As time passed, the organization started to accept other members of lower military rank.[14]

In 1927, another organization was set up, *Russkii emigrantskii kruzhok v Norvegii* (Russian Émigré Circle), which gathered emigrants from a broad range of political and social strata. The circle aimed to improve the material conditions of Russians in Norway, look for worthy employment for them, and strengthen the national feelings of the emigrant community through cultural education. The Russian Émigré Circle had its own letterhead with the name of the club in Russian and Norwegian, and the date when it was established. Members of the circle were Russians, but there were also some Norwegians with a Russian background and who spoke Russian. The group had its meetings in the building of the Chamber of Commerce in Oslo, St. Olavsgate 27. Regular "Russian Talks" organized by

11 Morken, *Kvite russiske emigranter i Norge*, 149.

12 GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation), F. 5867, Op. 1, D. 105, L. 1, 13–14.

13 National Library in Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:16; Goldin, Teterevleva, Tsvetnov, "Russkie emigranty v Norvegii (1917–1930 gg.)," 184.

14 Morken, *Kvite russiske emigranter i Norge*, 215–216.

this circle became well-known events in Kristiania, with discussions about history, culture, and political life in Russia. The main organizer of these talks was Valerii Carrick, possibly the most outstanding representative of post-revolutionary emigration in Norway.[15] The Russian Emigré Circle dissolved in 1940, when Norway was occupied by the German forces. The reason for its dissolution was disagreement among the members about Nazism and diverging attitudes towards the German occupation.[16]

Carrick was one of the few Russian intellectuals who settled in Norway after the revolution. Even before 1917, he was renowned in Russia as a caricaturist, writer, illustrator, and publisher of collections of folk tales for children. After emigrating to Norway at the end of 1917, he continued with his professional life. As early as 1918, he was placing caricatures of politicians in a Norwegian newspaper. He also published tales for Norwegian children in Norwegian, which appeared in newspapers and later in separate books. At the same time, he continued publishing tales in Russian, but now they were books that were intended for émigré children wherever they lived in countries outside Russia.[17]

Despite the material difficulties and frequent discord within the Russian emigrant community, Valerii Carrick enthusiastically tried to unite, educate, and help Russian emigrants in Norway and in other countries, right up until his death on 27 February 1943. Consequently, he undertook several journeys around the world, giving lectures on Russian culture, literature, philosophy, and the life of Russians in Norway. He also corresponded with editors of émigré journals, newspapers, and publishers, as well as with publishers in Soviet Russia.[18] For instance, he discussed Russian folk culture in a British newspaper in 1930, and he often appeared in the Norwegian press in connection with his tireless work promoting Russian culture.[19]

Furthermore, while living in Norway, Carrick corresponded for many years with countless Russian emigrants in France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, the US, and even in South America. There were a great many celebrated individuals among his correspondents: the writer Alexander Kuprin; Pavel Rimsky-Korsakov, a relative of the composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov; Maria Wrangel, the mother of General P. N. Wrangel (she was renowned

15 Goldin, Teterevleva, Tsvetnov, "Russkaia emigratsiia v Norvegii (1918–1940)," 119.

16 Morken, *Kvite russiske emigranter i Norge*, 219.

17 See National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:16.

18 The largest part of these materials are contained in the National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199 (the Carrick Archive).

19 National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:64 (Part 1) and F. 4199:66 (Part 1).

for her organizational and educational work among Russian emigrants); General Anton Denikin; and the last ambassador to Christiania from tsarist Russia, Konstantin Gulkevich.[20] It is also worth mentioning that Valerii Carrick communicated for many years with the eminent historian and fellow émigré, Sergei Melgunov, and his wife, who lived in Paris. The letters contain a unique exchange of views on topical subjects connected to Russia's destiny and revolution's impact on other nations.

From 1929, Russian emigrants in Norway joined in the annual celebration of the Day of Russian Culture. Carrick was involved in the decision, made in Prague in 1925, to fix this day for Russian emigrants throughout the world. The date was set as June 6, Alexander Pushkin's birthday. In different countries, program designs for these cultural days were made. They show how seriously they were planned. For instance, the 1927 Paris celebration and the 1935 Helsinki celebration were particularly impressive.[21] The purpose of this celebration was clear: "The day of Russian Culture was not essential for promoting Russian culture, which can so triumphantly promote itself. It is essential for the spiritual unification of our emigrants, who are torn apart from one another."[22] Russian organizations in Norway valued their contacts with Russian emigrants in other countries. They took every opportunity to highlight the fact that, while living in Norway, they were also part of the larger Russian diaspora.

Thus, the Day of Russian Culture was celebrated in Oslo for the first time on 14 June 1930. Greetings were read out from other émigré communities in France, Australia, the United States, Bulgaria, Finland, and Canada. Carrick gave a lecture about Russian culture and emigration. A two-part program from this day has been preserved. The festivities consisted of various events, and both Russians and Norwegians participated. The following year, Carrick made the opening address and then gave a lecture on Russian literature, and later the Norwegian Balalaika Orchestra performed a concert.[23] This festival took place in Norway every year until the German occupation in 1940.

Emigrants in Oslo opened a Russian Sunday school for their children. In April 1931 a Russian Orthodox congregation was established in

20 Konstantin Gulkevich served in Norway and Sweden in 1916–1917 and later emigrated to Switzerland after the October Revolution.

21 See National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:24 (Part 76) and F. 4199:26.

22 From the description and reports about "The Day of Russian Culture" in different countries (the beginning of the 1930s), National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:26.

23 Program of "The Day of Russian Culture" in Norway in the 1930s, National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:26.

Oslo, which subsequently took up residency in the Church of the Priests (later named Majorstuen Church). By 1940, the Orthodox Chapel of Saint Nicholas had been founded in Oslo, and it eventually became the principal assembly place for the Russian emigrant community. This congregation is still active, and now uses a chapel on the Graveyard of Our Savior. Elderly people in the congregation still recall when the well-known philosopher Father Alexander Rubets came from Stockholm in the early years of emigration to hold services.[24]

The majority of those who left Russia after 1917 to settle in Norway were people of distinguished rank. This shaped how Russian refugees were received in different areas of Norwegian society. The following view concerning the Russian refugees appeared in one of the bourgeois newspapers at the time: "If we behave in an alienating fashion when they need assistance, then we will leave an impression of being unwelcoming and selfish. During events such as these, people have strong memories of the bad as well as the good."[25] On the other hand, the political left in Norway demonstrated little sympathy for people whom they considered counter-revolutionaries. In 1920–1921, the main newspaper of the Norwegian Labor Party, *Social-Demokraten*, considered the refugees from Russia to be "work-shy and not positive, being accustomed to living at the expense of others, in the lap of luxury, and unable to live in a country where they have to work to survive."[26]

In general, it is possible to talk of a humane attitude towards Russian émigrés by the Norwegian authorities. To a great extent, this was enhanced by the support the refugees received from the well-known Norwegian polar explorer and diplomat, Fridtjof Nansen, who was appointed high commissioner for Russian refugees by the League of Nations in 1921. Nansen was highly respected in his own country, and he succeeded in obtaining assistance for refugees from the Norwegian Government in the early years of the Russian exodus. On the strength of his arguments, Norway became one of the first countries to issue "Nansen passports." At the same time, however, Nansen was criticized by Russian emigrant leaders for his work on repatriating Russian refugees to Soviet Russia.[27] Their argument was that former soldiers and officers

24 Goldin, Teterevleva, Tsvetnov, "Russkaia emigratsiia v Norvegii (1918–1940)," 123.

25 *Tidens Tegn*, September 20, 1918.

26 *Social-Demokraten*, May 1920 and November 1921.

27 Jens Petter Nielsen, "Tilbake til Russland! Kampanjer blant russiske 'hvite' emigranter for å vende tilbake til Lenins og Stalins Russland (1920–1945)," in *Årbok 1982 for Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi* (Oslo, 1984), 32–46.

of the White armies would not be safe in Soviet Russia. Nevertheless, Fridtjof Nansen was welcome to take part in meetings of the Russian Émigré Circle, and he did so several times. In addition, he corresponded with Valerii Carrick. There are letters from 1924–1926 in Carrick's archive, regarding support for Russian emigrants on numerous issues where the Russian Émigré Circle was active together with the Norwegian Red Cross.[28]

There can be no doubt that most Russian emigrants understood that they had to change their old way of life and accept a certain social decline in Norway. The people who left Russia during this first wave of emigration settled in Norway to a life that was very different from the one to which they were accustomed. There were twenty-eight officers and ten senior officials among those who came to Norway on the *Kozma Minin* in February 1920. Of these, two (including a former member of the government of the Northern region, S. N. Gorodetskii) received work as night watchmen, four became shoemakers, three house painters, and two drivers. The remainder became factory workers, tram conductors, sales assistants, or concierges/caretakers. Ivan Bagrinovskii, who had previously been mayor of Arkhangelsk, found work at a sawmill. Others set up their own small businesses as hairdressers, cobblers, and photographers. Kristofor Kristy, once the Russian consul in Oslo, remained in the city and opened a guesthouse in the building of the former imperial consulate.[29]

Some of the Russian emigrants made notable careers on a national level. For example, Anatol Heintz became a leading paleontologist and Issay Dobrowen an internationally recognized musician and composer. Others included the musician Boris Hoffmann (Boris Borisov) and Nikolai Tsvetnov (Nicolaus Zwetnow), a neurologist. It is most likely that this social deterioration was painful for those affected. Valerii Carrick, however, believed that, in general, Russians fared well in Norway. The reason for this, as he said, was "the lack of arrogance among people who had held high positions of authority, as well as the perception that any work was valued."[30] In any case, Russian aristocrats could not expect to maintain their status in a country where the nobility had been abolished in 1821.

Russian emigrants were employed, they were housed, and many of them still had energy to engage actively in education and culture to preserve their traditions. By the late 1930s, they had integrated relatively well into

28 National Library of Oslo, Private Archives, F. 4199:15 (Part 1).

29 Morken, *Kvite Russiske emigranter in Norge*, 236–237; GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation), F. 5867, Op. 1, D. 109, L. 1, 2.

30 See Valerii Carrick's article in the Paris-based Russian newspaper *Poslednie Novosti*, February 16, 1922.

Norwegian society. Their descendants have done equally well, and live in Oslo, Lillehammer, Bergen, Alta, Tromsø, and many other places in Norway.

After the Second World War, there was another small wave of Russian emigrants to Norway; and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was a new, and much larger, migration to Norway. Today, some 18,350[31] Russians live in Norway. But it is still the case that preserving "Russianness" in the full meaning of the word, which is what the majority of post-Soviet emigrants wanted and still want, is no easy task.[32]

Undoubtedly, the post-revolutionary wave of Russian emigration is a peculiar chapter in the history of Russian-Norwegian relations that, despite its modest size, merits further study.

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31 This summary figure is based on the data from *Statistics Norway* (http://ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/utlstat) and collected by the author for the years 1990–2018.

32 See Aleksandr Shcherbakov, "Emigratsiia iz Rossii v Norvegiiu v postsovetskii period," in Büchten, Jackson, and Nielsen, *Rossiia-Norvegiia. Skvoz' veka i granitsy*, 273–274; Tevlina, *From Russia to Norway and to its North*.

Soviet Diplomacy in Norway and Sweden in the Interwar Years: The Role of Alexandra Kollontai

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INTRODUCTION

In this article, I shall take a look at Soviet diplomacy in Norway and Sweden in the interwar years and try to assess the role of Alexandra Kollontai in the Soviet-Norwegian and Soviet-Swedish relationship during this period.[1] Kollontai was the leader (*polnomochnyi predstavitel',* or *polpred,* for short) of the Soviet diplomatic representation in Norway from 1923[2] to 1930 (except for a short stay in Mexico in 1926–1927) and in Sweden from 1930 to 1945 (from 1943 as ambassador). She is regarded as the first female diplomat in modern times.

Alexandra Kollontai had no diplomatic experience before her appointment as an adviser to the Soviet trade delegation in Norway in the autumn of 1922. She was, however, well qualified for such a job. She had a good education, spoke several languages, and was well acquainted with appearing at international forums and dealing with foreigners. A special advantage for her work in Norway was her knowledge of the country and of many Norwegians from her residence in Norway during the First World War.

Let us start by asking: How did Kollontai perform her work as a diplomat in Norway and Sweden? What was her personal contribution to the relation between the Soviet Union and these two countries? How was she received in these countries and what was her relationship to important political

1 I will not deal with Kollontai's important role as an intermediary between the Soviet Union and Finland during the Winter War and the Continuation War. This would call for a separate article.

2 She arrived in Norway in October 1922, as an adviser to the Soviet trade mission.

circles—especially the labor movement? Was there a difference in Soviet diplomacy in Norway and Sweden in the interwar years and, if so, can it be related to the personal influence of Kollontai?

Soviet foreign policy was, almost from the start, a dualistic project. On the one hand, there was the world revolutionary objective, represented by the establishment of the Communist International (or Comintern, for short); on the other, Soviet Russia needed to break out of its international isolation and form normal diplomatic relationships with other states. This dualism was, of course, self-contradictory. Russia was attempting to have good relations with foreign governments while at the same time working to topple these governments through communist revolutions.

ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI: BETWEEN DIPLOMACY AND PARTY IN NORWAY

This problematic dualism soon became apparent in Norway.[3] The Norwegian Labor Party—Det norske Arbeiderparti (DnA)—joined the Comintern in June 1919. The DnA was among the few majority socialist parties in Europe to sign up with the Comintern, and the only majority party to accept the famous, or infamous, twenty-one conditions for membership in the Comintern, adopted at the Comintern's second congress in the summer of 1920.[4] However, the "Moscow Theses," as they were called in Norway, were soon the object of controversy in the party, and in the end led to a split in November 1923, and the foundation of the Communist Party of Norway (NKP) as the Norwegian "section" of the Comintern.[5]

Kollontai's role as a diplomat called for exercising caution in dealing with intra-party affairs. She had been duly instructed by Foreign Commissar Georgii Chicherin in a letter in which he underscored "the sharp distinction, because of the historical situation, we have to make between state and party work."[6] She was cautious from the start. In an interview to a Norwegian

3 About Alexandra Kollontai and the Norwegian labor movement, see Åsmund Egge, "Aleksandra Kollontaj og norsk arbeiderbevegelse," in Yngvild Sørbye, ed. *Revolusjon, kjærlighet, diplomati. Aleksandra Kollontaj og Norden* (Oslo: Unipub, 2008), 55–81; Åsmund Egge, Sven G. Holtsmark, and Aleksej Komarov, introduction to *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser 1922–1930*, by Aleksandra M. Kollontaj (Oslo: Res Publica, 2015), 15–37.

4 The DnA was the biggest of the parties in the labor movement.

5 Åsmund Egge, *Komintern og krisen i Det norske arbeiderparti* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1995).

6 Chicherin to Kollontai, November 4, 1922. AVPRF, f. 04, op. 30, p. 199, d. 52327, ll. 32-33. Published in *Sovetsko-Norvezhskie otnosheniia 1917–1955: Sbornik dokumentov*

newspaper just after her arrival in the country, when asked about the forthcoming Comintern congress, she dismissed the question: "Not a word about the Comintern . . ." All the same, in her diplomatic notes she asked herself whether it could be possible to stay away from the local communists: "Don't we have to correct them when they make mistakes?"[7]

In connection with an extended central committee meeting of the DnA in January 1923, the leader of the Russian trade delegation at the time, Yakov Surits, and Kollontai were instructed to keep a distance from the struggle in the party, but all the same influence the leaders of the party through private conversations so that the party should leave behind "the dead end of these harmful debates."[8] Later, Kollontai also had political discussions with the party leaders, especially from the wing loyal to the Comintern.[9] So, there was a certain overlapping between strictly diplomatic work and party affairs, after all.

Kollontai was critical to the policy of the Comintern toward the Norwegian party and tried, through her secretary Marcel Body, to influence the Comintern leadership to have patience with the Norwegians in order to avoid a party split.[10] She was concerned that the implementation of strict Comintern policy would hurt her work for a Norwegian *de jure* recognition of the Soviet government. After the party divided, she expressed her anger:

> To my great sorrow I cannot fail to remark that the [Norwegian] party, which until now has had great political weight, and maybe was the only Communist party that could have played a role as an essential political factor in the issue of the recognition of Russia, is now weakened by the split. The timing chosen for the split is extremely unfortunate for us.

(Moscow: ELIA-ART-O, 1997), doc. 60. Norwegian translation in Sven G. Holtsmark (ed.), *Norge og Sovjetunionen 1917–1955* (Oslo: J. W. Cappelens forlag, 1995), doc. 60. Translation into English by the author.

7 Aleksandra Kollontaj, *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser 1922–1930* (Oslo: Res publica 2015), 118 (October 14, 1922) and 122 (October 15, 1922). The interview was published in *Social-Demokraten*, October 16, 1922. All quotes from Kollontai's diplomatic notes are translated by the author.

8 Ibid., 168 (March 3, 1923).

9 Such as ibid., 288–290.

10 Egge, *Komintern og krisen*, 91–94, 103–104. Body's letters are published (in Norwegian translation) in Åsmund Egge and Vadim Roginskii (eds.), *Komintern og Norge. DNA-perioden 1919–1923. En dokumentasjon* (Oslo: Unipub, 2006), doc. 288, 312. The originals are in RGASPI, f.495, op.18, d.171a, ll.91-94 (in French) and f. 495, op. 18, d.171a, ll.106–109 (in Russian).

> I am extremely surprised that the Comintern did not take into account the political situation and used excessive haste in forcing through the split, obviously without consideration for, or taking into account of, the extent to which what has happened makes our foremost task difficult.[11]

Even after the split of the Norwegian Labor Party in 1923, the labor movement remained for many years more sympathetic to the Soviet Union than was the case in other Western European labor movements.[12] This was the case not only for the Communist Party of Norway, which was rapidly weakening, but also for the much larger, and non-Comintern, Norwegian Labor Party.

Broad sympathy for the Soviet project led to the DnA and NKP cooperating with Soviet diplomats.[13] Kollontai and other Soviet diplomats gained access to Norwegian classified information through DnA and NKP members of Parliament (the Storting). Furthermore, there was coordination between the diplomats and their Norwegian "friends" on foreign policy matters, mostly relating to Soviet-Norwegian relations. Soviet diplomats influenced the Norwegian left's stance on Norwegian domestic policy issues. This was, however, a two-way activity, as the Norwegian left sometimes also tried to influence Soviet policy toward Norway.

During the infighting within the DnA before it split in 1923, the Comintern-friendly faction tried to get help from the Comintern and also tried to use the Soviet trade mission as an intermediary when asking for financial assistance. According to a police report, Kollontai allegedly expressed some frustration with nagging from the leader of the Comintern-friendly faction.[14]

On a personal level, and maybe even politically, Kollontai was closer to the representatives of the Labor Party than to the Communist Party. Her closest friends among the Norwegians were Martin Tranmæl, the de facto leader of the Labor Party, and Rachel Grepp, the widow of the late Labor Party chairman, Kyrre Grepp. An indication of her closeness to and trust in the Labor Party is a letter from Kollontai to Rachel Grepp, written in December 1930,

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11 Kollontai to Maxim Litvinov, November 9, 1923. AVPRF, f. 04, op. 30, p. 199, d. 52336, ll. 86-89. Here quoted from Åsmund Egge and Sven G. Holtsmark, "Soviet Diplomacy and the Norwegian Left, 1921–1939," in *Caution & Compliance. Norwegian-Russian Diplomatic Relations 1814–2014*, ed. Kari Aga Myklebost and Stian Bones (Stamsund: Orkana, 2012), 109.

12 Åsmund Egge, "Fra revolusjonsbegeistring til brobygging—Moskva i norsk arbeiderbevegelse 1917–1991," *Mediehistorisk Tidsskrift* 28, no. 2 (2017): 16–27.

13 Egge and Holtsmark, "Soviet Diplomacy," 101–112.

14 Martin Nag, *Kollontaj i Norge* (Oslo: Solum, 1981), 44.

shortly after Kollontai's transfer as a *polpred* to Stockholm. In the letter, she voices concern about the fate of her archive in case of her death. She was afraid that someone would get hold of her papers and "make bad use of them or destroy them." To the Soviet Union's Revolutionary Museum, "you may give only printed books and articles, in no case manuscripts [emphasis in the original]." These should be taken care of by some of her close friends. At the end of the letter, she even indicates that the Norwegian Labor Party might take care of her archive: "Perhaps 'Arbeiderparti' [DnA] would take all of my material under the Arbeiderparti's care?"[15]

KOLLONTAI AS A DIPLOMAT IN NORWAY

Less than a year before Kollontai came to Norway as an advisor to the trade delegation, she had asked for a visa to visit Norway. However, the chief of the Norwegian security police regarded her as a "one of the most dedicated and prominent *(ivrigste og fremmeligste)* revolutionaries" and advised most definitely against giving her a visa.[16] This was in 1921, at the peak of the fear of revolution in Norway. She eventually got a visa on certain conditions, but the visit was not pulled off.

At her arrival in October 1922, she was put under police surveillance. But as Kollontai lived a rather obscure life during her first months in Norway, there was not much to be reported. Her reception in the press followed political lines. The labor press was friendly; the bourgeois papers were negatively disposed towards her. It was reported that Kollontai had complained about the unfriendly attitude from the bourgeois press against herself and the Soviet government.[17]

As mentioned, in spite of her lack of experience in diplomatic work Kollontai had certain advantages as a diplomat in Norway. Her good education, her knowledge of several languages—she even spoke rather good Norwegian—and her acquaintance with Norway and many Norwegians from her earlier residence in Norway gave her an excellent starting point. Her good contacts with leading members of a strong Labor Party that was better disposed towards the Soviet Union than probably any other social democratic

15 Kollontai to Grepp, December 19, 1930. The Labour Movement's Archive and Library (Oslo), Ark-2754 Rachel Grepp, boks F 7 Brev og manuskripter, Mappe 1, Aleksandra Kollontaj—Brev.

16 Nag, *Kollontaj i Norge*, 42–43.

17 Ibid., 48.

party, gave her a unique insight into the conditions prevailing in Norway. In addition to Tranmæl, Grepp, and other friends on the left, she also became personally acquainted with political leaders from the bourgeois parties, most importantly Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, leader of the liberal party and prime minister during the greater part of Kollontai's diplomatic residence in Norway. In her work for the normalization of relations between Norway and the Soviet Union, Kollontai also established contacts far outside purely political milieus.

Kollontai's broad connections, including her personal friendship with some of the leading politicians and her active and successful diplomatic work, may have given her an influence unusual for a diplomat. This may be illustrated by the following incident (for which we, admittedly, only have Kollontai's word). At the beginning of 1930, the Storting was about to discuss a proposal from the government about raising duties on imported wood. At this time, a considerable quantity of wood for processing paper at the Borregaard paper mill was imported from the Soviet Union. Borregaard's director contacted Kollontai to ask her to influence the government: "Madam Kollontai, ask the government to postpone the question about raising the customs on wood at least for a year. This will be advantageous for both you and us. And you have such an influence on the government that your 'wish' counts more than an inquiry from a Norwegian industrialist."[18]

Kollontai's standing with the general public in Norway changed remarkably in a short time. From being looked upon as a suspicious and despicable Bolshevik among bourgeois society, she became respected and even popular. When she returned to Norway from Mexico in 1927, she was welcomed even in the conservative newspapers. S. M. Mirnyi, who worked as Kollontai's secretary after her return, later remarked—maybe with a little exaggeration—on Kollontai's popularity during her last period as *polpred* in Norway: "To say that Kollontai was popular in Norway—that is to say too little. She was loved."[19]

Kollontai's diplomatic activity in Norway was characterized by a limited amount of cases. The main question during the first years was the Norwegian *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Union, which was solved in February 1924.[20]

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18 Kollontaj, *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser*, 667 (February 18, 1930), Kollontai's rendering of the director's words.

19 S. M. Mirnyi, "Aleksandra Kollontai: kak ia ee pomniu," in *Severnaia Evropa. Problemy istorii*, vol. 5, ed. O. V. Chernysheva (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 293. English translation by the author.

20 See, for example, Gyrid Celius, "Norwegian-Soviet relations, 1920–1924: Negotiations on the Spitsbergen question and de jure recognition of the Soviet Government," in Myklebost and Bones, *Caution and Compliance*, 137–148.

Another problem that absorbed a lot of Kollontai's time concerned the consequences for Norwegian seal hunters of the Soviet government's extension of its territorial borders in the North, which implied that Franz Josef's Land and other islands in the Arctic Ocean became Soviet territory.[21] Kollontai was also involved with commercial and economic affairs, not least negotiations about establishing trade agreements, especially about the export of fish from Norway to Russia.[22] These efforts also had political implications as the outcome of the export negotiations would influence the Norwegian fishermen's attitude to the Soviet Union—and to the Norwegian communists.[23] During the last years of Kollontai's activity in Norway, protracted negotiations were in progress about a Soviet-Norwegian non-aggression treaty. The Norwegian government insisted instead on the establishment of an arbitration board, and the negotiations came to nothing.[24]

There is also a reason to emphasize Kollontai's role in establishing cultural contacts between Norway and the Soviet Union. Especially in her last years in Norway, she developed a broad network of contacts with Norwegian writers and artists.[25]

In her diplomatic work, Kollontai was active in establishing contacts and in promoting initiatives that could strengthen the prestige of the Soviet Union. This made it possible for her to write copious and well-informed reports to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) in Moscow. However, in accordance with her instructions from Chicherin, she showed caution when it came to taking independent initiative in politically sensitive matters. I. M. Diakonov, who as a boy was living in Oslo where his father was working in the Soviet representation, remembers his father saying that Kollontai was not characterized by boldness in her work: she feared making independent

21 See, for example, Sven G. Holtsmark (ed.), *Naboer i frykt og forventning. Norge og Russland 1917–2014* (Oslo: Pax, 2015), 93–111.

22 A. V. Repnevskii, *SSSR-Norvegiia: Ekonomicheskie otnosheniia mezhvoennogo dvadtsatiletiia* (Arkhangelsk: Izdatel'stvo Pomorskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1998), 109–168.

23 Kollontai was keenly aware of this. In 1933, from her viewpoint in Stockholm, she criticized the Soviet policy towards Norway: "Rozengolts has made the mistake of not buying fish from them [the Norwegians] this year. It would have been worthwhile to pay four million crowns to keep the sympathy for us among the coast population." Aleksandra Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker 1930–1940* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2008), 301 (March 27, 1933).

24 Sven G. Holtsmark, "A. M. Kollontaj og forholdet Norge-Sovjetunionen," in Sørbye, *Revolusjon*, 124–127.

25 See, among others, Daniela Büchten, "Kunst og politikk. Diplomaten Aleksandra Kollontaj som kulturformidler," in Sørbye, *Revolusjon*, 287–316.

decisions.[26] Diakonov attaches this to her need to be extra cautious because of her former role as an oppositionist—she had been one of the leaders of the so-called "Workers' opposition" before her assignment as a diplomat. This theory have something to recommend it. But another reason might be her own experience in not having the necessary support from Moscow in her diplomatic work. In connection with the Norwegian *de jure* recognition of the Soviet government in February 1924, a joint pronouncement between Kollontai and the Norwegian foreign minister was drawn up. This pronouncement contained a formulation that could be interpreted as if Norway was promised most-favored-nation treatment in the future trade- and shipping agreement that would be worked out between the two countries. The text of the pronouncement had not received clearance from the NKID, and Kollontai received a strict reprimand that she had exceeded her instructions. She was then forced into a humiliating and embarrassing retreat.[27]

However, Kollontai did not flinch from freely expressing her opinions to her superiors, and she made independent assessments in a lot of cases. For example, Kollontai played a personal and decisive role in the Norwegian-Soviet negotiations about Norwegian *de jure* recognition of the Soviet government. The final agreement, which stated the Soviet government's recognition of Norwegian supremacy over the Spitsbergen islands, was in fact the work of Kollontai. Chicherin at first failed to understand Kollontai's reasoning—that Norway could be elicited to diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government through Soviet accommodation in the Spitsbergen question. But, finally, Kollontai's arguments won the day.[28]

The reason why Kollontai and the Soviet government during the autumn of 1923 attached such importance to negotiations about diplomatic recognition *de jure* with a small country like Norway was that Norway appeared to be the first country in Western Europe likely to recognize the Soviet government. International recognition was the Soviet government's foreign policy priority at this time, and recognition even from a small country would strengthen its negotiating position with the great powers. However, the Norwegian government

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26 V. A. Shishkin, *Stanovlenie vneshnei politiki poslerevoliutsionnoi Rossii (1917–1930 gody) i kapitalisticheskii mir* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2002), 10.

27 Celius, "Norwegian-Soviet Relations," 146. See also Holtsmark, "A.M. Kollontaj," 106–107. Kollontai herself deals with this question in her diplomatic notes, see Kollontaj, *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser*, 325–331.

28 Egge, Holtsmark, and Komarov, Introduction, 39–42. Celius, "Norwegian-Soviet Relations," 142–148.

did not dare to defy Great Britain and the other great powers in the question of recognition. To Kollontai's great disappointment, both Italy and Great Britain recognized the Soviet government before Norway did.

SOVIET DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN NORWAY IN THE 1930s

The Soviet diplomats that followed never had the same influence and authority that Kollontai had enjoyed during her time in Norway. Admittedly, they also from time to time received confidential information from sources in the NKP and DnA. But the NKP soon became an unimportant factor in Norwegian politics, and after 1930 had no members in the Storting. The fact that later diplomats lacked Kollontai's extensive network of contacts was probably more significant.[29]

The growing Stalinization in the 1930s, and the Great Terror especially, influenced the work of Soviet diplomats. In Norway, Kollontai's successors had less scope of action and showed less active reporting about the Norwegian state of affairs. Her first successor, Alexander A. Bekzadian, continued to write extensive reports on a broad spectrum of themes regarding Norwegian politics and Norwegian society, just as Kollontai had done. However, once he left Norway in 1934, Soviet diplomatic reports became of limited breadth and contained little of value. After 1937, political reports to Moscow ceased almost completely.[30]

SOVIET DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN SWEDEN IN THE 1920s

With the New Economic Policy from 1921, the Soviet foreign policy changed from placing hope in revolutionary upheaval in the Western world to establishing normal diplomatic relations with other states—in particular, the greater Western European powers. During the first years after the October Revolution, the Russians regarded Stockholm as one of the main centers for Soviet activity toward the capitalist West.[31] In May 1920, Sweden was the first country to conclude a contract with Soviet Russia for the delivery of industrial products, the so-called "Krasin agreement." This was a purely commercial affair, and the

29 Holtsmark, "A. M. Kollontaj," 118.

30 Holtsmark, *Naboer*, 27–28.

31 See, for example, Aleksander Kan, *Hemmabolsjevikerna. Den svenska socialdemokratin, ryska bolsjeviker och mensjeviker under världskriget och revolutionsåren 1914–1920* (Stockholm: Carlsson bokförlag, 2005), 244–249.

Swedish authorities for a long time repeatedly refused to accept a politically trusted person as the head of the Soviet trade delegation. Even more persistently, the Swedish government refused to accept any political role whatsoever for the trade delegation's leader. The Swedes wanted to avoid doing anything that might be interpreted as a de facto recognition of the Soviet government. The answer from the Soviet government was to insist on a political regulation of the Swedish-Soviet relationship before any economic advantages for the Swedish trade and industry could be taken into account. [32]

In September 1921, a trade agreement between Norway and Soviet Russia was reached. This implied a de facto recognition of the Soviet government on the part of Norway. Shortly afterwards, a social democratic government led by Hjalmar Branting assumed power in Sweden. A parliamentary commission was set up to consider the question of a Swedish-Russian trade agreement, and in April 1922 the government put a proposal for such an agreement before the parliament (the Riksdag). The proposal was rejected by both chambers in the Riksdag.[33] The traditional anti-Russian attitude among Swedish conservatives was too strong for a de facto recognition at this stage.[34] The conditions for diplomatic success in dealing with Sweden were clearly more difficult than they were in Norway. The first Russian envoys, Platon Kerzhentsev and Valerian Osinskii, got a rather chilly reception from the Swedish authorities.[35]

In Moscow, the answer to the Swedish rejection of the trade agreement was a cancellation of the "Krasin agreement" and the introduction of an economic boycott of Sweden.[36] This was all the more easy now, since the Treaty of Rapallo with Germany made it possible—and even desirable—to shift economic focus from Sweden to Germany.

The economic relations between Sweden and Russia were far more important than those between Norway and Russia. For instance, Swedish exports to Soviet Russia were at this time relatively greater than that of any

32 Helene Carlbäck-Isotalo, *Att byta erkännande mot handel. Svensk-ryska förhandlingar 1921–1924* (Uppsala: Studia historica Upsaliensia, 1997), passim. For a short exposition of the Soviet-Swedish relations in the beginning of the 1920s, see Erik Lönnroth, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, vol. V, *1919–1939* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söners förlag, 1954), 70–75.

33 Carlbäck-Isotalo, *Att byta erkännande*, 175–184.

34 About the Swedish elites' traditional attitude to Russia before the war, see Gunnar Åselius, *The "Russian Menace" to Sweden. The Belief System of a Small Power Security Élite in the Age of Imperialism* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994).

35 About Kerzhentsev and Osinskii, see Carlbäck-Isotala, *Att byta erkännande*, 43–44, 216–217 and passim.

36 Ibid., 184.

other country.[37] At the beginning of 1923, the Soviets found it advantageous to cancel the economic boycott. Preliminary talks had already been initiated, but the Swedish attitude became cold after a new conservative government came to power in April 1923.[38]

As mentioned, Kollontai benefited from access to sensitive information through her contacts in the Norwegian labor movement. We know much less about the connections between the Soviet representatives in Stockholm and the Swedish left in the 1920s. Karl Kilbom, one of the most prominent leaders in the Swedish labor movement, was a good friend of Osinskii, who until 1924 was the Soviet representative in Sweden. Osinskii may have received confidential information from Kilbom, who however strongly denies this.[39]

KOLLONTAI'S TRANSFER TO SWEDEN

On 21 April 1930, Kollontai received a telegram from Moscow which informed her that the Politburo had appointed her as provisional chargé d'affaires in Sweden.[40] The background for the appointment was trouble at the representation in Stockholm. A member of the representation had defected and another had disappeared. The *polpred* himself was seriously ill and had to be replaced.

This appointment was not Kollontai's wish. She wanted most of all to leave diplomatic work and return to the Soviet Union working as a writer.[41] But if that was not possible, she preferred to stay in Norway. According to her diplomatic notes, she had already written, begging, to the party: "I ask you urgently not under any circumstances to appoint me to Sweden."[42] But her plea was to no avail.

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37 Ibid., 178.

38 Ibid., 208.

39 Karl Kilbom, *I hemligt uppdrag. Ur mitt livs äventyr II* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1954), 281–282.

40 Kollontaj, *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser*, 680–681 (April 21, 1930). The Politburo had decided the day before to appoint Kollontai to this provisional post while she kept her office in Norway.

41 For example: "I want, I want to go home!" See Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 242 (end of March 1932). Already in 1925 Kollontai had in a letter to deputy foreign commissar, Maxim Litvinov, asked to be relieved from her post as *polpred* in Norway. (Anna M. Itkina, *Revoliutsioner, tribun, diplomat* [Moscow: Politizdat, 1970]). She wanted to "again become a free writer without official rank." (Kollontaj to Fredrik Ström, July 24, 1925, in Aleksandra Kollontaj, *"Kära kamrat: allra käraste vän,"* ed. Britta Stövling [Stockholm: Gidlund, 1977], 30).

42 Kollontaj, *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser*, 680 (April 1930). Also, after having been permanently stationed in Sweden, she tried to get away, in the summer of 1931 as an envoy to France, in

Kollontai's earlier experiences with Sweden were not especially positive. Admittedly, in 1912 she completed a successful lecture tour in Sweden. But when she went from Berlin to Stockholm, after the outbreak of war in 1914, she was soon arrested and permanently expelled from Sweden. In February 1918, she was assigned to lead a Soviet delegation to prepare an international socialist conference in Petrograd. The delegation tried to reach Stockholm but did not get any further than Mariehamn on the Åland islands, which had recently been occupied by Swedish troops. Kollontai was then forced to return to Åbo in Finland.[43]

Kollontai's first and most important problem as the new *polpred* in Stockholm was to reestablish order in the representation, a task in which she succeeded. Secondly, she had to improve the image of her mission in the eyes of the Swedish authorities and public. This was not an easy task. Kollontai's predecessor had been looked upon with suspicion and was more or less ostracized both by the diplomatic corps and Stockholm society.[44] Her reception in Sweden was very cool. In a letter to her friend, Zoia Shadurskaia, she writes:

> It is not an easy task I have got—the atmosphere of enmity against the Union and against everybody from the representation is rude and explicit. When I and Pina walk through the lobby, the haughty and smug Swedes who had sat down in the armchairs, send us so openly hostile looks that I don't remember anything similar since Berlin during the first days of the war against Russia (1914). Our former "friends" among the social democrats keep plainly clear, they don't visit [us] and answer curtly on the telephone.[45]

In another letter to Zoia, she again complains about the Swedes:

> Do you remember Pushkin's words: "To annoy the arrogant neighbor" etc. The Swedes are still arrogantly self-satisfied. And they still remember Poltava. And they remember how they lost Finland. "The Russian bear"—whether he wears the crown of the tsar or a five-toothed star—is all the same "dangerous." There is nothing like that in Norway.[46]

1934 to Spain, and in 1935 to Belgium (Oleg Ken, Aleksandr Rupasov, and Lenart Samuelson, *Shvetsiia v politike Moskvy 1930–1950-e gody* [Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005], 54–55, note 50).

43 Kan, *Hemmabolsjevikerna*, 57, 298–301.

44 Kaare Hauge, *Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai: The Scandinavian Period, 1922–1945* (Doct. diss., Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1971), 156–158.

45 Kollontaj, *Diplomatiske nedtegnelser*, 698 (April 27, 1930).

46 Ibid., 702–703 (May 1, 1930). Also later she wrote about "this ocean of hostility"

In her diplomatic notes, Kollontai often makes comparisons between Norway and Sweden, and there is no doubt about where her sympathies are. The Swedes were more formal and more monarchist. She complains about a general lack of humor—"especially in Sweden, the Norwegians are more cheerful."[47] In a letter to Mowinckel, her Norwegian friend, she writes that she is missing Norway. She "believes that there is more spiritual contact between Norwegians and Russians."[48]

KOLLONTAI'S DIPLOMATIC WORK IN SWEDEN IN THE 1930s

There was a significant difference between the Soviet Union's relationship with Sweden compared to its relationship with Norway, both politically and economically. Sweden was a traditional enemy; Norway and Russia had never waged war. Sweden was, like Soviet Russia, a Baltic power; Norway was not. Sweden was much more important economically for the Soviet Union, compared to Norway.[49]

However, in the interwar years there emerged more fields of potential conflict between Norway and the Soviet Union. There were disputes about fishing rights and territorial limits at sea, and there was potential conflict over Norwegian jurisdiction over the Spitsbergen islands. The Soviet Union had no comparable areas of conflict with Sweden.[50] Furthermore, the economic systems of Sweden and the Soviet Union were highly complementary with regard to trade and industry. Swedish society was transparent and predictable, and therefore gave the Soviets no ground for fear of dangerous surprises. Finally, Sweden had no part in any anti-Soviet alliances or groups, and consequently was maybe in a unique position among other European states in the immediate vicinity of the Soviet Union.

Therefore, objectively the circumstances would seem to be good for the Soviet-Swedish cooperation, economically as well as politically. This was much more the case after the Swedish Social Democratic Party came to power in September 1932. But the Soviet leaders were incapable of exploiting this historical opportunity. This was during the period of the most intense Soviet hostility to European social democrats.[51] And the international situation made

and that "the atmosphere around us is gloomy, distant and stifling" (ibid., 773, 775 [November 23, 1930]).

47 Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 163, 273.

48 Kollontai to Mowincel, November 19, 1930, in Nag, *Kollontaj i Norge*, 32.

49 On the other hand, Russia was not as important economically for Sweden as it was for Norway.

50 In the following I am leaning on Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, esp. 151–181.

51 About this so-called "third period," see, for example, Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew,

it urgent for the Soviets to give most of their attention to great power politics rather than smaller states. This was noted by Kollontai. [52]

Kollontai had a realistic understanding of what she could accomplish and of the importance of economic relations between the two countries. At the beginning of 1932 she wrote about her mission:

> My task as envoy is to strengthen Sweden's friendly relations with us, to strengthen our prestige and our influence. For this to happen, there must be a firm economic foundation. . . . The closer the two countries' interests regarding economy and trade are united, the more realistic will be their community and common acting towards third parties. . . . I do not hope to make Sweden an active friend but to get the Swedes to reckon with the benefit of friendly relations with the Union and to remain neutral in case of pressure from third parties.[53]

However, Kollontai was not happy dealing with trade questions. In Norway, it had been fish; in Sweden, it was wood. The wood market was the only field of conflict between the two countries. The Swedes and the Finns criticized the Russians for dumping wood on the world market—wood produced by low-paid Soviet workers or even slave workers. To mitigate this critique, Kollontai proposed integrating the Soviet wood export monopoly as a third part in the Swedish-Finnish cartel of wood-producing enterprises.[54] In 1931 and 1932, negotiations with Sweden and Finland about export quotas dragged on for months and without result. Kollontai joked that it would be easier to put on gramophone records where the parties' arguments were recorded.[55]

Another frustrating experience was the negotiations in 1934 concerning a state loan from Sweden to the Soviet Union.[56] Such a loan was not only economically important. It was also politically important in that it was the first

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The Comintern. A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin (London: MacMillan, 1996), ch. 3.

52 Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 413 (October 3, 1934), 425 (end of December 1934). The NKID's dealing with Scandinavian affairs was transferred from a separate department to a department comprising Western Europe, America, and the British dominions. Cf. Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 42.

53 Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 230 (January 21, 1932).

54 Krister Wahlbäck, "Finland—en politisk nervknut. Aleksandra Kollontaj i Sverige 1930–1945," in Sørbye, *Revolusjon*, 174.

55 Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 209.

56 Ibid., 339–387; Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 50–55; Wahlbäck, "Finland," 174–177.

state loan the Soviet Union negotiated with a foreign country, that is, not only financial credits connected to specific trade agreements. Kollontai hoped that the loan would strengthen the influence of the Soviet Union in Sweden and that it would also establish a precedent to the benefit of the Union.[57]

The loan agreement was signed in March 1934, but had to be approved by the Swedish parliament, the Riksdag. Now began a fierce press campaign by conservatives in Sweden against the agreement. The political situation in the Riksdag was uncertain. The minority Social Democratic government was dependent on support from the Farmers' Party. The Soviets now became afraid of the loss of prestige for the Soviet Union in case of a negative vote in the Riksdag. When it became probable that the Riksdag would turn down the agreement, the Russians forestalled the Swedes by refusing to ratify the loan. In this way, the agreement would not come to a vote in the Riksdag.[58]

In spite of some derogatory characterizations of the Social Democrats in Kollontai's reports to the NKID, she was eagerly cultivating connections with Social Democrats, especially from the left wing of the party. One example is her relationship with Gustav Möller, a government minister. His information about the views of other members of the government, and his evaluation of the loyalty of the Swedish military command, which he shared with Kollontai, often had an extremely confidential character.[59] She had also close contact with the lawyer and politician Georg Branting, son of the former Social Democrat leader and prime minister Hjalmar Branting. Georg Branting worked for a time as a lawyer for the Soviet representation. His political views were close to the communists'. Kollontai once commented that he had become "quite Bolshevik."[60] However, her connections with Swedish Social Democrats were never as close and confidential as her relations with politicians in the Norwegian Labor Party.

Kollontai also had contact with leading Swedish communists, especially with Sven Linderot and his wife. When Kollontai arrived in Sweden, the Communist Party of Sweden had recently split in two, and the situation for Comintern loyalists was extremely difficult.[61] Kollontai was very worried, but

57 Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 355 (January 12, 1934).

58 In her diplomatic notes Kollontai is incorrectly taking credit for the idea of the forestalling of the Swedes. Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 53, note 45.

59 Ibid., 152–153.

60 Kollontai to Z. L. Shadurskaia, October 17, 1937. Here quoted from Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 154.

61 About the Communist Party of Sweden, see, for example, Åsmund Egge and Svend Rybner (eds.), *Red Star in the North. Communism in the Nordic Countries* (Stamsund: Orkana, 2015).

wrote that she "cannot, and must not, meddle in the affairs of our friends—even though it is irritating to see."[62]

While Kollontai's personal diplomacy helped to win friends, her efforts to influence the left in Sweden were only noticeable during a short period in the middle of the 1930s. At this time, the Soviet attitude to the Social Democrats changed, from regarding them as "social fascists" to including them in the policy of "people's front." In the foreign policy field, the collective security line had a lively flowering. In 1935, a Swedish-Soviet friendship organization was reestablished.[63] A year later, Kollontai reported a noticeable strengthening of sympathy with the Soviet Union "among broad circles of not only Sweden's radical intelligentsia but also among scientists, professors, representatives of the liberal arts, etc."[64] Kollontai explained that this was partly due to growing fears about the Nazi regime in Germany and partly because of a closer and more direct knowledge about Soviet reality. However, political Sweden kept a distance. Swedish politicians, even Kollontai's old friends on the left, refused to join the new friendship organization.[65] And in the late 1930s, "cultural expansion" and the work required to present the Soviet Union as a pillar of peace and democracy were sparse.[66] This had to do with the general political atmosphere and the consequences of repression in the government departments that dealt with international contacts.

The Great Terror (1937–1938) was an extremely difficult period for Kollontai. She suffered as old friends disappeared—including her former lover, Alexander Shliapnikov, and her former husband, Pavel Dybenko. She feared for her own life. Before both of her visits to Moscow during these years, she wrote farewell letters to her Swedish friend, Ada Nilsson, asking her—as she had earlier asked Rachel Grepp—to take care of her personal papers.[67] Why Kollontai was spared from the terror, one can only speculate. She had taken a clear stand against the opposition to Stalin.[68] She was obviously useful as a Soviet diplomat in Scandinavia. Stalin probably found her harmless. Her old friend Zeth Höglund in his memoirs called her "politically Stalin's soft slave."[69]

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62 Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 153.

63 It had been founded in 1924, but had been inactive for years. Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 156.

64 Report from Kollontai to N. N. Krestinskii, August 13, 1936. Here from Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 159–160.

65 Kan, "Aleksandra Kollontajs privata vänkrets," 274.

66 Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 160–161.

67 Ada Nilsson, "Glimtar ur mitt liv som läkare," *Natur & Kultur* (1963): 142–143.

68 *Pravda*, October 30, 1927.

69 "Kollontay förblev politiskt Stalins mjuka slavinna." Zeth Höglund, *Revolutionernas år. 1917–1921*, vol. III, (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1956), 97. See also different theories about

As she had done in Norway, Kollontai continued bringing her independent evaluations of political matters to the NKID and even ventured to engage in polemics. She maintained that Sweden (and Scandinavia) was, to a very high degree, influenced by Great Britain. Britain's anti-Soviet position strengthened the same tendency in Sweden. In 1934, Kollontai even doubted whether Sweden would remain neutral in a possible war. The country would bow to Britain's demands. However, Maxim Litvinov, the foreign commissar, found Kollontai's "anti-British pathos" exaggerated. The NKID was more concerned about Sweden's relationship with countries like Poland, Finland and Japan, and feared especially that Sweden could be an instrument of adventurous tendencies in Finnish politics.[70]

Kollontai tried carefully to explain to her superiors the actual facts about the situation in Sweden. For example, in November 1934, the Soviet press ran a negative campaign against Sweden and other Scandinavian countries. It declared that these countries had prepared a hostile policy towards the Soviet Union. The Swedish foreign minister, Rickard Sandler, contacted Kollontai in an attempt to halt the press campaign. Kollontai said she was willing to help with this matter. She told Sandler that she "had been bombarded with reports," but that she did not share the opinion that a hostile policy towards the Soviet Union existed. Her position was forwarded to Moscow, after which the Russian campaign against the Nordic countries was alleviated and, as far as the Scandinavian countries were concerned, ceased.[71]

CONCLUSION

The Swedish Foreign Office quickly appreciated Kollontai as a diplomat. As early as at the end of 1931, the British minister to Sweden reported that Kollontai "has endeared herself to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs by her correctness in all things, by her abstention from propaganda and by her helpfulness in finding a way out of such difficulties as arise from time to time between the two Governments."[72] Another observer praised Kollontai's patience and

her survival in Ingemar Lindahl, "Alexandra Kollontaj och Norden," in *Utrikespolitik och historia. Studier tillägnade Wilhelm M. Carlgren den 6 maj 1987* (Stockholm: Militärhistoriska förlaget, 1987), 158–159.

70 Ken et al., *Shvetsiia*, 62–67. For Kollontai's comments on England in her diplomatic notes, see, for example, Kollontaj, *Aleksandra Kollontajs dagböcker*, 265, 275, 412.

71 Lönnroth, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, 132–133.

72 Here quoted from Hauge, *Alexandra Mikhailovna*, 163.

her ability during difficult negotiations to understand motives and ideas of the opposite party. "She, like few, knew the art of listening—and is this not one of the most important qualities for a good diplomat?"[73]

In the opinion of some researchers, Soviet diplomatic activity and revolutionary propaganda were tightly fused in the 1920s. They have challenged the theory that there was an institutional dualism that made the NKID the repository of a national interest seemingly removed from any revolutionary implications.[74] However, in the case of Kollontai, this notion of institutional dualism seems correct. Although she had discussions with party leaders in Norway and Sweden, she obeyed—although grudgingly—Chicherin's order about not meddling in the affairs of the local communist parties. It seems that she left contact with the Comintern to her secretaries. Her reports to the NKID were almost completely free from revolutionary rhetoric.[75] The impression one gets from Kollontai's diplomatic activity gives no reason for concluding that there was any revolutionary propaganda emanating from the Soviet representations during her time as a *polpred*.

Kollontai had a great capacity for work and an open mind. She was helpful to the foreign offices in the countries in which she served, and gained respect as a result. She also won respect from the politicians and the broader public, especially in Norway. Compared to the Soviet diplomats in Norway and Sweden before her, and—not least—the Soviet diplomats in Norway after her, she was in another league. Kollontai was always loyal to her country. However, she had an independent mind and did not hesitate to express her own opinion and give advice to her superiors. All things considered, she was an outstanding diplomatic representative of the Soviet Union.

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73 Gunnar Hägglöf, *Möte med Europa 1926–1940* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1971), 122. Hereafter Wahlbäck, "Finland," 172–173.

74 Sabine Dullin, "Understanding Russian and Soviet Foreign Policy from a Geocultural Perspective," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 1 (2011): 177.

75 Holtsmark, "A. M. Kollontaj," 113–114. Admittedly, in November 1924 Kollontai was instructed by Litvinov "to write about party affairs in special reports, and in no way in NKID's general reports." Quoted from Repnevskii, *SSSR-Norvegiia*, 116. But even before this Kollontai seldom commented on party affairs in her diplomatic correspondence.

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Apprentices of the World Revolution: Norwegian Communists at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ) and the International Lenin School, 1926–1937

Ole Martin Rønning *(The Norwegian Labor Movement Archives and Library, Oslo)*

If we try to assess the long-lasting consequences of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the different aspects that we may take into consideration literally line up. This article's point of departure is the international communist movement, which, led by the Russian Bolsheviks, grew to be a considerable global political force after their successful revolution in 1917. British historian Eric Hobsbawm once stated that the October Revolution produced by far the most formidable organized revolutionary movement in modern history, with a global expansion that has no parallel since the conquests of Islam in its first century.[1] In order to develop an international movement of such size and complexity, and to keep this movement under firm Bolshevik authority, which was more or less undisputed until the end of the 1950s, a multitude of mechanisms and internal dynamics had to be in place.

This article focuses upon one mechanism that intended to support the development of the communist movement in the 1920s and 1930s: international cadre schools in the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks, the Communist

1 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London: Abacus, 1994), 55.

International (Comintern), and national communist parties all wanted to unify the international communist movement along a set of common ideological guidelines. As a means to achieve this, the Bolsheviks and the Comintern established several educational institutions for foreign communists in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. The article will describe the formation and development of this educational system. Further, the intention of the system to shape the identity of its students through their performance of defined practices, will be analyzed from a Scandinavian perspective. Finally, the Norwegian Communist Party is used as a case study in order to evaluate the possible influence and role of Moscow-educated cadres in the party's organization.

The Comintern veiled its educational programs for foreign cadres in secrecy, causing the widespread creation of myths in Western countries. Very few knew, in fact, what went on at the schools. Western intelligence services looked at them with suspicion, viewing their alumni as potential Soviet agents and dangerous revolutionaries. Only after researchers got access to Soviet archives in the 1990s, did the Comintern cadre schools become the subject of a series of historical studies. Most of them do have a national or ethnical perspective, such as the education of Austrian,[2] Chinese,[3] English,[4] Irish,[5]

2 Hans Schafranek, "Österreichische Kommunisten an der 'Internationalen Lenin-Schule' 1926–1938," in *Aufbruch-Hoffnung-Endstation. Österreicherinnen und Österreicher in der Sowjetunion 1925–1945*, ed. Barry McLoughlin et al. (Wien: Verlag für Geschellschaftskritik, 1994), 435–465; Julia Köstenberger, *Kaderschmeide des Stalinismus. Die Internationale Leninschule in Moskau (1926–1938) und die österreichischen Leninschüler und Leninschülerinnen* (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2016).

3 Alexander V. Pantov and Daria A. Spichak, "New Light from the Russian Archives: Chinese Stalinists and Trotskyists at the International Lenin School in Moscow, 1926–1938," *Twentieth-Century China* (April 2008): 29–59.

4 Gidon Cohen and Kevin Morgan, "Stalin's Sausage Machine. British Students at the International Lenin School, 1926–37," *Twentieth-Century British History* 13, no. 4 (2002): 327–355; Alan Campbell et al., "Forging the Faithful. The British at the International Lenin School," *Labour History Review* 68, no. 1 (2003): 99–128; Alan Campbell et al., "The International Lenin School: A Response to Cohen and Morgan," *Twentieth-Century British History* 15, no. 1 (2004): 51–76; Gidon Cohen and Kevin Morgan, "British Students at the International Lenin School, 1926–37: A Reaffirmation of Methods, Results, and Conclusions," *Twentieth-Century British History* 15, no. 1 (2004): 77–107; Alan Campbell et al., "British Students at the International Lenin School: The Vindication of a Critique," *Twentieth-Century British History* 16, no. 4 (2005): 471–488; Gidon Cohen and Kevin Morgan, "The International Lenin School: A Final Comment," *Twentieth-Century British History* 18, no. 1 (2007): 129–133.

5 Barry McLoughlin, "Proletarian Academics or Party Functionaries? Irish Communists at The International Lenin School, Moscow, 1927–37," *Saothar. Journal of the Irish Labour History Society* 22 (1997): 63–79.

Scots,[6] and African cadres.[7] General studies also exist.[8] As far as the Nordic countries are concerned, Finnish and Norwegian participation in the cadre schools has been thoroughly explored,[9] while Icelanders also have been studied.[10] All of these studies have profited from the rich source material: the records of the Comintern schools that today are accessible at the Russian State Archive for Social-Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow.

THE MOSCOW CADRE SCHOOLS—AN OVERVIEW

In 1920, the Bolsheviks decided to develop a unified, centralized, and hierarchically structured model of party education. At the apex stood the Communist Academy, while the level below consisted of several party universities.[11] Two of the universities originally intended to provide higher ideological education for Soviet national minorities in their native tongue, as part of the contemporary and quite liberal national politics of the Bolsheviks. This was the Communist

6 John McIlroy and Alan Campbell, "The Scots at the Lenin School: An Essay in Collective Biography," *Scottish Labour History* 37 (2002): 50–71.

7 Woodford McCellan, "Africans and Black Americans in the Comintern Schools, 1925–1934," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 2 (1993): 371–390; Irina Filatova, "Indoctrination or Scholarship? Education of Africans at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in the Soviet Union, 1923–1937," *Paedagogica Historica* 35, no. 1 (1999): 42–66.

8 Leonid G. Babitschenko, "Die Kaderschulung der Komintern," *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (1993): 37–59. Julia Köstenberger, "Die Geschichte der 'Kommunistischen Universität der nationalen Minderheiten des Westens' (KUNMZ) in Moskau 1921–1936," *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2001/2002): 248–303; Julia Köstenberger, "Die Internationale Lenin-Schule (1926-1938)," in *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale*, ed. Michael Buckmiller et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), 287–309.

9 Joni Krekola, "The Finnish Sector at the International Lenin School," in *Agents of the Revolution. New Biographical Approaches to the History of International Communism in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Kevin Morgan et al. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), 289–308; Joni Krekola, *Stalinismin lyhyt kurssi. Suomalaiset Moskovan Lenin-koulussa 1926–1938* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2006); Ole Martin Rønning, *Stalins elever. Kominterns kaderskoler og Norges Kommunistiske Parti 1926–1949* (PhD thesis, Oslo: University of Oslo, 2010); Joni Krekola and Ole Martin Rønning, "International cadre education of Nordic communists," in *Red Star in the North. Communism in the Nordic Countries*, ed. Åsmund Egge and Svend Rybner (Stamsund: Orkana, 2015), 292–293.

10 Jón Ólafsson, *Kæru félagar. Íslenskir sósíalistar og Sovétríkin 1920–1960* (Reykjavík: Mál og mening, 1999), 50–83.

11 Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind. Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918–1929* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 42–47.

University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) and the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ),[12] both established in 1921 and situated in Moscow. Before long, these two universities evolved into Comintern institutions, accepting students from communist parties abroad. In 1922, an international sector opened at the KUTV, consisting of students from Asian countries and colonies. From 1925, African and Caribbean students also joined.[13]

Originally, the KUNMZ served students from the western parts of Soviet Russia. Education took place in the German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, and Yiddish languages. In 1922, a separate branch of the KUNMZ opened in Leningrad, arranging study courses in Finnish, Estonian, and Latvian. From 1923, the KUNMZ, in compliance with Comintern demands, began to establish special foreign language sections designed for cadres from the communist parties of the following countries: Bulgarian (1923); Yugoslav (1925); Italian (1927); Greek (1928); Swedish (spring, 1928); Norwegian (autumn, 1928); and Hungarian (1930). By the end of the 1920s, the KUNMZ had become a university largely for foreign party cadres, as no more than 31 percent of the students came from the Soviet Union.[14] In the Swedish and Norwegian language sections, students attended from all the Scandinavian communist parties. In addition, came Icelanders, as well as a few Swedish-speaking Finns and Scandinavian emigrants living in the US. For linguistic reasons, students from Denmark and Iceland came to join the Norwegian section, while Swedish-speaking Finns found their place in the Swedish section. A few Scandinavian comrades from the American Communist Party attended the Swedish or the Norwegian section according to their native tongue.[15]

In the mid-1920s, the Comintern established another two educational institutions for foreign cadres in Moscow. The Sun Yat-Sen University of the Toilers of China started its activities in 1925. As the name suggests, the Bolsheviks designed the Sun Yat-Sen University for Chinese students. The university came to play an important part in Soviet and Comintern politics directed against China. Actual Comintern tactics of the time envisaged a unified front between Chinese communists and the nationalist Goumindang movement. That caused students from the Goumindang to join courses at

12 KUTV: Kommunisticheskii universitet trudiashchikhsia Vostoka. KUNMZ: Kommunisticheskii universitet natsional'nykh men'shinstv Zapada.

13 McCellan, "Africans and Black Americans," 375.

14 Köstenberger, "Die Geschichte," 250, 253–254.

15 Krekola and Rønning, "International cadre education," 292–293.

the university. Following the collapse of the Chinese unified front in 1927, the Comintern expelled all Goumindang students. In 1928, a renaming took place, as the university changed its name to the Communist University of the Toilers of China (KUTK).[16] The failure of the unified front, and thereby Comintern politics towards China, had its implications for the factional strides in the Bolshevik party. Due to internal political difficulties following the bitter fight between general secretary Josef Stalin and his adversaries, the KUTK closed down in 1930.[17]

Perhaps the most well know of the Comintern's educational institutions was the International Lenin School (MLSh).[18] The Lenin School began its activities in May 1926. The school was located near Arbat Street in the foreign embassy district of the Soviet capital. The School was established as a part of the so-called bolshevization process of the international communist movement, which originated from the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in 1924. At this time centralizing tendencies within the Comintern rose rapidly. Also, Bolshevik demands for loyalty along the party-defined ideological line increased following the death of Lenin, due to escalating internal factional activities that also involved foreign communists. Needs of an intensified and authoritative ideological schooling of foreign cadres became more pressing.

Originally, the Lenin School had four language sections (English, French, German, and Russian) that organized courses of two-and-a-half-years-long duration. Unlike the universities KUTV, KUNMZ, and KUTK, which intended to educate rank-and-file communists, the Lenin School was primarily designed as elite education for top party cadres. In 1929, the Lenin School expanded with a Chinese language sector, and the year after Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, and Finnish sections followed. In 1931, Polish and Romanian sections opened, joined by a Scandinavian sector at the year end. In the years 1932 to 1936, there also appeared American, Bulgarian, Greek, Latvian-Estonian, Lithuanian, Yugoslav, and Austrian sections. In total, between 3,300 and 3,500 students, originating from at least fifty-nine different countries, took part in the education provided by the Lenin School until it ceased operations in 1938.[19]

By the end of the 1920s, the Comintern leadership began discussing an eventual centralizing of the foreign cadre educational system by developing

16 Kommunisticheskii universitet trudiashchikhsia Kitaia.

17 Babitschenko, "Die Kaderschulung," 39–40; Köstenberger, "Kaderschmeide des Stalinismus," 26.

18 Mezhdunarodnaia leninskaia shkola.

19 Köstenberger, "Kaderschmeide des Stalinismus," 46, 66.

the Lenin School into a common international university. The plan was to incorporate all students from foreign communist parties that at present studied at the KUTV, KUNMZ, and KUTK. No international university ever materialized, but—as mentioned—the KUTK closed down, causing some of its students to move on to the Lenin School.[20] Several foreign language sections at the KUTV and KUNMZ dissolved as well, and the remaining students reorganized to the Lenin School.[21] As part of this process, the Swedish and Norwegian educational program at the KUNMZ shut down in 1932. Students who had not graduated transferred to the newly organized Scandinavian sector at the Lenin School.[22]

Following the Comintern's shift to Popular Front tactics in 1935, the International began a process of decentralization of the foreign cadre education that aimed to establish a nationally organized ideological schooling in countries with legal communist parties.[23] This, combined with escalating Stalinist terror and rising xenophobia in the Soviet Union, ultimately ended in total liquidation of the Moscow cadre schools. The KUNMZ and KUTV closed down in 1936.[24] From 1936 on, the Lenin School only accepted new students from illegal communist parties. Parallel to intensive purges, which included headmaster Klavdiia Kirsanova, the number of students declined steady until the Lenin School finally locked its doors in 1938.[25] The decision to dissolve the MLSh was made about the same time as enrolment began of volunteers in the International Brigades that fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. Like many others who had been associated with the Lenin School,[26] also some Scandinavian male students joined the Brigades. They travelled from Moscow to Spain as officers after an additional military schooling.[27]

The final group of Scandinavian students left the school in spring 1937.[28] By then the Swedish Communist Party had set up a new educational institution for Scandinavian and Icelandic cadres, *Björknäs Folkhögskola*, situated outside

20 Pantov and Spichak, "New Light," 35.
21 Köstenberger, "Kaderschmeide des Stalinismus," 59–62.
22 RGASPI: 529–1–636, 139–144. Report of the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ, October 21, 1932.
23 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 200–202.
24 Köstenberger, "Die Geschichte," 263; Babitsjenko "Die Kaderschulung," 56.
25 Köstenberger, "Kaderschmeide des Stalinismus," 69–70.
26 Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *International Communism and the Spanish Civil War. Solidarity and Suspicion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 50.
27 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 198.
28 Ibid., 197.

Stockholm. Even if the school operated in full legality, it nevertheless stood under the auspices of the Comintern, which also financed its operations. The school suspended its activities in the summer of 1939, probably due to the overwhelming threat of war in Europe.[29]

THE SCANDINAVIAN SECTIONS

At the KUNMZ, about 100 Scandinavian and Icelandic students graduated during the years 1930–1932. In addition came a number of students enlisted at the university, but who never fulfilled their studies due to health or disciplinary reasons, or they were given permission to return home for party duties.[30] For the Lenin School, a minimum of 116 students from the Scandinavian countries and Iceland attended. Of them, forty-four were Norwegians, companied by at least thirty-seven Swedes, twenty-five Danes, and ten Icelanders. They followed study courses of different duration, varying between nine months and two and a half years, during the period 1926 to 1937.[31] The cadre education was a pre-dominant male project. Only approximately 13 percent of the Scandinavian students at the KUNMZ were females while the percentage of female Scandinavian students at the MLSh was even less; the number for the Norwegian party was only three women (about 7 percent of Norwegian students at the school).[32]

The curriculum of the KUNMZ and the Lenin School featured some common key elements: Leninism, the history of the Bolshevik party, the history of the Comintern, political economy. In order to create a certain national approach, the curriculum also included studies of each country's communist party and labor movement as well as some particular national economical and historical aspects. Another important part of the study courses was practical schooling in organizational party work, based upon the experiences of the Bolsheviks in pre-1917 Russia. The students combined their practical schooling with training in trade union activities, clandestine procedures and some military subjects. Normally, the students added a study of the Russian language as well.[33]

29 Ibid., 204–208.

30 RGASPI: 495-529-1, 140. Report of the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ, October 21, 1932.

31 RGASPI: 531-1-31, 103 and 106. Statistics MLSh.

32 Krekola and Rønning, "International cadre education," 296.

33 Ibid., 296.

Specialization in military operations or intelligence was not part of the regular party education given. The study programs, nevertheless, included some military training and strategy, but their share of the study units was modest. For instance, at the Lenin School in 1933–1934 the ideological subjects counted for 63 percent of the total teaching time. The lectures in practical work was 30 percent, while in the remaining time (7 percent) the students focused on particular national aspects. This year, the education in clandestine party activities took up only a small amount of the time spent on practical work. Of totally 1,185 class hours, only forty hours (approximately 3.5 percent) were dedicated to such purposes.[34]

The curriculum of the KUNMZ originally included several basic academic subjects. In this way, students with no formal education could join the courses. However, only the first Scandinavian students who joined the university in 1928 participated in a four-year study program. The length of the education shrank to three, or even two, years as lecturing in regular branches of learning ceased in the years that followed.[35] The length of the education at the Lenin School originally lasted two years. Before long, the school developed shorter study courses of nine months or one-year duration. From the start in 1926, no education program in any Scandinavian languages existed at the Lenin School, but a few Scandinavian students joined courses in the German language section. With the foundation of the Scandinavian sector, the school introduced a one-year study course. The first Scandinavians started their studies in the new sector in January 1932, and graduated in January 1933. As mentioned, during the study year, some fellow Scandinavians, transferred when the KUNMZ closed down, joined them. Other study courses in the Scandinavian sector at the Lenin School began in January/February 1933 and 1934. Originally scheduled to begin in autumn 1935, but postponed by unknown reasons, the last course of the sector started in January 1936.[36]

HUNTING DEVIATIONS

It is not possible to separate the students' experiences at the Comintern schools from the faction strife in the Bolshevik Party in the second half of the 1920s and the practices of Stalinism that evolved in Soviet society in the 1930s.

34 Ibid., 296–297.
35 Ibid., 293.
36 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 81.

Factional strides in the party easily transferred into the sphere of the Comintern schools, resulting in purges of staff members and students blamed of supporting the loosing faction. The Comintern, for instance, accused the future Danish party leader, Aksel Larsen, of Trotskyism during his stay at the Lenin School in 1928. Larsen had to perform self-criticism and to serve a "mild exile" in Nizhny Novgorod for a period of three months.[37] New purges of so-called "right deviators" followed at the Comintern schools in 1929–1930 and 1931–1932.[38] During the last of these purges, a joint meeting of the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ and the Lenin School in December 1931 discussed eventual measures directed against deviations. Students in the sections had to form task brigades in order to search the study material for political errors.[39] Parallel to this, former Norwegian party Chairman Peder Furubotn, who the Comintern had summoned to Moscow in 1930, faced accusations of political wrongdoing following a lecture he had held as a teacher for the Scandinavians at the KUNMZ. Consequently, Furubotn lost his teaching job and had to take on compulsory work in Soviet industry.[40]

As shown by several examples found in the sources, the hunt for political deviations, and the coherent public condemnation and punishment of those accused, demonstrates quite clearly how the students at the Comintern schools had to subordinate to the actual ideological line defined by the Bolshevik party.[41] Students were also supposed to adapt to any new direction or change in the political main line without hesitation or asking questions. Within the context of the cadre schools, the Bolsheviks enjoyed supreme powers of definition and were always right. In a political sense, there existed no open educational process at the schools. All the answers were predetermined. In this way, the education was a practice that molded foreign communists into an escalating monolithic structure of Stalinism. During their stay at the schools, students were supposed to learn to speak the "right" language and to think the "right" thoughts. After returning to their home countries, students took on positions in their respective party apparatuses. The Comintern and the Soviet

37 Kurt Jacobsen, Aksel Larsen, *En politisk biografi* (København: Vindrose, 1993), 68–69, 73–74, 82–84.

38 Aleksandr Vatlin, "Kaderpolitik und Säuberungen in der Komintern," in *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936-53*, ed. Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mählert (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), 47–48. Babitsjenko, "Die Kaderschulung," 48.

39 RGASPI: 529-2-316, 60. Meeting report, December 30, 1931. RGASPI: 495-31-62, 2. Letter, January 4, 1932.

40 RGASPI: 495-247-2. Resolution KUNMZ, February 16, 1932.

41 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 182–188.

party expected the graduates to redistribute the ideological guiding lines they received from Moscow on to the party members and the public, using their newly learned understanding of "correct thought" and thus demonstrating loyalty to the Bolsheviks.

A PROCESS OF INDOCTRINATION?

Scholars have characterized the Comintern schools as "total institutions".[42] It implicates that the cadre education had a de-individualizing effect, which caused participating students to subordinate to a collective discipline. It can be argued that a certain moderation to the ideal type of "total institutions" is necessary, at least from a Scandinavian point of view. For the participating students from these countries, the cadre education was a voluntary project. They spent a defined and limited period at the Comintern schools. And, as we shall see, examples do exist of individual Scandinavian students who opposed against the school setting. However, during their educational period in the Soviet Union, students at the cadre schools had to take part in a series of compulsory practices that were constituent parts of Soviet political culture. Performing these practices was a habitual process of learning that aimed to internalize the "right" attitudes among the students. Essential in the learning process was a personal recognition on behalf of the students of the supreme position of the Bolshevik party and the central role of Soviet party activists in the achievement of constructing socialism in the Soviet Union.[43]

As a compulsory practice, students performed practical work in different spheres of Soviet society. At the schools, they joined different forms of organizational activities, for instance positions of trust in the sector or student group. Students also attended Comintern meetings and visited the offices of the International in order to become familiar with the central institutions of the communist movement. It was possible for them to carry out work tasks in the Comintern bureaucracy or in other international communist organizations such as the International of Trade Unions (Profintern) or the International Red Aid (MOPR). In addition came a regular service in nearby industries, where students took part in ordinary production work or joined

42 Brigitte Studer and Berthold Unfried, *Der stalinistische Parteikader: Identitätsstiftende Praktiken und Diskurse in der Sowjetunion der dreissiger Jahre* (Köln: Böhlau, 2001), 208.

43 RGASPI: 495-30-421, 38-53. Report, 1927. RGASPI: 495-30-533, 125. About the students' practical work, undated (1928). Studer and Unfried, "Der stalinistische Parteikader," 16–17, 211–212.

Russian party members at the workplace doing agitation among the workers as well as organizational tasks in the factory's party cell. Another kind of practical work happened during school holidays. The students travelled away from Moscow in order to work at industrial complexes, collective farms and do other tasks, for instance at international seamen's clubs.[44]

Some Norwegian and Icelandic students from the KUNMZ conducted a peculiar form of practical work in the far north fishing village of Tsyp Navolok by the Arctic Sea. In the village, the students met Norwegian-speaking inhabitants who descended from immigrants to Russia in the nineteenth century. The students helped the local party organization to persuade the fishers to abandon their old ways of doing individual fishing and instead join a fishers' collective. Due to reports, the "persuasion" happened with such aggressiveness and ruthlessness that an Icelandic student protested and tried to defend the local fishers. Of course, the student's supervisors at the university disapproved his actions, and he had to perform self-criticism when returning to Moscow.[45]

The *udarnik* movement was a Soviet cultural practice that transferred to the Comintern schools, where it was included as compulsory. As a part of the first Five-Year Plan, a militarization took place within Soviet industrial production. So-called shock workers, or *udarniki*, pressed output limits to new highs. The shock workers organized in shock brigades or shock labor teams that competed with each other in a "socialist competition." From 1928, the Comintern schools introduced this way of organizing labor. The leadership of the schools redefined the process of learning into production. The students had to look at themselves as *udarniki* and to join special brigades. High output became a sign of sacrifice and demonstrated that the students had internalized a true Bolshevik attitude.[46]

In the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ and the Lenin School, introduction of *udarnik*-principles met with little success. Students did not manage to internalize the prescribed methods of socialist competition into their studies.[47] Supposedly, the students may have perceived the *udarnik*-movement as a Soviet concept, closely connected to the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan.

44 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 137–138, 141.

45 RGASPI: 495-31-134, 20–22. Report, October 20, 1931. Morten Jentoft, *De som dro østover. Kola-nordmennenes historie* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2001), 87. Ólafsson, "Kæru félagar," 67–70.

46 Köstenberger, "Die Geschichte," 282–283.

47 RGASPI: 529-2-338, 27. Meeting report, April 13, 1932. RGASPI: 495-15-3, 136. PM, October 25, 1935.

It may be reason to believe that students who did not manage to live up to the standards of "socialist competition" interpreted their failure as a personal shortcoming. Within the universe of the cadre schools such failures were explained as results of the students' "petty bourgeois" social roots in the Scandinavian countries, and thereby further demonstrating the actual students "backwardness" compared to the idealized Soviet workers.[48]

CONSPIRACY AND DEBAUCHERY

As rules of conspiracy became stricter from the late 1920s, a regime of secrecy engulfed the cadre schools. One reason for this was a need to protect students who came from countries with prohibited communist parties, from persecution in their home countries and eventual foreign agents operating in Moscow. Simultaneously, the strict conspiracy rules functioned as a disciplining cultural practice, which in a symbolic way introduced the students to certain Soviet party procedures, such as restricted access to party documents.[49] Other actual measures included a mandatory use of aliases during the students' stay at the schools. Only students from legal communist parties got a limited ability to correspond with their home country, but they could not use their real names. Students could only receive letters through specific safe addresses in Moscow.[50] Photographing of fellow students was prohibited. In 1932, students at the Lenin School had to apply for permission if they wanted to leave the premises overnight. It was absolutely forbidden for the students to engage in random acquaintances. Students could not go outside in groups larger than three persons, or speak loud in their mother tongue on the street.[51]

Complying with the rules of conspiracy became another compulsory practice for the students. It also acted as a proof, demonstrating that students really had internalized an attitude as true communists and developed into Bolshevik cadres. However, in the Scandinavian sections at the cadre schools, there are many recorded shortcomings regarding violation of conspiracy or other disciplinary rules. For instance, in 1934 tutors criticized the Scandinavian students

48 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 152.

49 Studer and Unfried, "Der stalinistische Parteikader," 206–207.

50 RGASPI: 495-30-755, 151. Conditions for admission, MLSh, 1931. See Barry McLoughlin, "Stalinistische Rituale von Kritik und Selbskritik in der internationalen Lenin-Schule, Moskau, 1926–1937," *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2003): 91–92.

51 RGASPI: 529-1-636a, 27. Instructions, April 13, 1932.

at the Lenin School for demonstrating a poor understanding and practice of the conspiracy rules.[52] This may suggest that the students' involvement into, and identification with, the Comintern's educational project had its limits.

Scandinavian students committed several infringements of the cadre schools' disciplinary regulations. Most common was drunkenness; in 1931, for instance, the tutors revealed fifteen cases involving students in the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ.[53] Among them were two Swedish students who committed a major offense when they appeared drunk on the streets of Moscow, boasting to be students at a communist university, at the very evening before Celebration Day of the Great October Revolution, November 7. Of course, to act in that way on such a sublime evening made the case look especially bad in the eyes of tutors and fellow students.[54] Other examples of violating conspiracy rules, as well as implicit moral norms, included students who had relations with prostitutes or demonstrated "defeatism" in the meaning of requesting to return to their home country.[55]

Students who violated disciplinary rules were subject to punishment. Those who repeatedly violated disciplinary regulations risked to face expulsion from the education. If that happened, the perpetrator was not immediately sent back home, but held at the school and eventually forced to do compulsory work in Soviet industry.[56] In this way, expulsion came not to represent a kind of "reward" for those students who wanted to leave the school and go home, and with that in mind deliberately violated the rules of behavior. Normal procedures also included a required performance of criticism and self-criticism on behalf of the offender.

CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

In Soviet politics of the 1930s, criticism and self-criticism evolved into a ritualized practice, with common implied rules and pre-defined verbal forms of expression. The practice of criticism and self-criticism is characterized by historian J. Arch Getty as an example of "an 'apology ritual' in which the apology

52 RGASPI: 531-1-215, 16 and 19. Meeting report, May 10, 1934.
53 RGASPI: 529-1-630, 96. Letter, May 28, 1931.
54 RGASPI: 529-2-316, 59. Resolution, November 15, 1931.
55 RGASPI: 529-1-630, 127-129. Report of the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ, 1930–31; RGASPI: 529-1-631, 50. Meeting report, December 19, 1930; RGASPI: 529-2-316, 43. Resolution, 1931.
56 RGASPI: 529-1-625, 66. Resolution, 1931.

element served to affirm the 'mistake', to pronounce a lesson to other below not to make the same mistake, and to recognize the status and rights of the party receiving the apology (the leadership) to set the rules."[57] Historian Barry McLoughlin has claimed that the ritual of criticism and self-criticism was not a reflection only of underlying structures in Soviet society, but rather took form of an independent cultural behavior; a Bolshevik practice that lived its own life.[58] The overall aim for those involved was to become "new" in a political sense and thus coming closer to the idealized goal of being a Bolshevized cadre. At the Comintern Schools, students had to perform criticism and self-criticism on a regular basis at group, sector, and party meetings as a compulsory practice that was an integrated part of the learning process. Through this practice, the collective at the school helped students to realize their fouls, made them to recognize certain behavior as irregular and thereby create a foundation for change in the actual students' behavioral pattern.[59]

The above listed compulsory practices represented, taken together and combined with the whole context of the Comintern schools, an integrated environment that must have affected the students' dispositional system and cognitive pattern.[60] It is possible to understand the cadre education as a collective mobilization project, where participating students entered the political-ideological mindset as well as the organizational structure of the international communist movement. In the Scandinavian sections at the KUNMZ and the Lenin School, examples can be found of individual students who were driven into obstruction, and even opposition, but the absolute majority adjusted and subordinated themselves into performing the excepted actions and showing the right attitudes. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the cadre education represented a certain impact and helped to form a sort of lasting legacy that the majority of the participants brought with them into future party activities in their home countries.

Even if the education for the Scandinavians was a voluntary project, with little risk involved for those who did not subordinate, it nevertheless put a certain pressure on the participants. From the Comintern's point of view, the cadre schools were part of an institutionalized selection process of potential candidates to positions in the party apparatus of national communist parties.

57 J. Arch Getty, "*Samokritika* Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–38," *The Russian Review* 58 (1999): 52–53.

58 McLoughlin, "Stalinistische Rituale," 95.

59 Studer and Unfried, "Der stalinistische Parteikader," 153.

60 Ibid., 211–212.

At the end of the stay, tutors together with Comintern officials and party representatives evaluated the students. They did not only characterize the students' achievements at the schools, but also recommended which tasks they could do or what roles they could fill in the party's organization when returning to the home country.[61]

THE BACKBONE OF THE PARTY

When trying to assess the consequences of the cadre education for the Norwegian Communist Party, an essential point of evaluation is to what degree Soviet-educated and "approved" cadres really rose to powerful positions in the party. The basis for the survey is eighty-nine Norwegian individuals accepted at the KUNMZ and the Lenin School during the period 1926 to 1936. Eighty-eight of them are identified. Their average age at the time of joining the education was twenty-five for students at the KUNMZ, while the Lenin School students were an average age of thirty years. As mentioned, few women were among them. In total, eight Norwegian students were females (9 percent). Of the eighty-nine accepted, only seventy-one students completed the education at the cadre schools. The rest never finished for a number of different reasons. Six students had to return to Norway because of health issues, while as many as five students died of illness while staying at the schools. Four students got permission from the Comintern to quit their education in order to serve in the party. In addition, three Norwegians were expelled by the KUNMZ for disciplinary offenses.[62]

From 1930 onwards, persons with experience from the Comintern schools came to dominate the party's leading executive bodies. The party's secretariat and political bureau had the greatest presence of this category of cadres, while they had less representation among the district representatives in the central committee. Other key positions in the party, such as Chairman of the youth organization and editors of the most important party papers, were largely held by persons who had graduated from the Comintern schools. Several secretaries in the district party organizations had the same education. At the district level, Moscow educated cadres also acted as instructors or special representatives for the party leadership.[63]

61 Rønning, "Stalins elever," 162–163.
62 Ibid., 108–111.
63 Ibid., 361–362.

However, many of the cadres who graduated in Moscow around 1930, and who dominated the leadership of the party until 1934–35, had extensive experience and even held leading positions in the party before they began studying at the Comintern schools. Only in the second half of the 1930s, there is reason to say that cadres of a "new type" gained control of the party. That is, persons who had a minor or negligible role in the party before their education in Moscow, but with or without the help of the Comintern, rose to senior positions in the party hierarchy when returning to Norway after completing their education.[64]

During the Second World War, the German occupation of Norway made the Comintern cadre education most relevant. Firstly, German police was very aware of communists who had studied in Moscow and targeted them as specifically "dangerous" persons. As many as 45 percent of the persons who had studied at the Comintern schools were arrested by the Germans during the war. Secondly, several of the party cadres educated in Moscow took active part in the communists' armed resistance movement. Due to the war, thirteen of the eighty-eight identified Norwegian cadres from the Comintern schools lost their lives (over 15 percent), which is a dramatically higher percentage compared to the war losses for the Norwegian population as a whole.[65] There is reason to believe that many Moscow educated cadres felt a high degree of solidarity with the Soviet Union, and that this motivated their involvement in resistance activities after June 1941. Even more important, they had gone through a basic training of how to use clandestine methods and to run an illegal party organization. The party leadership was aware of the specific skills that these party members had, and wanted to give them special tasks in the fight against the Germans.[66]

The special circumstances created by the German occupation provoked a change in the party leadership. A combination of representatives from the older generation, who the Comintern partly had removed from the leadership in the first half of the 1930s, and new party members, recruited during the resistance activities, gained control of the party. They had the upper hand in the party until 1949, when their rivals orchestrated a coup that reinstalled several of the

64 Ibid., 361.

65 Of the thirteen, the Germans arrested and executed five for resistance activities. Four died in concentration camps, two lost their life in combat, and two committed suicide following arrest. In comparison, the war losses for the Norwegian population as a whole was 0.3 percent. Rønning, "Stalins elever," 317–318.

66 Ibid., 317–318.

Moscow educated cadres who held leading positions in the late 1930s.[67] This group of Lenin School educated cadres continued to play a heavy influence in the senior leadership of the party well into the 1960s. This probably contributed to the fact that the party was steadfast in its support of the Soviet Union and Soviet politics, even if a certain de-Stalinization took place after 1956.[68] Only when new cadres emerged, who had other experiences and preferences, and thus represented another political culture, a development began in the party that ended in the late 1960s when a renewed party leadership partly came in opposition to, and conflict with, Soviet positions.[69]

To sum up, the stay of Norwegian communists at the Comintern schools was a voluntary, time-limited self-development project, in which most of them participated with great enthusiasm. From the mid-1930s to the 1960s, except during the years 1942 to 1949, a group of Moscow-educated cadres dominated the CPN's leadership. They came from the same generation, shared the same political and cultural values, and were familiar with Soviet political institutions. There is reason to assume that they internalized elements of Soviet cultural practices and developed a solidarity with the Soviet Union during their stay in Moscow in the 1930s. Experiences gained in the Soviet Union probably influenced on the disposition systems and political practices of these cadres for the rest of the period they were politically active. It may be argued that the Comintern schools played a part in the forming of a Soviet-loyal communist movement in Norway. The cadre education also represented a vital organizational connection between the leadership of the national communist parties and the central institutions of the Comintern. This must have represented a certain impact in maintaining structure and authority within the worldwide Comintern organization.

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67 Ibid., 320.

68 Ibid., 351.

69 Åsmund Egge and Terje Halvorsen, "'Kriteriet på en kommunist er hans forhold til Sovjetunionen.' De norsk-russiske partirelasjoner 1917–1991," *Arbeiderhistorie* (2002): 27–28.

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The Impact of the October Revolution on the North-Norwegian Labor Movement

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Surprisingly few analyses of the Norwegian labor movement have been made at the regional level. Much, however, has been done at the national level, and there are thousands of publications about the local labor movement. The regional level has been squeezed between an elite perspective on the one side, and a grassroots perspective on the other. In a country like Norway, with complicated tensions between economic, cultural and political factors (as the political scientist Stein Rokkan has shown),[1] it is necessary to understand what lies between the national and the local level. In this article, I will discuss the short- and long-term impacts of the Russian Revolution at a regional level in Northern Norway—with particular attention to the counties of Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark.

Northern Norway is interesting in this context. The great breakthrough for the Norwegian labor movement came first in Troms county in 1903. Later, the labor movement became dominant throughout the whole region and became a bastion for the movement at the national level during the 1930s. According to Stein Rokkan and in his center-periphery model, northern Norway was one of two regions that mobilized particularly strongly against the center. Western Norway's politics were determined on a cultural basis and people joined Venstre, the liberal party, while northern Norway's politics derived from class and people supported the socialist movement. At the same time, there were interesting tensions internally in the region between what the historian Nils Henrik Fuglestad has called fisherman-peasant socialism and wage worker socialism,[2] and

1 See Stein Rokkan, "Geography, Religion, and Social Class: Crosscutting Cleavages in Norwegian Politics," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments, Cross-National Perspectives*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: The Free Press, 1967).

2 Nils Henrik Fuglestad, "Omkring arbeiderbevegelsens framvekst i Nord-Norge," *Tidsskrift for arbeiderbevegelsens historie* 1 (1984): 53.

between the Norwegian majority population in the north and the ethnic minorities, the Sami and the Kvens.

NORTHERN NORWAY AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Let us turn to the topic of this article: Which impacts on the political level did the Russian Revolution have in the north? First to the short-term impacts, which are not easy to measure. How to distinguish between the impacts of the Russian Revolution and other factors influencing voters? There is no doubt that there was a radicalization in parts of the labor movement in the north in the 1910s, but this radicalization went on throughout the whole decade and cannot be linked to the Russian Revolution in particular. It was radicalization in specific areas, mainly of the syndicalist type.[3] There was a clear class polarization, as we can see, for example, in a vignette in the Labor Party newspaper *Finnmarken*: "To battle! Wherever we are—outside or at home—we are in the enemy's country."[4] In the city of Tromsø, the new radical direction in the Norwegian labor movement took control. The syndicalist Peder Kaasmoli was its leader—a construction worker, who became editor of the Labor Party newspaper *Nordlys* (*Northern Light*).[5] Such pockets of radicalism were found throughout the region: in Southern Varanger in Eastern Finnmark; in Hammerfest in Western Finnmark; in Tromsø and Harstad in Troms County; and in mining communities, such as Salangen in Troms, Sulitjelma and Rana in Nordland.

However, this radicalization was independent of the revolution in Russia, and in the short term it does not seem that the 1917 resulted in any further radicalizing in the north of Norway. On the national level, the radical wing took control both of the Labor Party (in 1918) and of the National Trade Union Association (in 1920).[6] However, the Labor Party lost some support in the

3 Einar-Arne Drivenes and Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Die Norwegische Arbeiterbewegung zwischen Region und Nation," *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts zur Erforschung der europäischen Arbeiterbewegung* 19 (1997): 54 ff.

4 Randi Rønning Balsvik, *Vardø. Grensepost og fiskevær 1850–1950*, vol. 2 (Vardø: Vardø kommune, 1989), 117 and 162.

5 Pål Christensen, "Stormfull seilas under skiftende ledelse," in *Flammende budbringer. Nordlys gjennom 100 år*, edited by Pål Christensen and Hallvard Tjelmeland (Tromsø: Bladet Nordlys, 2003), 142–151.

6 Øyvind Bjørnson, "På klassekampens grunn," in *Arbeiderbevegelsens historie*, vol. 2, ed. Arne Kokkvoll and Jakob Sverdrup (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1990), 520–536; Finn Olstad, "Med knyttet neve," *LOs historie 1899–1935*, vol. 1 (Oslo: Pax forlag, 2009), 255. The victory for "the new direction" in the National Trade Association, however, was partly built on a compromise.

general election in 1918, compared to the election three years before, and in the north the decline was even greater—though the Labor Party gained 44.3 percent in Finnmark and 51.1 in Troms. Nordland was also a few percentage points higher than the national average of 30.6 percent.[7]

From a superficial point of view, the Russian Revolution did not have much of an impact in either Norway as a whole or in northern Norway in particular. However, if one looks a little further ahead in time, there are some regional and national characteristics that can be traced back to the revolution and the emergence of a revolutionary state in Russia. The first clear expression of the significance of the Russian Revolution as an independent factor in Norwegian politics is the two cleavages in the Labor Party. This was the only real mass party in Europe that became a member of the Comintern in 1919. First, a split to the right occurred in 1920 (the Social Democratic Labor Party of Norway came into being), and then to the left in 1923 (The Norwegian Communist Party, or NKP, emerged). The general elections showed the relative strength of the different tendencies in the labor movement. There were regional differences, and Finnmark stands out. In the election of 1924, the year after the split in 1923, the Communist Party of Norway received 11.9 percent support in Finnmark, compared with 6.1 at the national level, while support for the Communist Party in Troms and Nordland was only half of the country's average. In 1927, after the Social Democratic Labor Party rejoined the mother party (i.e. the Norwegian Labor Party) together with a significant part of the Communist Party, the NKP's support in Finnmark was still 10.1 percent (as opposed to 4 percent at the national level).[8]

THE FOUNDATION OF COMMUNIST SUPPORT IN NORTHERN NORWAY

It is reasonable to explain this clearly stronger support for the Communists in Finnmark as an expression of sympathy for the Russian Revolution and the new Soviet state. Finnmark, after all, shares a border with Russia, and since 1905 there had been a good deal of contact with the revolutionary movement in Russia. In Vardø (eastern Finnmark), a publishing house called Murman was established by Russian revolutionaries in exile in 1905, and there was a lively

7 Drivenes and Tjelmeland, "Die Norwegische Arbeiterbewegung zwischen Region und Nation," 55.

8 Ibid., 55.

Russian-Norwegian exchange of literature and ideas there until the late 1920s.[9] General support for the communists in Finnmark was high, but in some municipalities it was even higher. In Alta, for instance, which was characterized by what the historian Henry Minde calls "slate communism," where the combination of slate production and the fisherman-peasant economy proved to be a fertile ground for a particular kind of radicalism.[10] In southern Varanger, and especially related to the miners at the South Varanger mining company, a syndicalist and communist radicalism developed that was dominant among the workers until the late 1920s. During a military strike in Kirkenes and Bjørnvatn in eastern Finnmark at the end of the First World War, troops were mobilized. Workers' and soldiers' councils were formed there, in line with the Bolshevik pattern.[11] Still in the 1930s, there was almost 10 percent support for Norway's Communist Party in this part of Finnmark.

Such pockets of strong radicalism and communism in the period after the Russian Revolution could be found in many places in northern Norway. The most spectacular example was the rebellion in Hammerfest in Western Finnmark during the so-called great strike in 1921. This was the most comprehensive conflict in Norway until then—with all the Workers' Trade Union Association's 150,000 members in strike. The strike committee took full control of the city. The military was sent in. The highly right-wing organization Samfunnshjelpen brought strikebreakers in from the south. Nevertheless, the workers exercised full control over the city as long as the strike lasted, through what might be called a worker's council.[12] The head of the strike committee was editor Sigurd Simensen, who shortly after traveled to Harstad town in Troms and established the communist newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* (the *Daily News*). At the end of the 1920s, he became the vice mayor of Harstad, and after the Second World War, the mayor.[13]

9 Balsvik, *Vardø. Grensepost og fiskevær*, 120 ff., 138–145.

10 Henry Minde, *Stein og brød. Skifernæringa i Alta fram til 1940* (Alta: Alta Skiferbrudd, Alta Historielag og Alta kommune, 1983).

11 Steinar Wikan, *Grubeforeningen Nordens Klippe. Arbeiderkamp i nord 1906–2006* (Oslo: Pax forlag, 2006), 131–136.

12 Arnulf Kristensen, *Rød mai. Da verdensrevolusjonen banket på i Hammerfest* (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1977); Klaus Iversen, *Krise, utslettelse og nytt liv. Hammerfest etter 1914* (Hammerfest: Hammerfest kommune, 1989), 162–166.

13 Gunnar E. Kristiansen, *Sigurd Simensen. Kommunist og pressemann. En framstilling av redaktøren av partiavisene Folkeviljen (DNA) og Dagens Nyheter (NKP) i Harstad fra 1922–1931* (Master thesis, Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2006), 42–50, 94, and 100.

Another such pocket for communist support was, as mentioned, Alta, but here the breakthrough for the communists first appeared in the 1930s. Unusually for the communist movement in Alta, the communists had a foothold in the strongly religious low church Laestadian movement. By the end of the 1930s, the communist William Granås became mayor in the municipality, following a municipal election where the communists received nearly 30 percent of the votes.[14] There was also communist press in the region with newspapers in several cities in Northern Norway, such as Kirkenes, Tromsø, Harstad, Svolvær, and Narvik, in the latter case until the late 1950s.[15]

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The example of Alta also shows the problem of measuring the impact of the Russian Revolution. What was inspired by the revolution and what was a radicalism that had roots in other social, political, and cultural conditions? The strong radicalism among fishermen in Eastern Finnmark undoubtedly had it basis in sharp class antagonism between fishermen and fish buyers. The strength of the communists in Alta in the 1930s has to be explained primarily by the special conditions related to slate production there. The strong position of the communists in many northern mining communities can easily be explained by industry-specific conditions: miners and workers were, in general, radicals everywhere. The relatively strong position of the communists in Grane municipality in Helgeland in southern Nordland in the interwar period may undoubtedly be explained by importance of the forest industry here. It is obvious that radicalization, in northern Norway and numerous other parts of Europe, must be traced back to the experiences of the First World War in general—a war that destroyed dynasties, created a crisis of legitimacy for the ruling forces, and which had an extremely powerful effect on European youth.

However, the Russian Revolution was an essential factor in how radicalism was *expressed* after the First World War. It is important to be aware that sympathy with the Russian Revolution in Norway went far beyond the ranks of those who later became members of the Norwegian Communist Party. The breadth of this sympathy is conveyed by the fact that Norway was the only country in Europe where there was an effective general strike against

14 Minde, *Stein og brød. Skifernæringa i Alta fram til 1940*, 165; Kjell Roger Eikeseth, "Dramatiske tiår (1920–1964)," *Altas historie*, vol. 3 (Alta: Alta kommune, 1998), 185–190, 338.

15 Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Aviser som produsent og produkt av fellesskap—eksemplet Nord-Norge," *Arbeiderhistorie* (2003): 165.

intervention policy vis-à-vis Russia.[16] In contrast with similar groups elsewhere in Europe, the right wing that split off from the Labor Party in 1921 because it was opposed to the party's membership in the Comintern, remained a supporter of the new revolutionary worker's state.[17] As Odd-Bjørn Fure contends, it can be said that "In the defense of the Soviet state, the Norwegian Labor party and the Norwegian labor movement in general stood in the first ranks in Europe." This status was also manifested in practical measures—extensive legal and illegal transport of money and propaganda literature, with Eastern Finnmark as a key central hub.[18] Otherwise, there is reason to believe that there also were influences from revolutionary Russia beyond its ideology. Ketil Zachariassen has shown how a change towards a culturally pluralist orientation vis-à-vis the Sámi minority in both the Finnmark Labor Party and the Finnmark Communist Party in the mid-1920s was, among other factors, influenced by Bolshevik policy concerning minorities in the same decade.[19]

AMBIGUITY TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION

Nevertheless, it was not the Bolshevik Revolution and the Bolshevik Party that may have been the most important inspiration in northern Norway, but the state which was established as a result of the revolution—the Soviet Union. Relations with this new state changed the political culture of the north. The particularly strong wish in the north that there should be good relations to the great power in the east had a number of causes. One of them, as discussed, was the special radicalism in the north—a radicalism that became stronger the further north one went. The second cause was the long-lasting trade, going back to the eighteenth century, between northern Norway and Russian fishermen and traders on the White Sea: the so-called Pomor trade. The Pomor trade completely ceased after the Russian Revolution, but there were a deep, historical memory of these transnational contacts, memories that are still part of the collective memory in the north. It is likely that the geographical proximity

16 Odd-Bjørn Fure, *Mellom reformisme og bolsjevisme. Norsk arbeiderbevegelse 1918–1920: Teori praksis* (PhD thesis, Bergen: University of Bergen, 1984), 466.

17 Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Arbeidarpartiet, bolsjevikpartiet og sovjetstaten 1917–1991," *Arbeiderhistorie* 21 (2017): 87.

18 Balsvik, *Vardø. Grensepost og fiskevær*, 142–145.

19 Ketil Zachariassen, *Samiske nasjonale strategar. Samepolitikk og nasjonsbygging 1900–1940* (Karasjok: CálliidLágádus, 2014), 74 and 164; Ketil Zachariassen, "'Ingen kan komme forbi at samernes krav er retfærdige'. Arbeidarpartiet si haldning til etnopolitiske krav på 1920-talet," in *Arbeiderhistorie* (2013): 72 ff.

itself is a factor, with eastern Finnmark being the northern part of Norway that throughout the twentieth century has had the most comprehensive contact with Russia and the greatest interest in close interaction with its neighbor.[20] The third cause for the wish in the north of a good relationship with the Soviet Union was that Soviet Union was a great power.

In the interwar period, this was a question that had to do with the Soviet Union as a political alternative to Western capitalism. The position of the Soviet Union as an international actor was weak because of the revolution, intervention, civil war, and the Western isolation policy, but that would change. What transformed the Soviet Union's status in a fundamental way was the Second World War. In the wake of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the Soviet Union went to war with Finland in November 1939. Both of these events weakened the reputation of the Soviet Union in Norway as a while, but particularly in the northern part of the country which bordered Finland.[21] However, it is interesting to note that a couple of month after the German occupation of Norway in the summer of 1940, sixty-six people from the small fishing village of Kiberg in eastern Finnmark travelled to Murmansk. Several of them later joined the Soviet intelligence service as partisans, as this group of Norwegian intelligence agents in the Soviet secret service was called. [22] This was mostly people who sympathized with the Communist Party. They probably considered the German-Soviet treaty a tactical alliance. At the same time, the Norwegian Communist Party was banned in Norway, thus becoming the first political party outlawed in Norway by the German occupiers.

THE SOVIET UNION AND THE ARCTIC AS A NEW STRATEGIC REGION

However, with Operation Barbarossa (the massive German attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941), dramatic changes in relations between the great powers took place—changes which had enormous importance for the postwar period. In short, the Arctic and the High North became of great

20 Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Borders as Barrier and Bridge: The Norwegian-Soviet/Russian Border as a Political and Cultural Construction," in *Imagined, Negotiated, Remembered. Constructing European Borders and Borderlands*, ed. Kimmo Katajala and Maria Lähteenmäki (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2012), 176–183.

21 Sven G. Holtsmark, Mikhail M. Narinskij, Marianne N. Soleim, Sigurd Sørlie, "Krig og allianse," in *Naboer i frykt og forventning. Norge og Russland 1917–2014*, ed. Sven G. Holtsmark (Oslo: Pax forlag, 2015), 229–235.

22 Hans Kristian Eriksen, "Partisanene frå Kiberg," in *Partisanbygda Kiberg. Fiskeværet mellom øst og vest*, ed. Einar Niemi (Vadsø: Kiberg bygdelag, 2007), 318.

strategic importance. Through its exile government in London, Norway became allied with the Soviet Union in a joint fight against Nazi Germany. For three years, 80–90 percent of Germany's forces were at the Eastern Front. Great Britain planned to open a second front in northern Norway, which never materialized. But fear of this prompted the deployment of a large part of the German forces to the north of Norway and the construction of military infrastructure. This activity was also due to fighting on the border area—the Litza front—and German attempts to disrupt Soviet supply lines to Murmansk.

Towards the end of the Second World War, two circumstances affected the Soviet Union's relations with Norway in general and northern Norway in particular. Firstly, the experience from spring 1944, was important when it became apparent that the Western Allies were staking everything on a continental attack on Germany—and that Norway had to stand alone with the Soviet Union in the North. As a consequence, Norway entered into identical liberation agreements with the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom in May 1944.[23] This was the start of what has been called the Norwegian bridge building policy, which was based on the country allying itself with the United States and the United Kingdom while maintaining a good relations with what would be one of the two postwar superpowers, the Soviet Union. The basis of necessity was the strategic significance of the High North that had developed during the war. The second factor which strengthened the Soviet Union's position in the North was the Red Army's liberation of eastern Finnmark in October 1944, as well as the Red Army's withdrawal in September 1945, in line with the agreement between the two states.[24]

THE POLICY OF LOW TENSION AND CRITICAL DIALOGUE

Regional differences in opinion about the policy that Norway should adopt towards the Soviet Union appeared when the bridge policy came to an end as the Cold War began in 1947–1948. In the north, the wish to create a Scandinavian alternative to NATO, which Norway joined in April 1949, was stronger than in the south.[25] Support for elements of the bridge building

23 Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Andre verdskrigen og oppkomsten av norsk brubyggingspolitikk," in *Krig og frigjøring i nord*, ed. Fredrik Fagertun (Stamsund: Orkana forlag, 2015), 53.

24 Tjelmeland, "Andre verdskrigen og oppkomsten av norsk brubyggingspolitikk," 55 and 57.

25 Knut Einar Eriksen, *DNA og NATO. Striden om norsk NATO-medlemskap innen regjeringspartiet 1948–49* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1972), 122 and 182.

policy that Norway continued within the framework of NATO, the so-called self-imposed restrictions, was probably also stronger in the north. The most important of Norway's self-imposed restrictions was that the country would not have foreign bases on its soil in peacetime. It is interesting to note that the Finnmark Communist Party increased its support from 17 percent of the voters at the general election in 1949 (after the party had split and halved its support to 5.8 percent at the national level) to 18.6 percent in 1953, after three years of the Korean War and pronounced polarization in world politics.[26] In Finnmark, from the late 1950s onwards there was a commitment to build cultural contacts with people on the Soviet side of the Russo-Norwegian border. This was an extension of national policy towards the Soviet Union to the local level, where a strategy of critical dialogue became dominant after Stalin's death.[27]

Gorbachev's administration, which began in 1985, gave rise to new openings for contact and dialogue with the Soviet Union. This was met with enthusiasm in northern Norway, especially in Finnmark. All of the three northernmost counties in Norway entered into partnership with counties in the Soviet Union. There was a strong increase in activity in cooperation between northern Norwegian and northern Russian cities from the late 1980s, and there was a sharp rise in cultural cooperation in general.[28]

Thus, it was firm pressure from northern Norway that led to improved contact with the Soviet Union. The pressure from the north was also a factor behind the establishment of the entity that was meant to ensure a policy of low tension and trust building in the North—known as the Barents region—after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Barents region was established in 1993, two years after Russia replaced the Soviet Union as Norway's neighbor in the North at the state level.[29] Ever since, contact between the counties on both sides of the border has only increased, both culturally, socially, and economically. This has been an intentional policy from the Norwegian side, but since the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, the situation has changed. There is no doubt that the mood in the north is oriented towards maintaining dialogue, low tension,

26 Lars Svåsand, *Politiske partier* (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1985), 65 ff.

27 Stian Bones, "Med viten og vilje," *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift* 23, no. 3, 283.

28 Stian Bones and Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Avvikling av en periode," in Holtsmark, *Naboer*, 537–542; Alexander A. Sergunin, "Twin cities," in Holtsmark, *Naboer*, 537–541.

29 Tjelmeland, "Borders as Barrier and Bridge," 178 ff; Lena Elisabeth Ingilæ Landsem, *Barentsregionens tiblivelse—en studie av regionale initiativ* (Stamsund: Orkana forlag, 2013), 115 ff.

and contact with Russia, more so than in the south, where the support of sanction policies dominates.[30]

CONCLUSION

There has existed a different political culture in northern Norway, as opposed to southern Norway, in relation to the Soviet Union and Russia from the Cold War until today. The question concerns the extent to which these differences are due to the Russian Revolution. In this article, I have defined the impact of the Russian Revolution in terms of the revolution itself, the ideology behind it, and of the state which emerged after 1917. I have tried to show that, in both in the short- and long-term, these elements had greater effects in the north than in the south. The idea of the Soviet Union, and of Russia today, as fundamentally expansionist does not fit in with the historical experience of the north. This historical experience seems to have shaped a different political culture in northern Norway and in the High North in general, by comparison with the south, regarding cooperation with Russia in the Arctic.

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30 Hallvard Tjelmeland, "Klasse eller region. Spenninga mellom sosialisme og regionalisme i nordnorsk arbeidarrørsle," in *Kollektive bestrebelser. Ei bok til Knut Kjeldstadli på 70-årsdagen*, ed. Jardar Sørvoll, Trine Rogg Korsvik, and Idar Helle, 209–222 (Oslo: Novus, 2018).

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Part Two

Beyond

Avant-garde Artists vs. Reindeer Herders: The Kazym Rebellion in Aleksei Fedorchenko's *Angels of the Revolution* (2014)

Andrei Rogatchevski *(UiT The Arctic University of Norway)*

The Russian Bolshevik Revolution took place in October 1917, in the capital city of Petrograd, yet in some of Russia's remote corners the effects of that revolution could not be felt in earnest until much later. One of the topics that has fascinated scholars and authors alike is the revolution's influence on the indigenous peoples of the North. Ever since Mikhail Speranskii's administrative statutes of 1822, the tsarist government largely left such peoples, especially those resident in Siberia, to their own devices. As for the Soviet government, acting via the Committee for the Assistance to the Peoples of the Outlying Districts of the North (also known as the Committee of the North, 1924–1935), it initially tried to keep an uneasy balance between attempting to involve peoples of the North in building socialism, on the one hand, and preserving their unique traditional lifestyles, on the other. Needless to say, the latter approach, inevitably and to a significant degree, detached the indigenous peoples of the North from the process of socialist construction, at least for a while.

However, once Stalin had assumed full and unassailable leadership of Soviet Russia, "nobody was to be exempt from either progress or . . . equality. . . . The native tribes of the northern borderlands were obliged to join the modern . . . world without delay."[1] Yet "of all the non-Russian subjects of the Russian state, . . . it is the circumpolar hunters and gatherers who have proved the most difficult to reform. . . . The natives refused to play their parts and failed to demonstrate that they had [been] proper . . . proletarians."[2]

1 Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 389.

2 Ibid., ix and 390.

On a number of occasions, the natives' resistance to socialist reforms was tenacious, long-lasting, and violent. One prime example is the Kazym rebellion of 1931–1934, aimed against the Kazym *kultbaza* (or cultural station), which officially opened in the autumn of 1931 in the Amninskie iurty settlement, some 750 miles to the northeast of Ekaterinburg (then Sverdlovsk), in what is now known as the Khanty-Mansi autonomous district.[3]

The Omsk ethnographer and anthropologist Innokentii Shukhov, who travelled to the Kazym river valley in 1914–1915 to study the local population, characterized the Kazym Khanty (in contrast with other Khanty inhabiting the adjacent territories further to the north and to the south) as "hard-working, tough, not too demanding and relatively sober people. . . . Kazym Khanty have not been affected by Russian culture overly much. This may be one of the main reasons why they are relatively prosperous and not dying out."[4]

Some fifteen years later, these same Kazym Khanty (chiefly engaged in reindeer husbandry), together with the neighboring Nentsy (predominantly fishermen), staged a months-long rebellion, which was eventually suppressed with the help of special forces and airplanes, no less. The center of the rebels' attention, the Kazym *kultbaza*, was one of many cultural stations—built on the instructions of the Committee of the North as strongholds of Soviet civilization—in strategically located, hard to reach places. A *kultbaza* was

> a communist mission that would house a hospital, a veterinary center, a school, a museum, scientific laboratories, and a House of the Native, where local folks could relax with a cup of tea and a newspaper. This way, a cold and hungry teacher or doctor would not have to chase the nomads … ; on the contrary, attracted by the useful services the station had to offer, the natives would come by themselves.[5]

3 For more on the Kazym rebellion, see Olga Ernykhova, *Kazymskii miatezh: Ob istorii Kazymskogo vosstaniia 1933–34 gg.* (Novosibirsk: Sibirskii khronograf, 2003). The following account of real-life events is taken from this well-documented source.

4 I. N. Schuchov, *Der Fluss Kazym und seine Anwohner: Ergebnisse einer 1914 unternommenen Exkursion*, trans. by Katharina Oestreich-Geib (München: Veröffentlichungen des Finnisch-Ugrischen Seminars an der Universität München, 1980), 26. All translations into English are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

5 Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 157. In addition to stationary *kultbazy*, there also existed so-called red tents, "a sort of travelling kultbazy modelled after the mobile churches of the missionaries" (ibid., 229).

The Kazym *kultbaza* consisted of fourteen buildings, which together provided services that the locals needed most (educational, medical, veterinary, economic, and so on). There was a boarding school for fifty pupils; two hospitals (one for humans, another for animals; the vets reportedly focused more on studying reindeer than on treating them); a guest house; a vegetable storage building; a power station; and living quarters for thirty-seven members of staff, including a librarian and a local historian.

Kultbazy were meant to function not only as beacons of Soviet culture and enlightenment but also as "institutions controlling the process of collectivization."[6] It is in this capacity that the Kazym *kultbaza* caused a "protest among the locals, for whom it came to symbolize the new policy of compulsory collective ownership [*obobshchestvlenie*], implemented on a mass scale."[7] Two primary reasons for the rebellion are cited by Ernykhova:

1. changes in taxation practices (taxes for the allegedly affluent reindeer owners became extortionately high, and could only be imposed by threat of firearms);[8]
2. the involuntary recruitment of boarding school pupils (to secure the parents' consent to the schooling, their rifles could be temporarily confiscated).[9]

Furthermore, the state could not supply Kazym with enough foodstuffs. In 1932–1933, there arrived 240 t less flour, 8,500 kg less sugar, and 7,049 kg less butter than required. Despite the high demand, shops did not have washbasins, soap, hardware, utensils, cauldrons, kettles, cups, and so on.

The first phase of resistance, led by the former chairman of the Kazym indigenous district council (*raituzsovet*) Ivan Ernykhov, began in the autumn of 1931. The demands included the abolition of *kulak*-related taxation, the return of the boarders home, and the removal of *kultbaza* from Kazym. Some dissenting Khanty were arrested. A number of Khanty fami-

6 See Ernykhova, *Kazymskii miatezh*, 17.

7 Ibid., 22.

8 According to the statistical data, in August 1932 in Kazym, those categorized as "workers for hire (*batraki*) had 2.5 reindeer per household; the poor (*bedniaki*), 12 reindeer; the mid-income ones (*seredniaki*), 41 reindeer; and the rich (*kulaki*), 244 reindeer" (ibid., 40). At the same time, "to provide sustenance for a family of five and to ensure the herd's natural growth, it was necessary to own at least 43 reindeer" (ibid., 43).

9 "Removing children from their families against their will was perceived as hostage-taking to ensure the implementation of Soviet policies" (ibid., 48).

lies chose to disappear into the tundra. In the process, some parents picked up their children from school two days before its December closure in such haste that they got someone else's offspring and had to exchange them for their own on the way.[10]

The rebellion's second phase began in the summer of 1933, when the authorities decided to start commercial fishing on Lake Num-to, believed by the locals to be a sacred place of residence for the goddess of Kazym, *Kasum imi*. This annoyed many Nentsy, who joined the Khanty protests.[11] In order to try to resolve the conflict, a team of negotiators was dispatched to the Nentsy camp in December 1933. Among the negotiators were their leader Polina Shneider (a plenipotentiary from the Urals' Regional Communist Party Committee), Petr Astrakhantsev (the chairman of the Berezovo district executive committee, under whose administrative jurisdiction Kazym then belonged), Petr Smirnov (deputy head of the Kazym *kultbaza*), Nikolai Nesterov (director of the local branch of consumers' cooperative, or *integral'noe tovarishchestvo*) and Zakhar Posokhov (of the Berezovo OGPU, that is, Soviet secret police). These five were taken hostage by the Nentsy (in the hope that this would help for the rebels' demands to be met and the arrested Khanty to be released), and later strangled to death with ropes.[12]

The rebellion was finally quashed in February 1934. Almost 1,000 reindeer were confiscated by the state. Eighty-eight people were arrested. Some of them died during the investigation. Fifty-two were charged, three acquitted, eleven shot, and the rest were imprisoned.[13] As recently as 1993, the Tiumen prosecutor's office refused to exonerate the forty-nine people concerned.

The Kazym rebellion was, to all intents and purposes, a "reaction against the policy of unceremonious interference in the life of the indigenous population, the destruction of centuries-long customs and the imposition of unacceptable forms of economic management."[14] Curiously, the economic aspect, presumably the weightiest on the list of reasons for the

10 Ibid., 57. After that, the boarders at school (mostly those whose parents lived on the *kultbaza*, anyway) remained in the single digits.

11 The catch was too large, could not be transported anywhere and was left to rot away (see ibid., 67).

12 According to some reports, the dead were scalped and Shneider had her breasts cut off (see ibid., 77).

13 See ibid., 82–83.

14 Ibid., 91.

revolt,[15] is entirely missing from the heavily fictionalized film version of the Kazym events, *Angely revoliutsii* (*Angels of the Revolution*), directed by Aleksei Fedorchenko in 2015.[16]

The film's action begins on 6 April 1934. This date is written on a blackboard in a classroom in a wooden hut at the *kultbaza*, indicating the day when the Khanty suddenly take their children away from the boarding school. At the same time, it functions as a disclaimer warning the viewer about the film's fictional nature (by 6 April 1934, the Kazym rebellion was, of course, well and truly over). However, *Angely revoliutsii* does not wish to shed its factual origin completely. Shortly before the opening credits, an inscription appears: "The film is based on a true story."

In Fedorchenko's narrative, the economic disagreements in the conflict between the Nentsy-cum-Khanty (appearing here as one indigenous entity, by and large) and the Soviet authorities are chiefly replaced with aesthetic ones. Polina Shneider (played by Daria Ekamasova) is sent to Kazym not by the Urals' Regional Party Committee but by the People's Commissariat for Nationalities (defunct since 1924), to draw the indigenous peoples to the Soviet cause by the force of art, because they "need culture." The particular kind of art, believed to be suitable for the task, is exemplified by a dream team of avant-gardists, Polina's Communist sympathiser friends since the times of the Russian Revolution and Civil War, whom she summons from their diverse places of abode and occupation to follow her into the northern wilds.

Petr (played by Pavel Basov) is a film director who is shooting a picture about the Mexican revolution (Sergei Eisenstein and his unfinished project *Que viva México!* served as the principal background for this character).[17] Played by Aleksei Solonchev, Smirnov (also called Petr and therefore referred to in the film by his surname to avoid confusion) is a teacher and theatre director, who allegedly worked once at the Moscow Latvian Theatre Skatuve ("Stage"),

15 Cf. the Kazym dwellers' statement: "It is impossible to live under the Soviets: we all go hungry, they don't give us any bread yet make us work" (ibid., 87).

16 The film has received much praise and, among others, in 2014, a Marcus Aurelius Award at the Rome Film Festival; a Cineuropa Award at the Lisbon & Estoril Film Festival; a Special Award at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival; and, in 2015, a prize of the Guild of Film Critics and Film Scholars for Best Direction at the Open Russian Film Festival Kinotavr; and the Best Director prize at the Yakutsk International Film Festival. It was also named the best film in the Russian program at the 2015 Moscow International Film Festival.

17 See Valerii Kichin, "Shamany protiv revoliutsii: Aleksei Fedorchenko rasskazal v Rime o stolknovenii tsivilizatsii," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, October 22, 2014, accessed April 28, 2018, https://rg.ru/2014/10/22/film-site.html.

liquidated in 1938, and not in 1929, as *Angely revoliutsii* claims.[18] Zakhar (played by Georgii Iobadze) is a sculptor and photographer. His character is partly based on the Mordvin sculptor Stepan Erzia (1876–1959), famous for works such as his 1920 monument to the Liberated Laborer in Ekaterinburg—and partly on the unknown author of the legendary 1918 monument to Judas Iscariot in Sviiazhsk.[19] Nikolai (played by Konstantin Balakirev) is an architect and cremation enthusiast (this character is partly inspired by the artist and architect Nikifor Tamonkin, 1881–1951,[20] and probably also by the constructivist Dmitrii Osipov, 1887–1934, the designer of the New Donskoe Cemetery crematorium in Moscow, where many victims of Stalin's purges were burnt).[21]

Delivering, so-to-speak, a gift of modernity to reindeer herders, the avant-gardists present it, *inter alia*, in the form of a lecture on Suprematist painting, which utterly fails to impress.[22] As a general tendency in the film, *Angely*'s images repeatedly contrast ultra-modern urban civilization with its archaic rural counterpart (Figs. 1 and 2), not wishing to establish a superiority

18 See Ekaterina Vizgalova, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: 'Narod, kotoryi dolzhen byt' zainteresovan v svoei istorii, nichego ne znaet,'" *Kino-teatr.ru*, November 7, 2015, accessed April 28, 2018, http://www.kino-teatr.ru/kino/person/483/. Smirnov is probably inspired by Oswald Glazunov (Glaznieks), 1891–1947, who directed not only at Skatuve but also at the Vakhtangov theatre.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 By his own admission, Fedorchenko had studied some 400 lives of Russian avant-gardists to discover weird and wonderful biographical facts that were subsequently ascribed to *Angely*'s characters (see Olga Lunkova, "Shamany protiv Sovetskoi vlasti: V prokat vyshel film Alekseia Fedorchenko *Angely revoliutsii*," *Teatral-online.ru*, November 12, 2015, accessed April 28, 2018, http://www.teatral-online.ru/news/14674). Fedorchenko's Shneider, too, is an amalgam of the Russian revolutionaries Larisa Reisner (1895–1926), Aleksandra Kollontai (1872–1952), and Liudmila Mokievskaia-Zubok (1896–1919), as well as the food technologist Irina Sakharova (1880–c.1970) and, naturally, the real-life Polina Shneider (c. 1888–1933), who worked as a Bolshevik educationalist in Crimea before her transfer to the Urals in 1929. See Kichin, "Shamany protiv revoliutsii"; and Vizgalova, "Aleksei Fedorchenko."

22 Such a lecture, outlandish as it may seem, is an exaggeration but not a complete invention. At least one activist on an enlightening mission managed to attract the natives to his red tent "by playing his balalaika and showing pictures … but the overall picture was not in favor of cultural revolution" (Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 230). Similar techniques (visuals and music) were used, for example, by Christian missionaries, in times and places that were quite remote from Russia and its revolutions. Thus, in the late eighteenth century, father Jean Pierron converted Mohawk Indians to Christianity by showing them images of the torments of hell. His successor, father Boniface, formed a choir of Indian children to lure into his chapel Indians who liked music (see chapters 34 and 35 of Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966]).

FIGURE 1: Courtesy of the 29 February film company.

FIGURE 2: Courtesy of the 29 February film company.

of one over another. It is not that the two civilizations have nothing in common. Theatre, for example, is an essential part of both. Yet the indigenous theatre is represented by the handmade dolls of a Red Army soldier and a parka-clad shaman fighting each other (Fig. 3),[23] while the concept of modern theatre is illustrated by, among other things, the amateur theatricals of Shneider's youth (Fig. 4) and the rehearsals of an avant-garde play at the boarding school,

23 Genuine Mansi folk theatre puppets were used for this episode, see Lunkova, "Shamany protiv Sovetskoi vlasti."

FIGURE 3: Courtesy of the 29 February film company.

FIGURE 4: Courtesy of the 29 February film company.

immediately prior to the children's removal from it. However, in the end, few representatives of the two civilizations display much of a desire or capability of learning from each other, or even enough tolerance towards the differences that separate them.[24]

24 Cf., however, a wooden pagan miniature idol, a Russian Orthodox icon, and a statuette of Lenin, happily sharing a shelf for gods in an indigenous Kazym dwelling.

In an especially revealing juxtaposition of scenes towards the end of the film, each culture displays its peak achievement. The avant-gardists set up a film projector to project surreal scenes through a window onto the smoke of the bonfire billowing into the night sky. In the very next scene, masked Khanty ritually slaughter a reindeer, chant over its dying body, and the shaman reveals that this has pleased the Khanty goddess. Both scenes are ineffably magical to each culture, and explain perhaps why the adherents are so passionate about their respective beliefs.[25]

FIGURE 5: Courtesy of the 29 February film company.

FIGURE 6: Courtesy of the 29 February film company.

25 Frederick C. Corney, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: *Angels of the Revolution* (Angely revoliutsii, 2014)," *Kinokultura* 48 (2015), accessed April 28, 2018, http://www.kinokultura.com/2015/48r-angely-revoliutsii.shtml.

The mutual exclusivity of the two civilizations is demonstrated in particular through the juxtaposed multiple images of the (airborne) dogs (Fig. 5) taking part in a Bolshevik advertising campaign which promotes Soviet dirigibles, and of the cats (Fig. 6) occupying the sanctuary of the Kazym goddess (cat being her avatar and Kazym known as the Land of the Feline Elbow or, in the Kazym Khanty dialect, *kan kunsh olan*). As a desperate measure in showing the locals who's boss, Shneider, with her team in tow, intrudes into the sanctuary, removes the goddess's hat from her effigy and puts it on herself, like a crown of sorts, while turning some of the goddess's offerings into ad hoc stage props. Sadly, Shneider and her associates will later pay for this blasphemy with their lives.

Thus the indigenous population, appalled by the avant-gardists' radicalism, ultimately decides to reject the gift of modernity. In archaic societies, in the words of Marcel Mauss, a refusal "to accept [a gift is] the equivalent of a declaration of war."[26] In *Angely revoliutsii*, the murderous acts of the Kazym rebellion symbolically take place on the eve of the seventeenth anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution. Yet another friend of Shneider's, an avant-garde composer called Ivan (Oleg Iagodin),[27] who initially refused to come with her and others to Kazym (because he'd rather "hold a conductor's baton than a gun"), joins the military detachment mobilized in order to avenge his dead comrades. Having ordered Kazym Prince's (the rebels' leader) eyelids cut off, Ivan commits suicide under the air balloon which was meant to ascend into the sky to convince the natives that gods and spirits do not exist—but has never flown. It appears that in a mortal confrontation between the two civilizations, there are no winners.[28]

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26 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, transl. by Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen and West, 1966), 11.

27 His character has apparently been modelled after Lev Termen, 1896–1993 (see Kichin, "Shamany protiv revoliutsii"), and Arsenii Avraamov, 1886–1944 (see Aleksei Filippov, "*Angely revoliutsii*: Rossiia, kotoruiu my ne nashli," *Kino-teatr.ru*, November 1, 2015, accessed April 28, 2018, http://www.kino-teatr.ru/kino/art/pr/4181/).

28 *Angely revoliutsii* seems to belong to a range of Russian feature films dealing with various types of relationships between a titular nation and an ethnic (or ethno-religious) minority. In Fedorchenko's case, this relationship is portrayed as a tug-of-war. Also, the relationship can be represented as an idealized harmony (see, for example, Ivan Pyrev's 1941 *Svinarka i pastukh—They Met in Moscow*—about a love affair between a Russian swineherd and a Daghestani shepherd); a struggle between a David and a Goliath (see Aleksei Balabanov's 2010 *Kochegar—The Stoker*—about a Yakut dispatching several armed Russian gangsters with a ski pole); a case of divided loyalties, linked

Whose side is Fedorchenko on? According to one of his interviews, he

> tried not to take anybody's side. I wanted to portray altruists, not villains. The Khanty aren't bad and the Soviets had their uses, too, bringing in education and health care, which is good, isn't it?[29] The film is about how difficult it is, when in Rome, not to do as the Romans would do (*slozhno svoim ustavom oshchastlivit' chuzhoi monastyr'*).[30]

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Fedorchenko's intentions, but did they fully materialize? It is obvious that his attempts to depict the Russian Revolution in the best possible light, choosing to focus on its arguably least controversial, "angelic" features, such as selfless idealism, innovation, and a burning desire to improve the quality of life for the dispossessed, have been largely successful. Simultaneously, Fedorchenko is not blind to the revolution's shortcomings, such as tactless invasiveness and needless brutality. What about the natives, though? Their representation in *Angely revoliutsii* is clearly not free from colonialist clichés, which tend to uphold "the binary opposition of civility versus savagery."[31] In the film, the natives, especially in group scenes, are often shown as types, not individuals, wearing traditional dress and staring more or less straight into the camera, as if in those early anthropological photographs made by scientists in a "rational and objectivist [mode], characterized as it was by an instrumentalism that provided no opportunities for communication."[32]

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to protagonists' mixed origin (see Pavel Lungin's 1992 *Luna Park*, about a half-Jewish leader of a violent group of antisemitic skinheads); and a case of falling for the enemy (see Aleksandr Rogozhkin's 2002 *Kukushka* / *The Cuckoo*, about a reluctant threesome involving a Finnish private, a Soviet officer and a female Sami civilian at the end of the Continuation War in 1944).

29 Suprematism and cinema are not the only things brought as gifts to Kazym. A Singer sewing machine is presented to the mother of the first baby delivered at the *kultbaza*'s hospital.

30 Alena Solntseva, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: 'Bogi skazali, chto nado prinesti chuzhikh v zhertvu,'" *The New Times*, June 9, 2015, accessed April 29, 2018, https://newtimes.ru/articles/detail/98929/.

31 Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the "Native" People and the Making of European Identities* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), 14.

32 Ibid., 10. Fedorchenko studied such photographs in archives, and creatively used some of their images in his film, see Kamila Mamadnazarbekova, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: 'Istoriia nas dognala,'" *Vedomosti*, June 23, 2015, accessed 30 April, 2018, https://www.vedomosti.ru/lifestyle/characters/2015/06/24/597689-aleksei-fedorchenko-istoriya-nas-dognala.

In order to portray "the most essentially 'unspoilt' native—least urbanized, most primitive, most different,"[33] and thus emphasize the gap between the "advanced" culture of avant-gardists and the "backward" culture of reindeer herders, included in *Angely* are scenes such as "hunting with a primitive weapon" and "coming across a modern household item never seen by the indigene before."[34] When Shneider pretends to be the Kazym goddess, she engages in a mock hunting with a spear (although Khanty and Nentsy have been using rifles of various kinds since the eighteenth century). In another film fragment, Kazym women are taught how to apply makeup in front of a mirror (even though mirrors of various kinds have been known in Siberia since time immemorial, and widely used in shamanic rituals, while the custom of some indigenous women in Siberia to paint their faces was recorded in the mid-nineteenth century,[35] but of course had existed long before that).

Needless to say, "when represented as a 'child of nature', the colonial 'other' occupies a particular locus on the pseudo-biological social Darwinist continuum of human evolutionary development,"[36] usually well below the person responsible for such visual representations. How does all this agree with Fedorchenko's statement that "ethnographic films should not be made

33 Jeremy Silvester, Patricia Hayes, and Wolfram Hartmann, "'This Ideal Conquest': Photography and Colonialism in Namibian History," in *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History*, ed. Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester and Patricia Hayes (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1998), 17.

34 Cf. the canonical scenes of an Inuit hunting with a harpoon and listening to a gramophone in Robert J. Flaherty's pioneering *Nanook of the North* (1922), as well as two unidentified tribesmen hunting for a squirrel with a bow and arrows, and a Nentsy group encountering a gramophone in Dziga Vertov's *Shestaia chast' mira* (A Sixth Part of the World, 1926). The latter film also contains frequent shots of indigenous peoples staring at the camera en masse. Vertov was one of the prototypes for the character of Petr, see Vizgalova, "Aleksei Fedorchenko."

35 See Lydia Maria Child, *Brief History of the Condition of Women in Various Ages and Nations*, vol. 1 (New York: C. S. Francis, 1849), 183. Indigenous women indeed became the principal target of Soviet modernization, not necessarily as potential makeup wearers, of course, but as people who could introduce and maintain, for example, decent standards of hygiene. They were treated as "the mainspring through which the old way of life could be changed, the key to a healthier domestic and social life for the natives. Teach them new skills, and the children and men will have no choice but to follow" (Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 231). Nevertheless, "the emancipation campaign did not result in the creation of [a] much needed class of native allies" (ibid., 236).

36 Brent Harris, "Photography in Colonial Discourse: The Making of the 'Other' in Southern Africa, c. 1850–1950," in Hartmann, Silvester, and Hayes, *The Colonising Camera*, 21.

from a position of superiority. It should be done the other way 'round, looking upwards, showing respect"?[37]

At first glance, *Angely revoliutsii* does not deviate too far from the Soviet tradition of ethnographic filmmaking, in which "indigenous peoples were simultaneously presented as primitive societies awaiting modernization and as complex cultures in need of research and preservation."[38] However, upon closer examination, it transpires that *Angely revoliutsii* has acquired its shape not because Fedorchenko is incapable of breaking free from the Soviet film tradition. Neither is the film what it is because Fedorchenko and his principal co-scriptwriter on the project, Denis Osokin (a folklorist), approach their ethnographic material as outsiders. Oleg Fesenko's 2009 film *Krasnyi led: Saga o khantakh Iugry* (*The Red Ice: A Iugra Khanty Saga*), also devoted to the Kazym rebellion, still features Khanty as a "civilization of the 'noble savages,'"[39] even though it is based on a novel by the Khanty author Eremei Aipin, *Bozh´ia mater' v krovavykh snegakh* (*The Mother of God in the Blood-Spattered Snow* [2002]).[40] It rather appears as if in *Angely revoliutsii* Fedorchenko has consciously chosen to imitate, in an overblown manner and from an ironic distance, both the iconic imagery of the Russian revolutionary avant-garde and the stock imagery representing indigenous peoples as savages, because the film's aim is not to

37 Maksim Tuula, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: 'Eta istoriia o vtorzhenii liuboi tsivilizatsii v traditsionnoe obshchestvo,'" *Biulleten' kinoprokatchika*, June 8, 2015, accessed April 29, 2018, http://www.kinometro.ru/interview/show/name/Alexey_Fedorchenko_about_Angels_of_Revolution_2346. On ethnographic cinema, see, for example, Karl G. Heider, *Ethnographic Film* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006).

38 Oksana Sarkisova, *Screening Soviet Nationalities: Kulturfilms from the Far North to Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017), 64.

39 Corney, "Aleksei Fedorchenko."

40 Admittedly, Fesenko's (and his collaborators') script is dominated by an uneasy mutual attraction (absent from Aipin's book) between a priest's daughter and a revolutionary, at the expense of Khanty beliefs, legends and customs. Still, it may well be that even for the indigenous insiders—especially the authors educated in the Soviet system (such as Aipin)—it is not easy to express an unmediated point of view on their native history and culture, because most of their poetry and fiction "were written in Russian, and almost all were aimed at the Russian public. The activity of writing itself was nontraditional and had to rely on images, plots and tropes taken from Russian literature" (Slezkine, *Arctic mirrors*, 369). Fedorchenko shows the fruits of Soviet enlightenment in *Angely*'s documentary epilogue, when Ekaterina Obatina, the first Khanty woman born at the Kazym kultbaza, who became a teacher of Russian and outlived the USSR by almost a quarter century, sings in front of the camera not a Khanty folk song, as is expected of her by the film crew, but the 1958 Soviet schlager "Pesnia o trevozhnoi molodosti" (A Song about a Turbulent Youth) by Lev Oshanin (lyrics) and Aleksandra Pakhmutova (music).

demythologize the Russian Revolution in its relation to the indigenous cultures of the Soviet North but to remythologize it.

Insofar as filmmaking is about creating imaginary worlds that look convincingly real, it is, by its very nature, directly "related to mythmaking."[41] Moreover, "in the contemporary age, one of the most powerful media that … ensures the continuation of older myths, even as it alters them, is the medium of film."[42] As Irving Singer explains,

> by using the technical devices of panning, tracking, zooming, alternating shots that are close, medium, long, and all the rest of normal cinematography, as well as the systematic cutting that goes into the eventual editing, film instils in members of the audience a sense of distance from anything they might see outside the theater or within it before the lights are turned down. This distancing puts the spectators of the finished product into a receptive attitude toward narratives that are unlike life itself precisely *because* they are mythic or include mythic aspects… . Mythmaking depends upon our imaginative adherence to portrayals and events that we know to be unreal in any other context. At the same time, we are not just lured into but also engrossed by the quasi-realistic character of images that flit before our eyes in semblance of the world outside. The mythic experience combines both characteristics, the unreal as well as real.[43]

Retaining "the kind of one-to-one contact with a storyteller that some bard or shaman might effect in primitive societies,"[44] film can, and often does, serve as a bridge between the archaic and the advanced. In the words of Rachel O. Moore, "the camera is our one magical tool flush with animistic power to possess, enchant, travel through time and space, and bewitch.… Crafted as much by archaic beliefs and desires as by glass lenses, [it] joins the primitive to the modern."[45]

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41 S. Brent Plate, "Filmmaking, Mythmaking, Culture Making," in *Representing Religion in World Cinema: Filmmaking, Mythmaking, Culture Making*, ed. S. Brent Plate (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 2.

42 Ibid., 6.

43 Irving Singer, *Cinematic Mythmaking: Philosophy in Film* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 9–10.

44 Ibid., 6.

45 Rachel O. Moore, *Savage Theory: Cinema as Modern Magic* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), 162–63.

Fedorchenko has been making ample use of the cinematic opportunities for mythmaking and linking the archaic to the contemporary for quite some time now. His 2010 *Ovsianki* (a Russian word for buntings; this is another collaboration with Osokin, released in the West as *Silent Souls*) pretends to be a reconstruction of the rituals of the (non-existent) Finno-Ugric people of the Meria.[46] Fedorchenko's 2012 *Nebesnye zheny lugovykh mari* (*Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari*—yet another collaboration with Osokin) goes one step further and ascribes nonexistent beliefs and rituals to the very real, if not very numerous, Finno-Ugric Mari people.[47] Unsurprisingly, *Angely revoliutsii* broadly follows the same path and has been defined by Fedorchenko himself as "historical facts and ancient myths, refracted through the lens of [the film crew's] imagination."[48]

Why remythologize the indigenous resistance to the revolutionary changes, though, instead of telling the little-known yet deserving story of the Kazym rebellion as it was, documentary-style? Fedorchenko must have felt wary of documentary films as a genre. Their integrity has been compromised not only by Communist ideology (often too happy to subjugate facts to wishful thinking[49]), but also by the genre's early history. The word "documentary"

> suggests observational neutrality, . . . an unretouched record of what's real; and if that was the promise it was betrayed almost from the start. . . . The British producer James Williamson filmed the Boer War on a golf course. Thomas Edison made a documentary of the Russo-Japanese War on Long Island. . . . The Danish mogul Ole Olsen produced a safari documentary by buying a couple of aging lions from the Copenhagen zoo, moving them to an island, and, inter-cutting stock jungle footage, filming them being killed by hired "hunters." Audiences didn't seem to mind.[50]

46 For a review, see, for example, Serguei Oushakine, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: *Silent Souls* (*Ovsianki*, 2010)," *Kinokultura* 31 (2011), accessed April 30, 2018, http://www.kinokultura.com/2011/31r-buntings.shtml

47 For a review, see, for example, Andrei Rogatchevski, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: *Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari* (*Nebesnye zheny lugovykh Mari*, 2012)," *Kinokultura* 41 (2013), accessed April 30, 2018, http://www.kinokultura.com/2013/41r-nebesnye-zheny.shtml.

48 Valerii Kichin, "Letiat nad Rimom angely," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, October 17, 2014, accessed April 30, 2018, https://rg.ru/2014/10/17/premia-site.html.

49 Thus, Soviet documentaries of the 1930s about conquering the Arctic were quite adept at "turning failure into triumph" (Sarkisova, *Screening Soviet Nationalities*, 79).

50 Louis Menand, "Nanook and Me: Fahrenheit 9/11 and the Documentary Tradition," *The New Yorker*, August 9, 2004, accessed April 30, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/08/09/nanook-and-me.

In a similar vein, but a hundred years later or so, Fedorchenko, who started out as a straightforward documentary filmmaker,[51] released a feature-length motion picture *Pervye na Lune* (*First on the Moon*, 2005), about a 1938 secret Soviet space flight.[52] To lend a semblance of credibility to this entirely improbable story, the film was disguised as a documentary. After its screening to the inhabitants of Star City near Moscow (home to the spacecraft manufacturer Energia), a former operator of the lunar module came up to the film director to confirm that the story narrated in *Pervye na lune* had taken place almost exactly as it had been told.[53]

Since then, (re)mythologization seems to have been Fedorchenko's preferred operating mode. He may have found this mode particularly appropriate when dealing with the subject of the Russian Revolution. After all, countering Bolshevik revolutionary myths with hard facts is nothing new.[54] Contesting these myths with more myths of a comparable nature (implying, however, a very different moral lesson) may well have seemed a more original and challenging, and therefore more attractive, option.

In essence, the standard Bolshevik myth about revolutionaries sacrificing their own lives in adverse circumstances to make the world a better place is a variation on the monomyth—the hero's journey, which is subdivided into three principal stages (separation, initiation and return) and symbolizes the rites of passage. Joseph Campbell summarizes the monomyth thus: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from his mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons

51 See, for example, his shorts *David* (2002) and *Deti beloi mogily* (*Children of the White Grave*, 2003).

52 For a review, see, for example, Alexander Prokhorov, "The Redemption of Lunar Reality: Aleksei Fedorchenko's *First on the Moon* (*Pervye na lune*), 2005," *Kinokultura* 11 (2006), accessed April 30, 2018, http://www.kinokultura.com/2006/11r-firstmoon2.shtml.

53 See Viktor Matizen, "Aleksei Fedorchenko: 'My ne poliruem vremia,'" *Novye izvestiia*, June 6, 2005, accessed April 30, 2018, https://newizv.ru/news/culture/06-06-2005/25646-aleksej-fedorchenko.

54 Cf.: "From the first days in power the Bolsheviks tried to control the revolutionary narrative, creating a canonical view of selected events and their analysis, propagating it and eliminating the chances of breaking or even adjusting the canon. Locking away and destroying primary sources, documents and archives was part of this endeavor. It is not surprising that most of the counter-arguments and views outside the Bolsheviks' control were also formed within the framework set up by the Bolsheviks." Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia, "Introduction," in *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths*, ed. Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia (London: The British Library, 2017), 22.

on his fellow man."[55] The hero is often reluctant to embark on the journey, is persuaded to start regardless, by an older and wiser mentor, and is helped on the way by a company of magic assistants.

Campbell's follower David Adams Leeming describes the hero(ine)'s voyage in more detail, including, at the stages of initiation and return, his/her possible death, visit to the realm of the dead, and subsequent resurrection: "The hero must confront physical death. . . . He descends to the underworld to confront the forces of death . . . [and then] acts out humankind's most elementary desire—he overcomes death physically and is united with the natural cycle of birth, death and rebirth."[56]

Angely's plot is not unlike a version of the monomyth, at least up to a point. Shneider does not want to travel to Kazym but is convinced to do so by the unnamed People's Commissar for Nationalities (played by Viktor Terelia), who knew her father and acts as her mentor.[57] Her team of avant-gardists is of course little else but the hero(ine)'s helpers, while Kazym is the region of supernatural wonder (or the underworld), and the indigenous peoples stand for fabulous forces. This is where the parallels with the monomyth end, however, as Shneider and her helpers fail in their mission to overcome the natives. There is plenty of death in *Angely*, but no resurrection, and Shneider and her party will never return to their point of departure alive and victorious.

As for the Bolshevik hero(ine) in general, s/he may also perish, and does so more often than not—but never in vain. His/her deeds live on, s/he becomes a role model for others and is soon replaced by many more of those like him/her, just as heroic and self-sacrificial. This Bolshevik trope can be called "optimistic tragedy," after the title of the 1932 play by the Soviet dramatist Vsevolod Vishnevskii (1900–1951). In *Angely revoliutsii*, the tragedy is not counterbalanced by, or overloaded with, optimism. On the contrary, Shneider's mission feels like a complete and needless waste. With regard to the indigenous peoples, Fedorchenko's message could perhaps be expressed by Yuri Slezkine's phrase "The best colonial government [is] the least intrusive colonial government."[58]

55 Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968), 30.

56 David Adams Leeming, *Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 8.

57 For most of the Commissariate's existence it was run by Stalin.

58 Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 391.

In the opinion of S. Brent Plate, "myths never end, they are merely retold in new forms."[59] In some people's minds, even today, myths may still play a more important role than historical facts. This is not necessarily a bad thing, provided that such myths teach us "what it is to be civilized humans."[60] When Fedorchenko claims that "little-known [historical] facts will be judged in accordance with [how they are represented in] *Angely revoliutsii*,"[61] he may be right and doing future generations a favor, quite irrespective of his deliberate factual inaccuracy.

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59 S. Brent Plate, "Filmmaking, Mythmaking, Culture Making," 11.

60 Hannah Furness, "Children Should Be Taught Myths and Legends as 'Models for a Way of Life', Author Says," *The Telegraph*, October 31, 2013, accessed April 30, 2018, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/10410270/Children-should-be-taught-myths-and-legends-as-models-for-a-way-of-life-author-says.html.

61 Vizgalova, "Aleksei Fedorchenko."

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1917: The Evolution of Russian Émigré Views of the Revolution

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The place of revolution in Russia and within Russian social thought was broached in 1909 with the publication of *Vekhi*.[1] At the time, the call for greater moderation had been met with almost universal condemnation.[2] After 1917, the exiled members of the intelligentsia had experienced revolution and had thus modified some of their views. Some sought short-term political responses to the consequences of the revolution, whereas others wanted to produce a more complete and wide-ranging system of ideas. When examining the responses of Russian émigrés to the Russian Revolution and civil war, a variety of approaches can be discerned. First, the main protagonists of 1917 tended to focus on the events of that year and often sought to justify their own actions, as well as criticize the actions of their opponents.[3] Secondly, new groups arose, which did not find arguments about the course of events in 1917 at all constructive, and wanted to add new elements to the discussion. These groups looked for a political solution to overthrow the Bolsheviks and change

1 *Vekhi: Sbornik statei o russkoi intelligentsii* (Moscow: I. N. Kushnerev, 1909).

2 See, for example, Pavel Miliukov, "Intelligentsiia i istoricheskaia traditsiia," *Intelligentsiia v Rossii: Sbornik statei* (St. Petersburg: Zemlia, 1910), 89–192. For a discussion of the debate and reactions to it, see Leonard Schapiro, "The Vekhi group and the Mystique of Revolution," in Leonard Schapiro, *Russian Studies* (New York: Viking, 1986), 68–92; and Christopher Read, *Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia 1900–1912* (London: Macmillan, 1979). The introduction to Marshall S. Shatz and Judith E. Zimmerman (eds), *Signposts: A Collection of Articles on the Russian Intelligentsia* (Irvine, CA: C. Schlacks, Jr., 1986) contains a detailed bibliography.

3 David Anin's *Revoliutsiia 1917 goda glazami ee rukovoditelei* (Rome: Aurora, 1971) provides a useful shortcut to examples of the differing points of view of various participants in the Revolution. Pavel N. Miliukov's *Istoriia vtoroi russkoi revoliutsii* (Sofia: Rossiisko–bolgarskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1921–23) and *Vospominaniia (1859–1917)* (New York: Izdatel'stvo imeni Chekhova, 1955) are an example of the way in which a leading politician and historian interpreted events.

the situation in the USSR.[4] Others, however, wanted to reconsider what had happened in 1917 and to view the Bolshevik seizure of power from a broader perspective. They hoped this might lead to, firstly, a new understanding of the processes involved in the revolution, and also, perhaps, a changed philosophical outlook.[5] Despite all the problems encountered by refugees in Europe after the First World War, those members of the Russian intelligentsia who found themselves abroad had the freedom to put forward and discuss a very wide range of views—a freedom which was denied to their compatriots within the USSR.

The majority thought that they would preserve traditional Russian culture and values until their return home, but the longer they stayed abroad, despite their best intentions, the more they became affected by the countries and societies in which they found themselves. Nevertheless, the majority were still focused on Russia, and in their discussions Russia played the major role. In such discussions they continued to address the questions raised in the nineteenth century by Slavophiles and westernizers: How should Russia and Russian culture be defined? How should Russia develop? What should be the response of the intelligentsia? After 1917, an additional question was added into the discussion: How should 1917 and the aftermath of the civil war be understood?

It is no coincidence that scholars refer to Russian political and social thought, rather than the rarer instances of Russian philosophy. Much of the intelligentsia was responding to particular political problems, rather than developing a new philosophical approach. James Scanlan brings Russian thought and philosophy together in one book[6] and emphasizes the way in which ideas developed by émigrés were received in Russia. In *A History of Russian Thought*, edited by William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord, however, there is almost no recognition of developments in emigration. Even the development of Russian theology is only discussed with reference to the Silver Age before 1917. In this volume, Galin Tikhanov, in his very interesting essay on "Continuities in the Soviet Period" discusses the evolution of Marxist thought within the Soviet Union. However, he states that he decided not

4 Krest'ianskaia Rossiia and Miliukov's "new tactic" are an example of this kind of approach (see the discussion below).

5 Both the Eurasianists in *Iskhod k Vostoku* (Sofia: Rossiisko–bolgarskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1921) and *Smena vekh* (Prague: Nasha rech', 1921) were attempts to rethink the situation within Russia and produce a new approach to the problem in different ways.

6 James P. Scanlan (ed.), *Russian Thought after Communism: The Recovery of a Philosophical Heritage* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

> to include a separate overview of émigré currents of thought, because this would have reproduced the wrong notion of Russian émigré intellectuals as being the only heirs of the pre-1917 tradition, thus reinforcing the long-maintained—and rather misleading—picture of a constant and unbridgeable chasm between Soviet and émigré intellectual life.[7]

I agree with Tikhanov that it would be incorrect to maintain that all vestiges of Russian intellectual tradition were destroyed within Russia after 1917—although in many areas it was very difficult for Soviet scholars to maintain, let alone develop, such ideas and traditions. That said, I disagree with the notion that there was an unbridgeable gulf between Soviet and émigré intellectual life, because it can be argued that the greater part of the work of Russian émigré intellectuals was undertaken for Russia's sake and with Russia in mind. Ivan Il'in may have stated this more forcefully than many of his compatriots: "If Russia needs my books, the Lord will save them from destruction; if neither God nor Russia needs them, then I myself don't need them. For I live only for Russia."[8] This sentiment was echoed by many, including those who parted with Il'in on most other issues. P. N. Savitskii, for example, felt that his arrest, imprisonment, and exile in in the USSR in 1945–1957 enabled him to see the real Russia and meet the real Russian people.[9] Here, perhaps, one can see the continuing ambivalence that the Russian intelligentsia had with the idea of the *narod*.

Once Russians found themselves abroad, the process of trying to understand what had happened in Russia in 1917 began. Events had moved very quickly and processes which had occurred almost simultaneously were not obvious even to those who played a major role in 1917. The main protagonists began to produce accounts which both justified the actions they had taken in 1917 and clarify the course of events. Archives within the Soviet Union were not available to historians in emigration who began to compile records and memoirs. The journal *Arkhiv Russkoi Revoliutsii*, produced by Iosif Gessen in

7 Galin Tikhanov, "Continuities in the Soviet Period," in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. W. Leatherbarrow and D. Offord (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 311.

8 Quoted in Scanlan, *Russian Thought after Communism*, 151, from Ivan Il'in's *Rodina, russkaia filosofiia, pravoslavnaia kul'tura*, compiled with an introduction by E. S. Troitskii (Moscow: n.p., 1992), 3.

9 Letter of P. N. Savitskii to N. E. Andreyev, September 28/29, 1957, in N. E. Andreyev's archive, held in Oxford by C. Andreyev. See Catherine Andreyev, "Arkhiv N. E. Andreeva: Pis´ma P. N. Savitskogo 1957–1966 i stikhi Vostokova." In the press for *Slepukhinskie chteniia* (2016), due to be published in St. Petersburg in 2018.

Berlin, and the archive collections in Prague are just some of the more widely known examples of the way in which émigrés felt that they could contribute to a more complete understanding of 1917.

As it became progressively more difficult for historians in the Soviet Union to produce analyses that diverged from the party line, collecting documents and clarifying the facts became increasingly important. The émigré community held that a "future Russia" would need to have access to the truth. Among protagonists of 1917, there were both recriminations and justifications of their own practices and positions.

Menshevik émigrés were very consistent in their criticism of Bolshevik policy. They continued to reiterate that the dictatorial nature of the Bolshevik takeover of power was due to the fact that the revolution had taken place before the Russian working class was large enough or had developed adequate political consciousness.[10] Many émigrés from the whole spectrum of opinion blamed Alexander Kerensky for his role and decisions, and *Kerenshchina* in some circles became synonymous with a lack of decisiveness and vacillation.[11] Much later, George Katkov found discussing 1917 with Kerensky highly irritating, as the acknowledgements to his discussion of the Kornilov affair demonstrate. Katkov wrote:

> The most difficult task for me is to express my gratitude to the other main protagonist of this drama, A. F. Kerensky. I knew him only after emigration and had a number of disagreements with him which I would rather forget . . . I discussed with him more than once very touchy points relating to the Kornilov affair. On these occasions I found him very much on his guard and evasive in his statements.[12]

Some people blame Kerensky for the disappearance from the Russian archive at Columbia University of key documents relating to the Kornilov affair.

Collecting information and verifying facts might be absorbing for historians, but it was a rather slow business. The émigrés wanted information about what was happening and were eager to find a way to influence the current situation. Pavel Miliukov's new tactic in 1920 consisted of a reappraisal of the

10 *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, published in emigration, first in Berlin, Paris (1921–40) and later in New York (1940–63), was seen as a Menshevik journal in which such views were expressed.

11 Richard Abraham's *Alexander Kerensky: First Love of the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) discusses reactions of émigrés towards Kerensky, 351–358.

12 George Katkov, *The Kornilov Affair* (London: Longman, 1980), viii.

situation which split his party, the Kadets, and confronted the emigration with a range of contentious issues. Miliukov's views "represented a startling switch from his position of 1917–1918."[13] He abandoned his support for the monarchy and for the idea of a united Russian Empire. He argued that instead of armed intervention from abroad, émigrés should try to encourage the growth of an anti-Bolshevik popular movement within Russia. This should include a program which would appeal to the people. He stressed the need for the following: republican government; peasant ownership of land; a genuinely federal structure for the Russian state; and an end to arbitrary government and rule from above.

Miliukov's opinion as to why the Bolsheviks had succeeded and the Whites failed offended many of his fellow émigrés. Furthermore, his criticism of the White movement was particularly keenly felt. The idea of new tactics, however, drew people's attention to the need to consider practical measures that might influence the situation within their homeland. The idea, nursed by so much of the military, that a successful campaign would win over the Russian population, was called into question. It should be noted, however, that although the idea of a military campaign to liberate Russia was seen increasingly as unrealistic, the Soviet authorities did not seem to have ruled out this possibility. The 1930 kidnapping of General Kutepov—the head of the veteran association, ROVS, by the OGPU—and also, perhaps, the kidnapping of General Miller in 1937 were partly dictated by the Soviet belief that the émigré Russian military was still a threat. The 1920s saw a great deal of discussion amongst émigré groups as to the best way to influence the Russian population and put pressure on the Soviet government. This was linked with the hope that the USSR might be evolving in ways that would make it easier for them to return home.

Krestianskaia Rossiia is an interesting example of an émigré group which arose after 1917 and wanted to influence the Soviet population in new ways. The members of this party came from the more moderate wing of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Krestianskaia Rossiia was formed in 1921, but although accepting many aspects of a socialist analysis, it did not agree that the only relationship between classes had to be one of conflict. The party considered that the growth of political consciousness among the peasantry had created a sense of unity and purpose, but that the efforts of the peasantry to become a political force did not mean that the interests of the country as a whole should be

13 Melissa K. Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 282.

ignored. Krestianskaia Rossiia also stressed the concern for the welfare of the individual (общезначимое благо человеческой личности), but in order to do so the importance of labor in all spheres of life had to be affirmed and the main areas of human life and culture needed to be democratized.

This group was attempting to counter what it saw as the main weaknesses of Marxism, and most of their ideas had links with both socialist and liberal thinking. The émigré section of Krestianskaia Rossiia continued to send illegal literature to the Soviet Union via contacts in the border areas until collectivization broke these links.[14] Solzhenitsyn suggested that Stalin had considered having a show trial of members of the Trudovaia Krestianskaia Partiia, but decided that this would have highlighted the discrepancy between Soviet policy and the desires of the peasantry.[15]

Although the focus of discussions was Russia, the emigration could not fail to be affected by the situation in which it found itself. Europe in the 1920s was dealing with the crisis produced by the First World War. Liberal democracy was seen to be struggling with the challenges of the political, social, and economic reconstruction of Europe. This was one of the fundamental reasons for the attraction of fascism, which promised firm leadership and national unity. This coincided with the rise of a younger generation in the émigré community—a generation which felt that the bickering of their elders about who had done what in 1917 was not a constructive approach to the current problems in Russia. They also thought that the senior generation was simply repeating the political divisions and political mistakes of the old order. To some extent, they could be blamed for what had happened. Thus, elements of intergenerational conflict entered the discussion.

John Stephan's magisterial study of Russian fascism[16] shows the extent that wishful thinking, combined with bravura and ignorance, produced a Russian fascist party. Nevertheless, the Russian Fascist Party (RFP) had few members and was dependent on the enemies of the USSR, Germany and Japan, for its operations. In the end, those states closed it down.

Possibly the most bizarre of the post-revolutionary political movements, which also reflected some of the ideas that produced Russian fascism, was the

14 Vasilii Butenko, "Partiinaia zhizn'. (Itogi 1930–31 goda)," *Vestnik Krest'ianskoi Rossii* (June–July 1931), 11–15.

15 Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *Arkhipelag GULag, 1918–1956*, vol. 1–2 (Paris: YMCA–Press, 1973), 61–2.

16 John J. Stephan, *The Russian Fascists: Tragedy and Farce in Exile 1925–1945* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978).

Mladorossy or Young Russians, led by Alexander Kazem-Bek (1902–1977). Their slogan was *Tsar' i Sovety* (The Tsar and the Soviets). They professed to support the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, who had been the first member of the imperial family to accept the Provisional Government in 1917 and had marched his men, with red cockades in their hats, through the streets of Petrograd.[17] The Mladorossy argued that only a monarchical government could lead to greater national awareness and achievement.

The Natsional'no-trudovoi Soiuz was the most long-lasting of the émigré groups which emerged in the prewar period. Their early history is still contentious,[18] but the official beginning of the organization was at a conference of various Russian youth groups in 1930. The NTS was attracted to the idea of national unity, as put forward by some forms of fascism. However, their emphasis on religious morality set them apart from fascism, and it might be more accurate to say that they had sympathies for forms of authoritarianism. Once the leadership of the movement encountered Nazism, it was clear that the racist elements of Nazism (particularly its characterization of Slavs as *Untermenschen*) made it impossible for them to seek any form of alliance with the German party.

During the Second World War, the NTS made use of all available opportunities to meet their Soviet compatriots within the occupied territories of the USSR. They also tried to develop the idea of solidarism as a counter to class conflict—but this never developed as a philosophical system. After the Second World War, the NTS was involved in aspects of the Cold War,[19] but, arguably, was more influential as an émigré publisher. Following the fall of Communism, the organization returned to Russia. Although their journal *Posev* is still published, it is largely a vehicle for historical accounts and documents, and does not provide commentary on current events.

Eurasianism is viewed as being one of the most far-reaching attempts to redefine Russia's place within the rest of the world, to cast new light on the revolution, and to provide a new philosophy and synthesis for cultural discussion. It has attracted much scholarly interest,[20] both in its émigré manifestation and

17 George Katkov, *Russia 1917: The February Revolution* (London: Longman, 1967), 399.

18 See discussion in Catherine Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement: Soviet Reality and Émigré Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 183–193.

19 For more, see Benjamin Tromly, "The Making of a Myth," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, no. 1 (2016), 80–111.

20 See Marlène Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*, trans. M. Gabowitsch (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); and Mark Bassin, Sergei Glebov, and Marlène Laruelle (eds), *Between Europe and Asia: The Origin, Theories and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).

in the way in which some of its ideas have been interpreted in contemporary Russia. Petr Savitskii and Nikolai Trubetskoy began to consider and develop some of their ideas before 1917, but the birth of Eurasianism came with the publication of a volume of essays *Iskhod k Vostoku* in 1921. Although the ideas have links to previous Russian social and political thought, the aim was to redefine Russia's position in the world as a part of Eurasia. Such a definition involved the discussion of many subjects which had contributed to the creation of Russian culture, including history, geography, economics, linguistics, and ethnography. But it also included the experience of the revolution and civil war. As Savitskii argues, "The Russian Revolution is not an episode of European history only."[21] The Eurasianists posited that the Bolsheviks could be seen as the most extreme example of Western culture. The revolution was not so much an example of class struggle as a rising up of the Russian masses against the domination of a Europeanized elite which had introduced a culture incomprehensible to the people.

This meant that Russia had to define herself correctly. The search for a deeper understanding of Russian culture was a large part of the program, and attracted scholars such as N. P. Toll and G. V. Vernadsky at various points. Another strand of the movement was more political, and resulted from the fact that the movement developed among émigrés. Sergey Glebov argues that it was

> the product of the imperial situation . . . it is not a history of Russian nationalism or modernism, of geopolitics or structuralism, but all of these contexts that came to shape the movement in various, often contradictory ways.[22]

The support for an ideocratic state was controversial and led to splits within the movement, particularly after 1928. This developed into the third part of the program. The revolution had a positive side and brought about a deeper search for truth and meaning. The intelligentsia had to see the error of their ways and repent. This idea led to a religious worldview, as exemplified in Russian Orthodoxy. The demand to examine all areas of Russian culture was at variance with the unquestioning acceptance of Russian Orthodoxy, and the Eurasianists never managed to find a way to reconcile the different strands of thought within the movement.

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21 Petr Savitskii, "Povorot k vostoku," *Iskhod k Vostoku* 2 (1921), 2.

22 Sergey Glebov, *From Empire to Eurasia: Politics, Scholarship and Ideology in Russian Eurasianism (1920s–1930s)* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2017), 13.

Savitskii was always anxious to keep in contact with his Soviet compatriots. In 1927, he became involved in the Trest operation,[23] and entered Russia illegally. He returned to Prague afterwards, and seems to have thought that he had outwitted the OGPU. He was not arrested, but it is more than likely that the authorities knew about his journey. As stated above, he thought that through his arrest and imprisonment in 1945 he had encountered the real Russia. He wrote of his exile in 1955:

> And I travelled on foot from village to village. . . . I spent many nights in the huts of Russians and Mordovians. And many times feasted with them on their "altars." I observed things which it is unlikely that anyone from among the Muscovites will have seen.[24]

The Smena vekh ("Change of Landmarks") group was the earliest attempt to come to terms with the revolution, rather than simply to oppose it. They came into being after the publication of a volume of essays that was edited by N. Ustrialov in 1921 in Prague. They argued that the White movement was historically mistaken and that the Bolsheviks were the natural instruments of the national mission. The Smenovekhovtsy were seen as apologists for Bolshevism, and frightened the majority of émigrés. They were accused of being Soviet stooges, although Hilde Hardeman in her excellent analysis argues that this was not the case. They proposed that an acceptance of the revolution was necessary in order to prevent further struggle and destruction. Although they still had reservations about the Bolsheviks, they also saw "the October revolution as an expression of the Russian people's will and hence as a phenomenon which could not be disavowed."[25]

In 1922, Lenin expelled many leading Russian philosophers, thinkers, and writers.[26] For the most part, they did not wish to leave Russia; but their

23 Trest was a counter–intelligence operation in the USSR in the 1920s. Various émigrés became involved in it, believing that they could visit their homeland and aid opposition to the USSR, when most of them were in fact being monitored and provided with disinformation by the Soviet security services.

24 Letter of P. N. Savitskii to N. E. Andreyev 28/29 September, 1957 in N. E. Andreyev's archive. Translation mine.

25 Hilde Hardeman, *Coming to Terms with the Soviet Regime: The "Changing Signposts" Movement among the Russian Émigrés in the Early 1920s* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 187.

26 See Lesley Chamberlain, *The Philosophy Steamer: Lenin and the Exile of the Intelligentsia* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

views were inimical to the Bolsheviks, and Lenin had no use for a group who saw themselves as the conscience of society. He was afraid that executing them would produce too much international opprobrium,[27] but he believed that exile would deprive them of their readership and diminish the impact of their ideas. Philosophers and theologians—such as Nikolai Berdiaev, Sergei Bulgakov, and others—attracted an extensive readership when their works became available in Russia once again. The focus of their ideas was the question of God and Man's relationship with the eternal, rather than a discussion of the impact of 1917. But it should be noted that a number of these thinkers contributed to *Vekhi* and continued the debate on these issues in *Iz glubiny*.[28]

1917 meant that an influential part of the intelligentsia had to leave Russia. It forced them to rethink many of their ideas and assumptions. They remained very focused on Russia, but the fundamental polarity was whether it should strive to overthrow the Bolshevik regime or to accept it. These arguments formed the basis of much émigré culture and were reflected in their publications. Many of the émigré political and military organizations proved to be ephemeral, and in the long term did not justify the attention which the Soviet security forces paid them. But it can be seen that there is a fundamental continuity between the pre-revolutionary debates and those which occurred among émigrés. In the course of the debates, they tried to clarify how they should relate to the USSR and what they valued in Russian culture.[29] The research of such historians as Semion Lyandres[30] has shown that there are still gaps in our understanding of 1917. To misquote Zhou Enlai, it is still too early to judge the impact of the Revolution, but it was a central concern of those who had to leave Russia after 1917.

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27 Stuart Finkel, *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 166.

28 *Iz glubiny: Sbornik statei o russkoi revoliutsii* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1967 [1918]).

29 N. A. Omel'chenko, *V poiskakh Rossii: Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia mysl' russkogo zarubezh'ia o revoliutsii* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkogo khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 1996).

30 Semion Lyandres, *The Fall of Tsarism: Untold Stories of the February 1917 Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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Russian Revolutions Exhibited: Behind the Scenes

Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia *(The British Library)*

INTRODUCTION

2017—the centenary year of two Russian revolutions—was marked in Europe, North America, and Russia by a number of academic conferences, publications, talks, public events, and performances. The "silences and noises" made in public discourse and academia in Russia and in the West during this commemorative season have been summarized by Matthew Rendle and Aaron B. Retish.[1] Public events, programs and exhibitions have been widely reviewed in periodicals, media, social media, and blogs.[2] Yet art, museum, and

1 Matthew Rendle & Aaron B. Retish, "Silences and noises: commemorating 1917," *Revolutionary Russia* 30, no 2 (2018): 151–157.

2 Here is a short list of reviews that represent a wide range of source types (from brief adverts to extensive articles) and opinions, many of them commenting on the exhibition *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myth* at the British Library: Patrick Burgoyne, "Russian Revolution: Design in a world turned upside down," *Creative Review*, May 3, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.creativereview.co.uk/russian-revolution-design-world-turned-upside/; Leslie Jones, "Alas, poor Russia," *The Quarterly Review*, posted on May 2, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.quarterly-review.org/alas-poor-russia/; "Hope, Tragedy, Myths—British Library throws the book at the Russian Revolution," *Socialist Worker* 2552 (May 2, 2017), accessed April 26, 2018, https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/44524/Hope%2C+Tragedy%2C+Myths+British+Library+throws+the+book+at+the+Russian+Revolution; Alexander Herman, "Russian Revolution(s) at the British Library," *Institute of Art and Law*, posted April 28, 2017, https://www.ial.uk.com/russian-revolutions-at-the-british-library/; Robert Dex, "British Library puts banned Bolshevik books on show in journey through Russian Revolution," Even*ing Standard*, April 27, 2017, accessed April 6 2018, https://www.standard.co.uk/go/london/arts/british-library-puts-banned-bolshevik-books-on-show-in-journey-through-russian-revolution-a3525266.html; "Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths," *Apollo: The International Art Magazine*, accessed April 25, 2018, https://www.apollo-magazine.com/art-diary/russian-revolution-hope-tragedy-myths-british-library/; Miriam Harris, "The British Library's rarely-seen Russian Revolution propaganda posters," *Digital Arts*, April 28, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/news/illustration/british-librarys-rarely-seen-russian-revolution-propaganda-posters/; "Exhibition on Russian Revolution opens at British Library," *Xinhua Net*, April 28, 2017, accessed April 6. 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/28/c_136241605.htm; Laura Gozzim, "Russian Revolution: Hope,

library curators are only now considering putting together reflections of their practices and, by doing so, sharing and analyzing them.

A discussion of the theory of exhibition presentation as a genre,[3] the specific issues of curatorial styles and (the most relevant issues for me) distinct features of exhibitions in libraries should by all means take place on professional forums for information specialists, librarians, and curators. This article, however, aims at a more general public, offering my reflections on taking part in creating the *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths* exhibition at the British Library in my capacity as its lead curator. I will present an account of my experience, to add to the collection of "anecdotal" curatorial stories on "how it was made: from behind the scenes." As the exhibition was a product of extensive collaboration and teamwork, the account presented here is solely based on my personal involvement in the project. I hope that these reflections might be of interest to specialists in Russian studies and Russian history, rather than merely exhibition creators—and, more generally, to exhibition visitors. Sharing curatorial experience and expertise with a wider audience, in my view, might be not only entertaining, but hopefully useful as well. It might be worth mentioning that the British Academy recognizes physical and online exhibitions as one of the primary ways that academic research in the arts and humanities could make

Tragedy, Myths at the British Library," *Etcetera*, May 3, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.hamhigh.co.uk/etcetera/art/russian-revolution-hope-tragedy-myths-1-5000629; Aleksandr Kan, "Britanskaia biblioteka: 'Tragediia i mify russkoi revoliutsii,'" BBC Russian service, May 3, 2017 (video), accessed April 6 2018, https://www.bbc.com/russian/media-39797173; Kristina Moskalenko, "'Russkaia revoliutsiia' v Britanskoi biblioteke: na chto posmotret'," *Zima*, April 29, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, https://zimamagazine.com/2017/04/russkaya-revolyutsiya-v-britanskoj-biblioteke-na-chto-posmotret/; green_fr, "Russian Revolution v British Library," *Livejournal*, March 28, 2018, accessed April 6, 2018, https://green-fr.livejournal.com/736897.html; "Russkaia revoliutsiia v Londone," *Euronews*, April 29, 2017 (video), accessed April 6, 2018, http://ru.euronews.com/2017/04/29/paper-trail-of-a-revolution-british-library-unveils-centenary-exhibit; "Vystavka k stoletiiu russkikh revoliutsii otkrylas' v Britanskoi biblioteke," *RussiaNow.com*, April 29, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, http://russia-now.com/206925/%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BA-%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%8E-%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85-%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8E%D1%86%D0%B8/, etc.

3 This theory is currently in a state of development. See, however, E. Brown and C. Power, *Exhibits in Libraries: A Practical Guide* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2006), and several other helpful accounts, such as A. Dutka, S. Hayes, and J. Parnell, "The Surprise Part of a Librarian's Life: Exhibition Design and Preparation Course," *College and Research Library News* 63 (2002): 19–22; Sean Swanick, Sharon Rankin, and Melinda Reinhart, "Curating Exhibitions in Academic Libraries: Practical Steps," *Practical Academic Librarianship: The International Journal of the SLA Academic Division* 5 (2015): 1–22, and so forth.

an impact on the general public, communities, and the UK economy at large. Scholars are encouraged to present the results of their research in accessible ways, a popular exhibition being one of them.

As a result of a series of consultations in 2005, some large museums, galleries, archives, and libraries in the UK received from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) the status of Independent Research Organizations (alongside higher education institutions). In 2005/6, the AHRC Museum and Galleries Research Program was launched.[4] The number of examples of successful collaboration between academia and public sector institutions in creating research-enriched exhibitions is growing, as has been shown in *The Impact of AHRC Research* and *Annual* reports.[5] To facilitate research for the Russian Revolution exhibition, the British Library also set up two Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs)[6] with the University of Nottingham and Queen Mary University of London, as recorded on the AHRC CDP website.[7] The aim of these projects was to build a small research network that would support curatorial activities around the exhibition, validate ideas and interpretations that would go into the exhibition, benefit from the new research done by CDP students, and provide them with a space for acquiring practical and transferable curatorial skills by actively participating in the exhibition project at every stage. These and similar projects and collaborative programs would, hopefully, instruct a new generation of researchers, who can actively promote an understanding of theories and practices of curating and public engagement.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION EXHIBITION: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTEXTS

The exhibition *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths* was on show at the British Library from April 28 to August 29, 2017,[8] and was visited by over

4 "AHRC, Museums and Galleries," accessed April 7, 2018, https://ahrc.ukri.org/funding/research/museumsandgalleries/.

5 *The Impact of AHRC Research*, April 2015–March 2016 (file), 12–14, accessed April 7, 2018, https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/the-impact-of-ahrc-research/2015-16/; *Arts and Humanities Research Council Annual Report and Accounts*, 2016–17 (file), 4, accessed April 7, 2018, https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/ahrc-annual-report-accounts/arts-and-humanities-research-council-annual-report-accounts-2016-17/.

6 "AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership," accessed April 7, 2018, http://www.ahrc-cdp.org.

7 Katie McElvanney, "Collaborative Doctoral Partnership" (film), accessed April 7, 2018, http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/katie-mcelvanney/.

8 "British Library, What's On," accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.bl.uk/events/russian-revolution-hope-tragedy-myths.

50,000 people. One hundred and eighty-four physical objects complemented by fifteen audio points, film, and video installations, went on display in the gallery that covers ca. 600 square meters of floor space. Over seventy-five percent of the material presented came from British Library holdings and the rest of the exhibits were borrowed from other institutions or individuals locally, nationally, and internationally. As elegantly put by the author of a very complimentary review in a specialized academic journal,

> [t]hroughout its four-month run this definitive exhibition received near universal acclaim with reviewers encouraging the public to come along to the Paccar Gallery in the Library's headquarters on the Euston Road and witness for themselves how the major political events surrounding this seismic revolution had been deftly brought to life.[9]

From the very beginning, we—the four-strong curatorial team in charge (for names, see below)—had the ambition of reexamining our understanding of the Russian Revolution from a modern perspective based on the leading trends in historical research. One of our departure points was what S. A. Smith called "one of the most significant trends in historiography in the new century"—positioning "the 1917 revolutions squarely in a narrative that commences with the outbreak of war in 1914 and ends with the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922."[10] Among other works that developed this narrative,[11] the *Russia's Great War and Revolution* series[12] greatly influenced our vision of the project and helped to shape the chronological framework of the exhibition. Setting the scene with prerevolutionary tsarist Russia, the exhibition took visitors through four further sections that told the story of the First World War, the end of the monarchy, the Bolsheviks' military insurrection, the complex civil war, the first months of the Soviet state, the refugee crisis, and the impact of developments in Russia on the world labor movement and politics in general.

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9 Robert Henderson, "British Library: 'Russian Revolution. Hope, Tragedy, Myths,'" *Revolutionary Russia* 30, no. 2 (2017): 273.

10 S. A. Smith, "The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On," *Kritika* 16, no. 4 (2015): 734–35, accessed April 6, 2018, doi: 10.1353/kri.2015.0065.

11 See, for example: Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003); Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Jonathan D. Smele, *The "Russian" Civil Wars 1916–1926. Ten Years That Shook the World* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015).

12 *Slavica Publishers*, accessed March 22, 2018, https://slavica.indiana.edu/series/Russia_Great_War_Series.

The display concluded with a short epilogue that showed how the revolution was interpreted and presented in Soviet culture: film, literature, and music.

Two themes were identified as very important for the entire narrative and were present in each section: 1) British perspectives on Russia; and 2) personal accounts of a wide range of people in Russia and beyond. Taking into account that a great number of British visitors might not have profound knowledge of the Russian history and the Russian language, the curators decided that these two themes would help visitors better relate to the exhibition narrative. Some material in the English language, and certain references to well and not so well-known facts in the British history, on the one hand, and citations from personal accounts of ordinary people, on the other, indeed drew emotional reactions from viewers. We considered this key for people to understand the lessons of the Russian Revolution.

Relations between Russia and Britain were shown: royal family ties—for example, photographs of the Romanovs with Queen Victoria, as well as Tsar Nicholas II with George V, the pair looking almost like identical twins; documents such as a letter written by the British ambassador in Russia, Sir George Buchanan, in which he suggests that the UK refuse refuge to Nicholas II and his immediate family as it could spark unrest; and stories by British journalists, soldiers, and spies. The most popular exhibits in this section (judging by informal feedback) were the sculptor Clare Sheridan's book *Russian Portraits*, which allowed us to mention her love affair with Lev Kamenev and her conversations with Lenin, while he was sitting for her in 1920, and the memoirs of Paul Dukes—*The Story of "ST 25": Adventure and Romance in the Secret Intelligence Service in Red Russia* (Fig. 1)—which was opened at a page with numerous photographs of him in disguise. After a public curatorial talk about the exhibition, a gentleman from the audience told me how touched and pleased he was to see this book on display, as Paul Dukes was his parents' acquaintance and visited their home when the gentleman was a small boy.

Another exhibit that led to the most interesting conversation with a visitor was a fur hat on loan from London's Imperial War Museum, which was supplied to British troops in the north of Russia on the advice of polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, who also served with the British expeditionary force in 1919. The object reminded one of the visitors of a story of his grandfather who enlisted to earn money for his wedding and impress the parents of his darling (who was a couple of stairs higher on a social ladder than he was). The Russian campaign was successful for this young man, and the young girl he loved eventually became my interlocutor's grandmother. The "British" theme was essential in

FIGURE 1: Paul Dukes, *The Story of "ST 25": Adventure and Romance in the Secret Intelligence Service in Red Russia* (London: Casell & Co, 1938), © British Library, shelfmark 010290.ff.43)

order to bring in more English-language material, so that visitors could better connect with it, and to give an impression that the Russian Revolution happened much closer to home than British people usually think.

The other recurrent theme was a focus on personal accounts of the people who lived through the revolution. The diary of Meriel Buchanan, Sir George Buchanan's daughter, on loan from the Special Collections of the University of Nottingham Library, was almost the ideal object to display a personal British take on the Russian Revolution.

A combination of chronological and thematic approaches to the narrative put the exhibition in a framework of a fairly traditional history exhibition, which was immediately recognized and noted by reviewers. Although it was easy and tempting to draw parallels with the current political situation, many of which were obvious, this was indeed the area where the curators left room for the audience to treat the exhibition "like a piece of fiction . . . weaving an intricate story in which each reader will create their own analogies and interpretations."[13] This move was defined as "wise" by one reviewer, who nevertheless confessed that it was "hard to view the propaganda posters, film footage, news

13 Swanick, Rankin, and Reinhart, "Curating Exhibitions," 9.

sheets, and photographs without filtering the story of the Russian Revolution through our own current experience of a changing political landscape."[14] It was also truly rewarding to read in informal reviews that the exhibition managed to remind attentive viewers that "history in the making [was] fluid" and that "the outcome [was] unknown to the participants and the feeling of 'what's going to happen next' [came] through strongly."[15]

In the centenary year, the exhibition at the British Library had to compete for visitors, critics' stars, and specialists' approval with such visually powerful art shows as the Royal Academy's *Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932*,[16] on the one hand, and TV documentaries and popular histories of the revolution compiled by leading academics and writers,[17] on the other. In experts' reviews, public responses and professional discussions, the British Library's exhibition was compared to, and put in context with, other art and history shows in Britain and abroad. To name but a few, these were the Tate Modern's *Red Star Over Russia: A Revolution in Visual Culture, 1905-1955*;[18] *Revolutsiia! Demonstratsiia! Soviet Art Put to the Test* at the Chicago Art Institute;[19] *A Revolutionary Impulse: The Rise of the Russian Avant-Garde* at the New York MoMA;[20] *Russian Revolution: A Contested Legacy* at the International Print Centre, New York;[21] *Royal Fabergé* and *Radical Russia*

14 Jason Hewitt, "Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths" (review), *Historia: Magazine of the Historical Writers' Association*, May 2, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.historiamag.com/hope-tragedy-myths/.

15 Andystan, "Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths" [review], Tripadvisor, July 26, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d187728-r505909650-British_Library-London_England.html#.

16 "Royal Academy, Revolution: Russian Art 1917–1932," accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/revolution-russian-art.

17 See, for example: Sheila Fitzpatrick, "What's Left?," review of *October: The Story of the Russian Revolution* by China Miéville, *The Russian Revolution 1905–1921* by Mark D. Steinberg, *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928* by S. A. Smith, *The Russian Revolution: A New History* by Sean McMeekin, and *Historically Inevitable? Turning Points of the Russian Revolution* by Tony Brenton, *London Review of Books* 39 (March 30, 2017): 13–15, accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n07/sheila-fitzpatrick/whats-left; or her own recently published book: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

18 "Tate, *Red Star over Russia: A Revolution in Visual Culture, 1905–1955*," accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/red-star-over-russia.

19 "Art Institute Chicago, *Revoliutsiia! Demonstratsiia! Soviet Art Put to the Test*," accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.artic.edu/about/press/press-release/revolutsiia-demonstratsiia-soviet-art-put-test.

20 "MoMA, *A Revolutionary Impulse: The Rise of the Russian Avant-Garde*," accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1668.

21 "IPCNY, *Russian Revolution: A Contested Legacy*," accessed April 8, 2018, https://www.ipcny.org/past-exhibitions/2017/12/18/russian-revolution-a-contested-legacy.

that constituted the Russian Season at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich;[22] *The Russian Revolution 1917–1922* at the State Museum of Political History of Russia;[23] *1917: Romanovs & Revolution. The End of Monarchy* at the Hermitage-Amsterdam Centre;[24] *1917: Revolution. Russia and Europe*, a joint project of the Deutsches Historisches Museum and the Swiss National Museum;[25] *Et 1917 devient révolution* at the Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC);[26] *Ecos de los soviets* at the Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno de la República Argentina (the National Library of Argentina);[27] and *The Crown Under the Hammer: Russia, Romanovs, Revolution*, co-organized by the Hoover Institution Library & Archives and the Cantor Arts Center.[28]

It is also worth mentioning that the show at the British Library shared many common features (and probably similar issues, too) with the two other successful university library exhibitions on a smaller scale—*Caught in the Russian Revolution: The British Community in Petrograd, 1917-1918* (which was on display at the Brotherton Gallery, University of Leeds)[29] and *Red Press: Radical Print Culture from St. Petersburg to Chicago*, presented by the University

22 "Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Past Exhibitions, The Russia Season," accessed April 6, 2018, https://scva.ac.uk/art-and-artists/exhibitions/the-russia-season; "Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Past Exhibitions, The Russia Season, *Radical Russia*", accessed April 6, 2018, https://scva.ac.uk/art-and-artists/exhibitions/the-russia-season-radical-russia.

23 "The State Museum of Political History of Russia, *The Russian Revolution 1917–1922*," accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.polithistory.ru/en/visit_us/view.php?id=831.

24 "The State Hermitage Museum, The Hermitage News," accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/news/news-item/!ut/p/z1/pZJNb4MwDIb_ynroEdkkEOgx6hgVXYe6jhVyQRmNKFNJPxbBfv7STtMO-6jW5RA5i-q3Hfv2CgByEll1TS9NstdzYdyFYmXLOXDrGJJ4iQx4jSfmM0Dhi8AgCxEbXUCh9DH-dVs4KC-khGIykdxqhyPLWqnFBWviMZCZ8IIlWojtmVNjuzhmKtDm1jZK2ulB5itd-VGaTNErfqXj5ugG7zHpeuXbgDLc60J-40_HI62XpxLKSwi-ERg5kXIw8WdG9x6Lk4JLLtG9ZDp7aG1Yi3-KMDkCyG-ia_tEKP5OPRSgpn_HWE5npXzLLq3tZcJfwYa_HOs5CTrL4uxpmqe93vBrQGOq341kF_igF3bhrR1cnSKpOv7h0lbziLqb2o-GLwBpr_uyQ!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?lng=en.

25 "Deutsches Historisches Museum, Exhibitions, *1917. Revolution*," accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.dhm.de/en/ausstellungen/1917-revolution.html.

26 "Mission Centenaire 14–18, Exposition 'Et 1917 devient révolution,'" accessed May 8, 2018, http://centenaire.org/fr/autour-de-la-grande-guerre/expositions/exposition-et-1917-devient-revolution.

27 "Agenda, *Ecos de los soviets*," accessed May 15, 2018, https://www.bn.gov.ar/agenda-cultural/ecos-de-los-soviets.

28 Stanford University, Cantor Arts Center, accessed April 6, 2018, https://museum.stanford.edu/exhibitions/crown-under-hammer-russia-romanovs-revolution.

29 "University of Leeds, Events, *Caught in the Russian Revolution: British Community in Petrograd*," accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.leeds.ac.uk/events/event/4020/caught_in_the_russian_revolution_the_british_community_in_petrograd_1917–1918.

of Chicago Library.[30] All these exhibitions were united by the broad theme of the Russian Revolution, but differed in scope, core material, message, curatorial styles, and many other aspects, including budgets, level of support from hosting organizations, and commercial goals and potentials.

On the other hand, the *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths* should be considered in the context of other British Library exhibitions presented in the same space—the Paccar Gallery. The British Library exhibition program is comprised of several temporary displays, including two major exhibitions each year. From 2012, when the British Library introduced exhibition entrance fees in the Paccar Gallery, the program included shows on such diverse topics as *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination* (November 11, 2011–March 13, 2012); *Writing Britain: Wastelands to Wonderlands* (May 11–September 25, 2012); *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire* (November 9, 2012–April 2, 2013); *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion* (May 17–September 17, 2013); *Georgians Revealed: Life, Style and the Making of Modern Britain* (November 8, 2013–March 11, 2014); *Comics Unmasked: Art and Anarchy in the UK* (May 2–August 19, 2014); *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination* (October 3, 2014–January 20, 2015); *Magna Carta: Law, Liberty, Legacy* (March 13–September 1, 2015); *West Africa: Word, Symbol, Song* (October 16, 2015–February 16, 2016), *Shakespeare in Ten Acts* (April 15–September 6, 2016); and *Maps and the 20th Century: Drawing the Line* (November 4, 2016–March 1, 2017).

Of those on this list, the Russian Revolution exhibition is one of only three exhibitions—the other two being *Mughal India* and *West Africa*—that was based primarily on British Library collections of foreign material. According to visitor numbers and income generated, it did well and is placed in the same cluster with *Terror and Wonder*, *Comics Unmasked*, and *Propaganda* and *Maps*, although it is definitely not in the league of commercial superstars like *Magna Carta* and *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* (October 20, 2017–February 28, 2018) that went on show straight after the Russian Revolution exhibition.

Ninety-five percent of identified visitors[31] to the Russian Revolution exhibition came from the United Kingdom. People aged sixty-five and over formed the largest demographic group, followed by people between fifty-five

30 "The University of Chicago Library, News, *Red Press: Radical Print Culture from St. Petersburg to Chicago*," posted on August 28, 2017, accessed April 6, 2018, http://news.lib.uchicago.edu/blog/2017/08/28/red-press-radical-print-culture-from-st-petersburg-to-chicago/.

31 The report was done by the British Library marketing team based on a representative group of ca. 1,500 people or three percent of all visitors.

and sixty-four, and then young people in their mid-twenties and thirties. Among identified visitors fifty-two percent were women. When asked about the emotions they felt during their exhibition visit, many visitors named "inspiration," "surprise," "excitement," "empowerment," and so forth; but the most popular by far was "sadness." The exhibition was visited by a large number of academics and education professionals. On average, they rated it higher than people without a specialist background, and enjoyed it more than the general culturally curious audience, who, according to the evaluation research, had slightly different expectations of what they came to see (that is, the material proved to be more distressing than enjoyable). Therefore, the exhibition scored slightly lower in terms of the expectation criteria when compared with other similar exhibitions at the British Library. Few than usual numbers of the exhibition visitors (excluding academics and educators) said that the exhibition was "better than expected."

Having looked at this and other data, I would carefully suggest two most plausible primary explanations for the results achieved by the exhibition. Although the Russian Revolution is still perceived as relevant, especially as part of the centenary reexamination of the First World War, the exhibition required from visitors some effort to learn previously unknown facts and process information that shared little with to their own cultural experience. The display did not fully resemble the expected visual feast of Russian avant-garde artworks that are associated with this historic period, and the predominant feeling of sadness did not correlate well with an anticipation of having a good time in the process of a cultural or learning experience. As the lead curator, I take full responsibility for both of these "faults," although I do not regret my conscious decision not to shy away from the complexity of the story and to refrain from giving the exhibition a look that would be dominated by powerful Soviet propaganda. I am very grateful that my co-curator Susan Reed, the two CDP students Katie McElvanney and Mike Carey, and the exhibition team shared my view and provided enormous support that helped me to deal with the difficulties in achieving our goals. Analysis of feedback is useful for understanding the audience and its needs, but I believe that it is equally important to get across the message based on professional expertise. The ultimate goal of modern exhibitions is to engage with the audience without patronizing them by simplification or alienating them by complexity. As we can see from formal evaluation, informal feedback, and professional reviews, the exhibition held slightly more appeal to those with some background knowledge or strong interest in the subject, but also managed to move and surprise visitors of all backgrounds.

VISUALIZING HISTORY

It is generally expected and agreed that an exhibition should be an entertaining way of learning. However, I would also stress that exhibitions transform certain aspect of the visitors' interests, attitudes, or values,[32] which, hopefully, the British Library's Russian Revolution exhibition achieved by appealing to visitors on an emotional, as well as intellectual, level. Long gone are the days when "[t]he visitor was conceptualized as a more or less absorbent sponge encountering the expert knowledge provided by the museum,"[33] and we (the curatorial team) intentionally encouraged visitors to respond to the ambiance of the exhibition gallery, shaped by its 3D and graphic design. The importance of design in a museum (and even more so in a library gallery) is impossible to underestimate. The design throughout the gallery organizes the area, giving the narrative its spatial interpretation by creating logical pauses, helping visitors navigate their way through the display, and highlighting items that deserve special attention. In the design tender brief for the Russian Revolution exhibition we specifically stressed that we would like to avoid the easy route of using the kind of radical and abrupt transitions typical of Constructivist aesthetics (a popular choice among many designers tasked with a visual representation of the Russian Revolution). Instead, we visualized our exhibition as a mood piece that would create a true emotional atmosphere of "hope, tragedy, and myth." The response from the company Hara Clark was very convincing, as they suggested using different sources of visual inspiration for each section: the grandeur of an imperial palace created by plus red curtains; an Ikea chandelier; a minimalistic and symbolic display of two large maps of the Russian Empire; and a first edition of the *Communist Manifesto* (that looked tiny placed between among these other elements. These items gradually gave way to images of the streets of St. Petersburg and Moscow where the struggle for power was happening. The space then opened up into a wide area inspired by a vision of a forest clearing associated with Boris Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago*. Continuity was supported by what we called the "red line," a concept that evolved significantly in the course of the project. Initially, we imagined the red line as a highlighting structure that would accentuate the exhibition's changing focus from the main socio-political narrative to the personal stories of individuals—ordinary people who lived through these extraordinary times (Fig. 2).

32 Barry Lord et al., eds., *Manual of Museum Exhibitions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, c. 2014), 13.

33 S. Macdonald, "Interconnecting: museum visiting and exhibition design," *CoDesign* 3 (2007): 150.

FIGURE 2: An example of the red line. The Photograph of Ministry of Transport officials, 1917 (Loan, Special Collections, Leeds University Library, LRA MS 716) was accompanied by an excerpt from telegram to Tsar Nicholas sent by Chairman of the State Duma Mikhail Rodzianko, March 12 and 13 (February 27 and 28), 1917 and Iurii Lomonosov's diary entry, March 1, 1917.

While researching for the exhibition, we realized that in the last two decades, scholarship on the Russian revolution had engaged more with social theories and produced a number of groundbreaking works on grassroots movements, gender roles, regional variations, non-Russian territories within the Russian Empire, socio-cultural practices, and everyday life.[34] Translating these themes into an exhibition was not an easy task. I initially struggled to present the collection material—primarily print books, newspapers, and ephemera—in such a way that they could be interpreted within the new scholarly frameworks and through recent theoretical lenses. The idea of giving actors in, and witnesses of, the revolution their individual voices by quoting

34 See the following overviews of the current state of research: Smith, "The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On"; and R. Wade, "The Revolution at One Hundred: Issues and Trends in the English-Language Historiography of the Russian Revolution of 1917," *Journal of Modern Russian History and Historiography* 9 (2016): 9–38, accessed April 6, 2018, doi: 10.1163/22102388-00900003.

personal accounts, diaries, and letters was implemented in two parts—visual and audio—both of them becoming an integral design feature of the exhibition. Each exhibition section contained one or two items placed against the red background with an additional label—a short extract that would refer to some personal story, such as a letter from the young Vladimir Ulianov (Lenin) to his mother, recollections of the railway engineer Iurii Lomonosov about stopping Tsar Nicholas's personal train from entering Petrograd (which subsequently led to the tsar's abdication), or reminiscences of an imperial theatres' actress about how the last royal gifts that were presented to her colleague just days before the revolution. Extracts from a list of horrific executions performed by the Cheka (Soviet secret police, the KGB's predecessor), a passage from Isaak Babel"s collection of short stories *Konarmiia* (*The Red Cavalry*), and a poem from a magazine printed by Czech legionnaires in Siberia also belong to the same category of objects.

For practical reasons, all these objects were displayed in stand-alone or perimeter cases, but could not constitute a visual red line on their own. The designer suggested that, visually, the red line would become a light frame structure with transparent fabric of different shades of red, stretched within the frames. It was then decided that these pieces of fabric would bear prints of photographs from the period. Seventy-six photographs and ten quotations were selected from various sources, and printed on fabric and panels. Many of the prints had a dividing line across them as a symbol of fracture and distress. Audio points were placed on the same frame structure to reinforce the significance of the red line. This gave visitors an opportunity to listen to one- or two-minute extracts from personal letters and diaries of ordinary Russian and British people (one notable exception was the famous British author H. G. Wells). Russian texts were translated into English especially for the exhibition and recorded by professional actors.

We did not particularly plan it this way, but when the selection of extracts was finalized, we noticed that almost all of them were accounts by young people. My personal favorite was the diary of a fourteen-year-old boy, who in his diary first described a demonstration mourning Lenin's death which he watched on his way from school, and then noted that back home he had to study German with his school friend Kirill.

To find just eight short extracts, we had to read dozens of books. Fortunately, the online project *Prozhito.org* has made many texts more accessible, and the entire database highly searchable. According to the evaluation report, commissioned by the British Library, only thirty percent of visitors

engaged with the audio, but of those who did, over seventy percent admitted that this significantly increased their understanding of the exhibition.

Powerful and naturally blended into the fabric of the exhibition as they may have been, very few exhibits could be presented purely as objects held in the British Library. Only on three occasions was the text in the label quoted from the item exhibited on the red line. On other occasions, the texts were taken from sources that were not visually appealing and would not be interesting to look at. The available material required significant extra backing (design, translation, changing its physical format, such as an audio recording of written diaries, and so forth) before it could support our argument on the importance of everyday life and ordinary people in the story of the revolution. Despite representing the nature of the British Library as a home for written texts, these exhibits could hardly excite our visitors about our collections and holdings. However, the red line as a design solution created the much needed atmosphere of uneasiness and tension, and contributed significantly to the overall emotional impact of the exhibition narrative on the viewers.

Visualization can be very important, not only as a pure design feature, but also as something that plays a special role in the display of objects in cases. I would argue that the issue of such presentation is more acute for library exhibitions, compared to exhibitions in museums and art galleries. For example, there is often a discrepancy between the importance of content, on the one hand, and the relevant item's poor visual appeal, on the other. Using visually rich items multiple times is also practically difficult and problematic. In the first section of the exhibition, one of the star items was the coronation album of Nicholas II—a beautiful book with was created not only as an encyclopedia of coronation festivities and rituals, but as a valuable material object, a symbolic representation of authority and power of the Russian monarchy.[35] Several prominent Russian artists were tasked with documenting the festivities, and the book contains high-quality reproductions of their work.

For the purpose of the exhibition, the book could be opened on almost any page to show almost any of those illustrations, but I thought that the best

35 See: M. V. Ryzhanok, "Khudozhestvennoe oformlenie koronatsionnogo alboma Nikolaia II 1896 goda," *Izvestiia Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A. I. Gertsena* 175 (2015): 138–151.

use of the it would be to focus on the story of the Khodynka stampede that happened during the festivities. This focus allowed us not only to show the life of the Romanovs, but to introduce the theme of how Nicholas II frequently mishandled critical situations. The picture by Vladimir Makovskii, although tense and emotional, shows the crowd before the tragedy, and therefore requires a great deal of explanation. To let viewers have a little bit more time for appreciating the scale of the tragedy, we needed to keep them in front of the display for slightly longer than it is normally required to glance at the picture of a crowd. Two other objects loaned to us were displayed next to the album to visually expand the story. One of them was a souvenir mug that the people in the picture were waiting to get as a free gift (and for which hundreds lost their lives), and a goblet from an imperial set with Tsar Nicholas's initials. A private collector who helped us to source the mug kept warning me that it was not rare, but for me this was not very relevant, as in this display the object played a very special role. Although the name of the person who had got it (and probably escaped death in the stampede) was lost in history, the juxtaposition of these three items built a powerful visual image and helped visitors expand it into a full visual story (Fig. 3).

FIGURE 3: *Les Solennités du saint couronnement* (St. Petersburg, 1899), © British Library, shelfmark L.R.25.c.20, displayed with a souvenir coronation cup, private loan, and a wineglass engraved with the Cipher of Nicholas II, loan, British Museum, 1994, 0508.1.

ONE-HUNDRED-WORD STORIES

In a times when even official bodies and senior politicians express themselves in 280-character tweets, it is hardly surprising that stories can be told in a hundred words, as we see from a newly published anthology.[36] Exhibition as a genre of presentation that tells a story through exhibition labels is very much in accord with the fast speed of information acquisition and processing today. It is expected that an average visitor will spend between sixty to ninety minutes in an exhibition gallery. However, those with some previous knowledge of the subject, or an interest in it, according to anecdotal evidence, spent between two and three hours there. In line with British Library in-house exhibition guidelines, our curatorial team aimed to write section panels in no more than 150 words, while the labels' word limit was 100. For the purpose of this article, I calculated that in total we offered our visitors about 24,500 words of nonlinear and fragmented text. Good label writing is one of the most discussed questions in the curatorial community and is subject to numerous guidelines and handbooks. I would single out Dany Louise's *Interpretation Matters Handbook*.[37] Leaving the quality of label writing out of the scope of this article, the point to be made here is the tension that any curator feels for the entire duration of the project from scoping to interpretation. This is the tension between the space of the text that curators think they need and the physical space of a gallery and the time which visitors are willing to spend in it. For me, this spatial and temporal tension manifested in a conflict between the accuracy of factual presentation and the necessity of a comprehensive and linear narrative, on the one hand, and the need to simplify, streamline, and break the narrative into pieces, on the other. For example, quoting figures or dates that could be obtained from different sources was a minefield, as options to indicate the discrepancies were minimal or sometimes just impossible to convey in the given space.

The choice of terminology also often required a considerable amount of research. For example, some authors referred to the armed forces of Southern Russia, while some referred to the armed forces of South Russia. The emphasis was made on the general geographical area, rather than "south of the country," and we had to make an informed decision to be prepared to reply to feedback, in case our visitors questioned our preferences for one school of history over another. In one comment, a visitor pointed out that we only mentioned

36 Grant Faulkner et al. (eds.), "Nothing Short of: Selected Tales from 100 Word Story.org," *Outpost19*, 2018.

37 Dany Louise, *Interpretation Matters Handbook* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2015).

Norway as a place of diplomatic service of Alexandra Kollontai, missing out her terms in Mexico and Sweden, to which I had to reply that any more complete information was precluded by the word limit.

CURATOR'S CHOICE

The curatorial team was often asked, for marketing and press purposes, which exhibits were our personal favorites. To be entirely honest, I favored some items of the story for their discovery, selection, and the effort put into explaining their role in the show, such as a photograph of soldiers reading Tsar Nicholas's abdication manifesto in a popular magazine *Solntse Rossii* (*Sun of Russia*) (Figs. 4 and 5). Unfortunately, the British Library does not have the April, 1917, issue of this magazine, and we had to order a digital image of its cover from the National Library of Russia. Both of these images, the reading soldiers and the magazine cover, ended up in the red line frames and were placed so high up that few visitors likely registered them.

Sometimes an item would cost curators several sleepless nights or the shocking realization that they were struggling to say anything sensible and interesting about it. This was precisely the case with an original photograph that we requested on loan from a private collector. The photograph depicted one of the many demonstrations that happened in Petrograd in spring 1917. This was a fascinating object—an image taken by a famous Russian photographer in an original print. However, I was failing miserably in the task of explaining to visitors why they should engage with it, until I found out what exactly

FIGURE 4: *Solntse Rossii* (Sun of Russia) (April 1917).

FIGURE 5: Group of soldiers reading the same issue of *Solntse Rossii*; photograph from *Voina i revoliutsiia* (War and Revolution), Petrograd, 1918, © British Library, shelfmark X.802/4756.

the image depicted and established a personal connection between the artist and the event he captured, making it the focus of the following exhibition label:

> This photograph by Karl Bulla (1855–1929) shows the demonstration of Estonian soldiers on 8 April (26 March) 1917, who saw the fall of the monarchy as an opportunity to get autonomy for Estonia. Several days later the Provisional Government issued a decree that united all Estonian regions into one administrative and autonomous area with its assembly and executive bodies. Bulla's wife was Estonian, so his interest in this was also personal. He soon handed over his business to his sons and left for Estonia for good.

For my own personal and nostalgic reasons, my favorite objects were several banknotes that had been in circulation in 1917–1922 and belonged to my grandmother. On the accompanying label, I wrote:

> One of the Provisional Government's first acts was to order a new issue of banknotes. In spring 1917, five and ten ruble notes were issued, using the design of 1909, with simplified serial numbers. New designs were also created. Printed in America, some notes only reached Russia in 1918. Twenty and forty ruble notes were issued in August 1917. They were of simplified design and level of protection. Although generally known as "kerenky" (the Kerensky money), they were mostly printed by the Soviet government, and remained in circulation until 1922 [Fig. 6]. Growing hyperinflation meant that printed strips of banknotes were no longer cut, so that people exchanged long ribbons of money.

The biggest hit of this exhibition, however, mentioned almost in every review, blog, or interview, was an admission request to become a reader at the British Museum Library from one Jacob Richter—one of Vladimir Ulianov's

FIGURE 6: Banknotes, private loan.

pseudonyms. If there could ever exist a perfect exhibit, this was it: a handwritten document by one of the most famous men in the world, related to the place where it was kept and put on display (the British Library); still slightly veiled in mystery (although solved), as it was not signed in the person's real name; and easily accessible, because it was inscribed in English in a clear cursive (Fig. 7). This was truly the most popular object among visitors, and definitely the one that most of them were surprised to see, and therefore remembered. This object gave viewers an opportunity to reconstruct a curious episode of the private life of Lenin, and remind themselves that this had been happening just in local streets. Stories of individuals and the British theme were successfully combined in the exhibit and this was recognized by the audience.

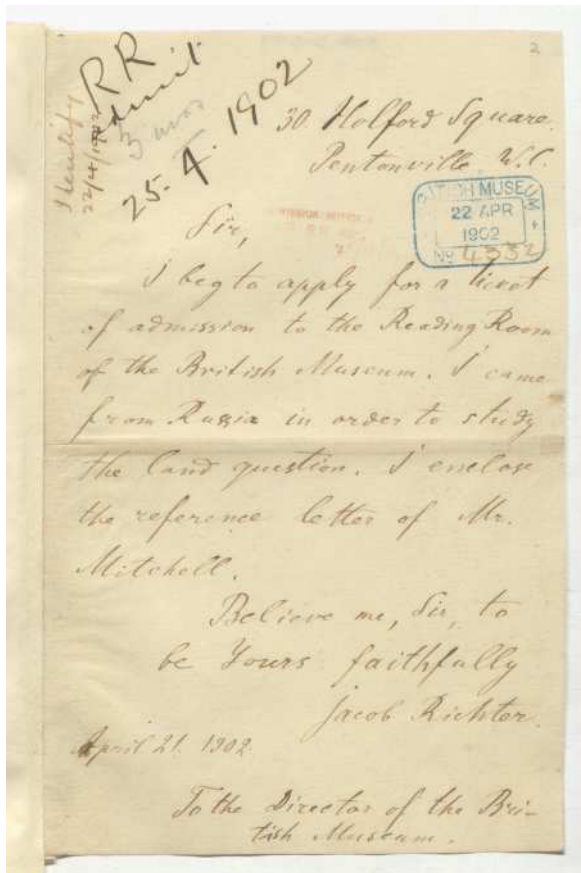

FIGURE 7: Marx-Lenin Papers: correspondence and other papers concerning the use of the Reading Room at the British Museum, © British Library, shelfmark Add.MS.54579.

For nearly all the visitors with a Russian background, the most impressive exhibits were the White propaganda posters (Fig. 8)—a totally hidden and surprising part of the civil war narrative.

Another example of an object that had an immediate appeal for some visitors, was an absolutely unique item that I found in the British Library manuscript collection. It was a hand-lettered wall newspaper, or a placard newspaper, made by Soviet women in 1927, which we displayed in the section "Brave New World." The vogue for such newspapers emerged in Soviet Russia due to a shortage of print facilities and materials. Wall newspapers were meant to disseminate official and local news, and very soon became a powerful propaganda tool. Small communities (or, collectives) of coworkers or co-students formed editorial boards and periodically issued wall newspapers. This one was issued by a local women's committee in Yalta. It contains reports on their joint achievements, amateur poetry, and stories intended to inspire and promote new communist values. The "women-delegates," as they called themselves, described their everyday life in simple words and propaganda clichés. Portraits of the women, who created the wall paper—its editorial board—are painted in watercolors in the middle. Despite their similar look—they are all typical

FIGURE 8: Two posters on display: "Go and save them!" (1918–20?), © British Library, shelfmark 1856.g.8.(17) and "Mountain-dwellers and Muslims, enlist" (1920), © British Library, shelfmark 1856.g.8.(30).

of Soviet propaganda poster, in that they feature identical red scarves tied at the back—the wallpaper was a real message from the past directly from these young women. Those visitors who had personal experience in making wallpapers from growing up in the Soviet Union or in the Eastern Bloc were very much inclined to extend their imagination and see these women as individuals in flesh and blood. If I had had information on the provenance of this item, this could have created an even more powerful personal story, but without it the wallpaper was probably more difficult to contextualize for British visitors, as they did not usually have an experience of wallpaper making and could not fully relate to it. At the same time, the point that wallpapers did not mean to survive, and even less be kept in foreign libraries, was always much appreciated by visitors, as was the humor of the picture of a multitasking girl in the lower corner. From anecdotal evidence, visitors were happy to engage with, and express sympathy towards, a Soviet girl who was cooking, cleaning, and writing an article for a wallpaper at the same time (Fig. 9).

CONCLUSIONS

Quite a few themes, thoughts, and anecdotes have been left out of this account. Looking through the special literature available for, and written by, exhibitions curators in the arts, museums, and libraries, I can see that there is still no standard way of documenting such an ephemeral genre as exhibitions. Reading catalogues and books to accompany exhibitions is not the same as experiencing an exhibition as a visitor. Similarly, from a curatorial perspective, writing catalogues is a very different type of work from creating an exhibition. I hope that this discussion of the importance of documenting exhibitions will result

FIGURE 9: *The Yalta Female Delegate*, hand-lettered wall newspaper, 1927, © British Library, shelfmark Add.MS.57556.

in a more open exchange of curatorial practices and thinking, problems and their solutions, reflections and analyses within the curatorial community and beyond. I would like to believe that the Russian Revolution centenary year was a cultural and historical event that will create a forum for such an exchange.

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The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Kremlin's Policy of Remembrance

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The first time I visited the Lenin Mausoleum was on an autumn day in 1971. Leaves blew over Red Square, and down in the sarcophagus Lenin was lying in dim illumination, immaculately dressed in a dark suit, white shirt, and a red necktie. Despite his attire, he made a dismal impression with his yellow, parchment-like skin. Twenty years later, Soviet society dissolved, without Lenin being offered a decent burial. He is still there, in Red Square, and when I visited the Mausoleum once more in 2016, his suit was still black but the necktie had been swapped for a blue one. Lenin, without doubt, looked better than he had done forty-five years earlier. When I came out again into the daylight, one question presented itself: why is it that Russians continue to honor the memory of the founder of the Soviet state and architect of the October Revolution, when we know that Russia today has a political regime that is based on a repudiation of Communism? Why is Lenin still lying in state, guarded by some of Russia's finest soldiers?

This is the question that will be addressed here: what kind of perception of history, or rather remembrance policy, underlies the Kremlin leadership's management of Lenin's embalmed body and the entire history of the Russian Revolution? In a recent article S. A. Smith, a leading British specialist in Russian and Chinese history, states that "[o]ur ability to understand—certainly to empathize with—the aspirations of 1917 has diminished."[1] Less research is being done on the Russian Revolution, according to Smith, owing to the advance of neoliberalism and the marginalization of the Left in Western countries. Neither the so-called color revolutions in the Ukraine, in Georgia, and in Kyrgyzstan, nor the Arab Spring have fulfilled the expectations that they raised in the beginning. With few exceptions, they have

1 S. A. Smith, "The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On," *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History*, 16 (2015): 733.

become examples of how difficult it is to achieve political progress through violent means.[2] We should add that the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space have created fear of a new revolution in Russia, and this undoubtedly forms part of the backdrop for the Putin administration's remembrance policy with regard to the revolution.

Since Stalin's time (without making invidious comparisons), no Russian leader has been more preoccupied with the past than Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin. In the 1930s, there was no open debate on Russia's history and, in particular, on the history of the Russian Revolution. To take a false step in this field was no joking matter, and historians lived in fear and trepidation. Stalin's intervention in the historical field was a kind of remembrance policy, even if this concept had not yet been formulated. Remembrance history comprises not only the writing of history, but "the whole sphere of public strategies with regard to the past, the entirety of different practices and norms, connected with the regulation of the collective remembrance."[3] Hereto belong measures for erecting memorials, producing historical exhibitions in museums, marking by celebration of particularly significant events in the past, and directing attention to some topics in the past while being silent about others. Remembrance policy can be exerted not only by the state, but also by other agents, while the concept "history policy," as used by A. I. Miller, presupposes "the use of state administrative and financial resources in the sphere of history and policy of remembrance in the interests of the ruling elite."[4]

Even if the Kremlin leadership today has a guiding hand when it comes to the political use of history in Russia, it can be said without irony that, compared with Stalin, Putin handles historians with kid gloves. By and large, he leaves the historical debate in Russia open. It is true, however, that the Kremlin interferes in the financing and organization of historical research, the writing of textbooks, erection of monuments, media reach, etc. In this way, it makes sure that the official discourse on national history

2 Smith, "The Historiography of the Russian Revolution," 733.

3 Remembrance history as defined by D. V. Efremenko at a seminar organized by the Institute of Scientific Information of Social Sciences (INION), Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, on October 12, 2017, under the heading "Stoletnii iubilei revoliutsii 1917 goda i rossiiskaia politika pamiati: Kommemoratsii stoletiia revoliutsii v Rossii: ot pamiati k politikam pamiati," November 7, 2017, accessed May 26, 2018, http://gefter.ru/archive/23171.

4 A. I. Miller, "Istoricheskaia politika v Vostochnoi Evrope nachala XXI veka," in *Istoricheskaia politika v XXI veke*, ed. A. Miller and M. Lipman (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 19.

gets a lot of attention, and there is reason to believe that this pressure from above will increasingly impact professional historians' interpretations in the years to come.[5]

In spite of fundamental disparities, we still find some common features in Stalin's and Putin's way of arguing: in the 1930s Stalin called the historian Mikhail Nikolaevich Pokrovskii (1868–1932) and his so-called school to account for their way of writing history. Pokrovskii was the leader of the first Marxist generation of Soviet historians that had dominated the field in the 1920s. One of their main concerns was to justify the October Revolution, and for that reason they painted Russia's history before 1917 in bleak colors, seeing continuity between a dark past and a bright future. The party leadership was not satisfied with Pokrovskii's disciples, because they reduced Russian history to a series of socioeconomic formations, with no place for individual destinies—and without national glory.[6] During the phase of intensive socialist construction in the 1930s, a cultural readjustment to prerevolutionary national values took place in the Soviet Union.[7] Soviet youth should be given reasons for being proud of their own country's history; it was no longer appropriate to represent the Russian tsars as little more than bloody oppressors. Some of them were great commanders who had defended Russia against foreign intruders, consolidated the Russian state, and made it a great power.

The core of Putin's history policy is, likewise, to strengthen Russian national values. As he told the Russian Federal Assembly in 2012, "Precisely in civic responsibility, in patriotism I see the consolidating basis of our policy."[8] When in the beginning of the 2000s he started to take interest in history in earnest, Putin pointed to the fact that in the 1990s, the beginning of the post-Soviet period, Russian historians "had underlined the negative, because the task was to

5 See B. I. Kolonitskii, "On Studying the 1917 Revolution: Autobiographical Confessions and Historiographical Predictions," *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History* 16 (2015): 751–768.

6 See Konstantin F. Shteppa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 102–108; George M. Enteen, *The Soviet Scholar–bureaucrat: M. N. Pokrovskii and the Society of Marxist Historians* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 193–199.

7 See Nicholas Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: D. P. Dutton, 1946).

8 "Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniiu," February 12, 2012, accessed May 26, 2018, http://www.kremlin.ru/news/17118 and http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/15781.

destroy the old system," that is, the Soviet system. Now, however, one faced not a destructive but "a constructive task"—to build the new Russia.[9]

Putin wanted to root his new regime in history and the national community after the troubles and degradations of the 1990s, and at the same time make sure that no groups ended up outside this community. Putin was engaged in creating a "United Russia" (*Edinaia Rossiia*), which also became the name of his political party. However, unlike Stalin, who intervened in the historical field on behalf of the victors in the Russian Revolution and Russian Civil War, Putin is searching for a conciliatory narrative of the kind which, according to Aleida Assmann, rightly should be offered to both victors and losers, allowing them "to include one's conflicting views on the events into a common context on a higher level."[10]

Among professional historians in post-Soviet Russia the view of the revolution has changed much more than in the West, and many historians of the Soviet school who used their younger days to study and endorse the October Revolution have now distanced themselves from it. During the Soviet period, research on the Russian Revolution was a highly prioritized, but at the same time strictly regulated, field that affected the very legitimacy of the Soviet order. The Great October Socialist Revolution was the foundation myth of the Soviet state, and it became the start of Russia's triumphant motion from capitalism towards socialism, an heroic event that all of a sudden placed one of Europe's most backward countries at the very head of social progress worldwide.[11]

It is not difficult to understand that after the breakdown of the Soviet Union the new, post-Soviet leadership in Russia needed a reinterpretation of the Russian Revolution and a new scheme that would explain the connection between the past and the present of the country after the rejection of historical materialism. Eltsin did not get very far in creating a new general reinterpretation or "metanarrative" of Russian history. In the 1990s, criticism of the Soviet order was the main instrument in legitimizing the ongoing reforms, and Eltsin's

9 N. Sokolov, "Vek surka, ili Kratkaia istoriia kolovrashcheniia rossiiskikh uchebnikov istorii," *Polit.ru*, October 15, 2008, accessed October 18, 2016, www.polit.ru/analytics/2008/10/15/history.html.

10 Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (München: Beck, 2006), 71.

11 Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Celebrating (or Not) the Russian Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52 (2017), 817.

regime very quickly started to identify itself with the values that had earlier, during the Cold War, been ascribed to the capitalist West.[12]

It was more difficult for Russia than for the other post-Soviet states to stake a lot on national values, due to the multinational nature of the Russian Federation. Neither could Eltsin, just like that, choose the imperial or great power paradigm, since he himself had worked so determinedly for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the new post-Soviet Russian identity had to be built mainly on the contrast with the totalitarian past and the new "democratic," Western values.[13] The emphasis was clearly on the breach, rather than the continuity, with earlier epochs in Russian history. A change was discernible, however, from the second half of the 1990s, after the 1996 elections, which became a success for the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its leader, G. A. Ziuganov. Instead of a fundamental dissociation from the Soviet heritage, came a new emphasis on *reconciliation* in Eltsin's history policy, and November 7, the Revolution Day, was renamed "The Day for Reconciliation and Accord."[14]

Another visible effect of this was the conspicuous official reburial of the mortal remains of the last tsar family and his family. However, Eltsin and his acolytes were presumably still under the spell of the Soviet narrative of pre-revolutionary Russia, perceiving the authoritarian ancien régime as a contrast to "democratic" Russia. It was essential to uphold this divergence in order to emphasize the enormity of ongoing reforms.[15] Anyhow, Eltsin lacked a plausible narrative that in a positive way could connect the present with the imperial period of Russian history.

Ever since he took over as president of the Russian Federation in 2000, Putin has been even more dedicated to reconciliation with the Soviet past. At first, he was influenced by what Olga Malinova calls the "popular-patriotic opposition," in particular the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its interpretation of Russia's history, which, unsurprisingly, is more open to the positive values in the Soviet epoch. At the beginning of his first presidential term, Putin characteristically persuaded the State Duma to vote for the retention of several Soviet state symbols, among them the red flag and Soviet star for the Russian armed forces, as well as the old Soviet anthem, albeit with a new

12 See R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Yeltsin Era* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997).

13 See Olga Iu. Malinova, *Aktual´noe proshloe: Simvolicheskaia politika vlastvuiushchei elity i dilemmy rossiiskoi identichnosti* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2015), 175–178.

14 Malinova, *Aktual´noe proshloe*, 179–180.

15 Olga Iu. Malinova, "Neudobnyi iubilei: itogi pereosmysleniia 'Mifa osnovaniia' SSSR v ofitsial'nom istoricheskom narrative RF," *Political Science* (RU) 3 (2017): 22–24.

text.[16] And since then Putin has stuck to this conciliatory strategy. His message to the Federation Council in 2016 was that

> the lessons of history we need first and foremost in order to strengthen the societal, civic agreement that we have succeeded in obtaining. … It is inadmissible to drag schisms, malice, offences and bitterness of the past into our present [social] life, in one's own political and other interests to speculate in tragedies, which touched upon practically every family in Russia, regardless of on which side of the barricades our ancestors ended up. Let us always remember: we are a united people, we are one people, and Russia is one and the same for us [*Rossiia u nas odna*].[17]

Thus the Kremlin leadership is still careful not to alienate those Russians who are nostalgic about the Soviet period and its lost stability, especially elderly people. And they are still numerous. This was possibly the main reason why Putin and his collaborators were deliberately ambiguous in their statements in connection with the centenary of the revolution in 2017. For the commemoration of 1917 was not only about the revolution, something that happened a hundred years ago. It was about a whole epoch in Russian history, which was introduced by the revolution. So, according to Russian Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinskii, one should avoid dividing people into the just and the unjust, into Reds and Whites, and instead realize that both groups who fought in the revolution and civil war, were guided by patriotic feelings and a wish to defend Russia. They simply understood the task differently.[18] This ambiguity on the part of the Kremlin leadership is the reason why Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state, is still on display on Red Square. Putin does not want to have him removed before an overwhelming majority of the Russian population is in favor of expelling him from the Mausoleum.[19] That would upset the older generation, since it would imply that millions of Soviet citizens had nourished

16 See Kristian Lundby Gjerde, "The Use of History in Russia 2000–2011: The Kremlin and the Search for Consensus," *East European Politics* 31, no. 2 (2015): 152.

17 "Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniiu," December 1, 2016, accessed March 25, 2018, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379.

18 "Navstrechu 100-letiiu Revoliutsii: Zveno v istoricheskoi preemstvennosti i platforma primireniia," May 20, 2015, accessed May 26, 2018, http://www.odnako.org/blogs/navstrechu-100-letiyu-revolyucii-zveno-v-istoricheskoy-preemstvennosti-epoha-gigantskih-dostizheniy-i-platforma/. See also Fitzpatrick, "Celebrating (or Not) the Russian Revolution," 827.

19 See the newspaper *Argumenty i fakty*, May 7, 2009.

false ideals during the seventy-four years of Soviet power. To reach this end, the removal of Lenin, we will probably have to wait until the generations that learned to look up to him are gone. But as long as Lenin is on Red Square, says the Russian historian Edvard Radzinskii, "the Revolution continues."[20]

Post-Soviet Russia needs not only reconciliation. Another main concern is to give the country a firmer historical identity, and this goal seems to be incompatible with reconciling the Reds and the Whites with each other. Putin and his closest staff members in the field of history, such as Sergei Naryshkin – the present head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service and chairman of the Russian Historical Society—and Minister of Culture Medinskii, agree that the only thing that can give Russian history a firm coherence after Marxism-Leninism is Russia's great power tradition, which ascribes to the Russian state a unique and beneficial role in forging Russian society through the ages. All this seems to be in accordance with well-known postulates of the prerevolutionary Russian state historical school.[21]

Through their textbook projects and erection of monuments and memorials, like the huge statue of Saint Vladimir just outside the Kremlin, the statue of Tsar Alexander III in Crimea, the memorial devoted to Russian soldiers who were killed on the battlefield during the Great War and so on, the Kremlin leadership has been preoccupied with constructing an "infrastructure of remembrance" of key events and heroes, a symbolic axis that links post-Soviet Russia firmly with both the Soviet and the prerevolutionary tsarist past. This axis is Russia's great power status, irrespective of the regime, and a key concept in this connection is *preemstvennost'* (continuity),[22] which is projected on the whole "millennial history" of Russia.

A major problem for this new metanarrative of Russian history is how to make the Russian Revolution fit into the scheme. One crucial issue in this connection is the correlation between the revolution of 1917 and the First

20 Elena Novoselova, "Poka Lenin na Krasnoi ploshchadi, revoliutsiia prodolzhaetsia," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, November 17, 2015, accessed January 6, 2017, https://rg.ru/2015/11/18/radzinskiy.html.

21 These postulates are neatly summarized in Pavel N. Miliukov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi kultury*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M. A. Aleksandrova, 1904). Miliukov, one of Russia's foremost historians, believed that the state paradigm was the key to understanding Russia's past. As a liberal politician and leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party, however, he went in for changing Russia's course in the direction of liberal democracy and the parliamentary system. To obtain this, it was crucial to get away from the "millennial" hypertrophic state.

22 See Malinova, *Aktual´noe proshloe*, 180.

World War. Among Western historians it has always been a conviction that the Russian Revolution grew out of the war. And that still seems to be the case. Joshua A. Sanborn, for instance, maintains that "the Russian Revolution as a whole was a product of the war and was decisively influenced by soldiers at every key stage."[23] Christopher Read likewise writes that without August, 1914, "the revolution as we know it could not have taken place."[24] In a recent article, Rex Wade states that what no historian today disagrees with "is that the war doomed the regime of Nicholas II."[25] Comparative research on revolutions also indicates that great revolutionary upheavals generally only succeed if the old regime is weakened in advance because of external strains.[26] S. A. Smith in his new book on the Russian Revolution reminds us of the fact that in practically all socialist revolutions in the twentieth century, it was imperialist wars that led the old regimes into crisis.[27]

Military defeat, war weariness, and lack of food and coal for heating in the cities were important reasons for the fall of tsardom and also for the problems of the so-called Provisional Government, which only existed for eight months. Contrariwise, the war explains a great deal of the Bolshevik success in the autumn of 1917, even if the general deterioration in living conditions for the working class in Petrograd may have been more important than the desire for peace.[28] Today the majority of historians, both in the West and in the East, find it difficult to imagine the Russian Revolution of 1917 without the three years of preceding war. *The War that Gave Birth to a Revolution* is the title of V. P. Buldakov and T. G. Leont'eva's 2015 book on the First World War.[29]

In the Soviet era, however, it was not acceptable to use the Great War as an explanation for why a successful revolution occurred in Russia, because that would call into question the legitimacy of October, 1917, as revolution in a

23 Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 235.

24 Christopher Read, *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914–1922* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 22.

25 Rex Wade, "The Great War, Revolution and the Struggle Over Peace: Russia 1917," *Revolutionary Russia* 30, no. 2 (2017): 182.

26 See Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

27 S. A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4.

28 Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, 119–120. On the other hand, one can, of course, surmise that the worsened living conditions to a large extent resulted from the war.

29 V. P. Buldakov and T. G. Leont'eva, *Voina, porodivshaia revoliutsiiu: Rossiia, 1914–1917 gg.* (Moskva: Novyi khronograf, 2015).

Marxist sense. Especially from the 1930s it was important to show that the October Revolution was caused by classical Marxist prerequisites for a socialist workers' revolution and that it was deeply rooted in Russian society itself. It was wrong to attach too much importance to external impulses, even if Lenin himself saw a clear connection between the Great War and the revolution.

Remarkably enough, as long as the Soviet Union existed, not a single memorial was erected to honor the Russian soldiers that fell on the battlefield in the years 1914–1917. Altogether, 1.7 million soldiers perished. No anniversaries were marked in connection with the First World War. Why? The explanation is that the October Revolution was programmatically an anti-national revolution and a revolt against the war. Lenin wanted to transform the Great War from being a war between nations to becoming a war between classes. And he succeeded—but only in Russia.

The negative view of Russia's participation in the First World War was so entrenched in the minds of the Russians that it was some twenty years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union before they were ready to do anything about it. Only in 2010 did the Kremlin leadership decide to rehabilitate the First World War as a symbol for Russian heroism and suffering. In his speech to the Russian Federal Assembly on June 27, 2012, Putin declared that Russia's defeat in the First World War resulted from the treachery of the Bolshevik leaders: he blamed them for having withdrawn Russia from the war and signed a disgraceful peace with the Central Powers, the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty on March 3, 1918, when Russia finally withdrew from the war:

> Our country lost this war to the loser. A unique situation in the history of mankind! We lost to Germany, which was already on the losing side. In reality we capitulated to her, and she after some time capitulated to the Entente. And this was the result of a national betrayal of the leadership of the country at that time.[30]

The Bolsheviks had to accept the independence of Poland, Finland, the Baltic states, and Ukraine (in practice, Ukraine became a German protectorate), also ceding parts of the Caucasus. Later, they would not acknowledge that Brest-Litovsk was a mistake, said Putin, and therefore they continued to name this war "imperialist" and failed to honor the Russian army and its heroism.

30 "Poslanie Prezidenta Federal´nomu Sobraniiu," February 12, 2012, accessed May 27, 2018, http://www.kremlin.ru/news/17118 and http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/15781.

On August 1, 2014, Putin unveiled the first official Russian monument in the war memorial park *Poklonnaia Gora* in Moscow devoted to the Russian soldiers that died during the Great War. August 1, 1914, was the day when Russia joined the Allies, and it has become the official day of remembrance for this war in Russia. On account of the Bolsheviks, Russia became a victim in the war, instead of taking part in sharing the fruits of victory.[31] This reevaluation of the Great War is also a suitable issue for bringing together two different Russias—Russia proper and Russia abroad (the latter comprised of those who fled the country because of the 1917 Revolution—or, today, their descendants.)[32] At the initiative of Russian émigré groups and the Russian Ministry of Culture, a memorial will reportedly be raised in Crimea, where the civil war in the European part of Russia came to an end in November, 1920.

The idea of "the stolen victory" was an important element in the Kremlin leadership's history policy in the 2014 centenary year. The need to rehabilitate Russia's participation in the First World War is connected with the fact that The Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) has become even more important in post-Soviet Russia than it was before. It has been called the Putin regime's foundation myth,[33] and has done a great deal to displace the memory of the revolution.[34] Remembrance of the war, as it were, makes all dissonance die away. Ideological conflicts, contradictions between generations, as well as between ethnic groups, disappear like magic. Victory Day—May 9—is today perceived by most people as the country's real national day, and it is definitely about displacing the memory of the Russian Revolution and November 7.[35]

What the post-Soviet foundation myth really is about, however, is not the war itself, but the Putinist idea of the historical continuity of the Russian great power tradition, where the victory over Nazi Germany only represents the absolute apex. As a rule, foundation myths have a "before" and an "after"; but

31 This view is shared by quite a few professional Russian historians today, among them the well-known Boris N. Mironov (B. N. Mironov, personal communication, St. Petersburg, September 24, 2016).

32 Vera Tolz, "Modern Russian Memory of the Great War, 1914–1920," in *The Empire and Nationalism at War*, ed. E. Lohr, V. Tolz, A. Semyonov, and M. von Hagen (Bloomington: Slavica, 2014), 279.

33 See Nikolai Koposov, *Pamiat' strogogo rezhima: Istoriia i politika v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011), 163.

34 Jens Petter Nielsen, "'Å skape mening i konsolideringens navn': Den russiske revolusjonens hundreårsjubileum," *Arbeiderhistorie* (2017), 23–41.

35 Markku Kangaspuro, "History Politics and the Changing Meaning of Victory Day in Contemporary Russia," in *The Long Aftermath: Cultural Legacies of Europe at War, 1936–2016*, ed. Manuel Bragan and Peter Tame (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 333–343.

in this case the emphasis is on continuity, or rather on a cyclical conception of history, where the principle on which the history of modern Russia is allegedly based, with certain intervals, reappears with a particular clarity. In this connection, the Great War is considered as a necessary stepping stone between imperial Russia, the Great Patriotic War and post-Soviet Russia, which is about to regain its great power status under the leadership of Vladimir Putin.[36] Because one hundred years ago the October Revolution came about as an upheaval against the First World War, it ended up casting a shadow over Russia's participation in this war throughout the entire Soviet period. Now, when Russia's new leadership has decided that the First World War was also a war for Russia's honor and national interest, it has started to cast a shadow over the 1917 revolutions in both October and February.

When Boris Eltsin in 1998 renamed November 7 "The Day for Reconciliation and Accord," the intention was that this day, instead of being a day for commemorating the Russian Revolution, should be used for overcoming the split that the revolution created, which still persists between those who have positive feelings about the Soviet past and those who are against it. In 2005 Putin renamed "The Day for Reconciliation and Accord," calling it "The Day for National Unity," and moved it to November 4, a date that is historically related to the investiture of the Romanov dynasty in the early seventeenth century and the restoration of the Russian state after the Time of Troubles. This was a deliberate move to divert attention away from the discord about the Soviet past towards the heritage of Russian state building. Presumably it was no accident that this decision was taken on December 29, 2004, three days after the conclusion of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.[37]

In this way the revolution was symbolically downgraded, and for many years Putin and Medvedev would not speak about the Russian Revolution unless they had to. Since the beginning of the new millennium, November 7, the old Revolution Day has been swallowed up by historical military parades. On Revolution Day in 1941, when German military detachments were getting close to Moscow and could already glimpse the domes of the Kremlin, Stalin

36 For Boris Eltsin in the 1990s, the Great Patriotic War had first of all the merit of "the courage, patriotism and self-sacrifice" of the Soviet people, not of the Stalinist, totalitarian leadership (see Malinova, *Aktual´noe proshloe*, 91–100).

37 See Vladislav Inozemtsev, "Razdvoenie soznaniia," *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (Moscow), November 7, 2012, 2. Malinova suggests that Putin's personal views also played a part here; according to her, Putin has never been particularly fond of the October revolution (Malinova, *Aktual´noe proshloe*, 78–79).

ordered a military parade on Red Square to demonstrate the Russians' indomitable readiness to fight. In recent years, on November 7, parades have been held on Red Square in imitation of the 1941 parade, including uniforms of the time and equipment from the Second World War. In this way, Revolution Day has changed its nature completely from being a day of remembrance of the October Revolution to becoming yet another day of remembrance of the victory over Nazi Germany.

The foundation myth of the Soviet state, however, cannot simply be pushed away, because of the dimension of this event—and its international repercussions; and the problem remains that the Russian Revolution unavoidably weakens the continuity of the Russian great power tradition. Seen from the Kremlin's point of view, the main problem with the Bolsheviks is perhaps not communism, but the fact that they tore down the old tsarist state and afterwards entered into a separate peace with Russia's enemies. Of course, it would have been possible for Putin to distance himself from October 1917 but embrace the February Revolution, which aimed at introducing democracy in Russia. But that was not the case either. In the year 2000, Putin became friends with Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the great writer and outspoken and intrepid Soviet dissident, who had returned to Russia in 1994 after twenty years' exile in the West. This was an unlikely alliance, of course, since Putin came from the KGB, an organization that Solzhenitsyn had spent his entire life combatting. Elena Bonner has called their friendship "a psychological problem worthy of Dostoevsky's pen." [38]

The struggle against revolution had been a governing idea throughout Solzhenitsyn's public life, and Putin came to share his views on the February Revolution and its topicality. When in 2005 the Orange Revolution took place in Ukraine, Solzhenitsyn involuntarily compared it with the February Revolution in Russia in 1917. In those days, Germany was behind the scenes, helping Lenin and other Bolsheviks get back to Russia, supplying them with money, and so on. A hundred years later, Western philanthropic organizations played the same role, according to Solzhenitsyn, encouraging revolutionary unrest in Ukraine. February, 1917, brought mediocrities to power in Russia, maybe with the best of intentions, but they were spineless and soon swept away by Lenin and the Bolsheviks.[39]

38 R. Horvath, "Apologist or Putinist? Solzhenitsyn, the Oligarchs, and the Specter of Orange Revolution," *The Russian Review* 70, no. 2 (2011), 300–318.

39 Horvath, "Apologist or Putinist?," 311.

Solzhenitsyn's views on the February Revolution touched deep-felt chords within the Kremlin leadership,[40] and on March 13, 2007, the Kremlin organized a round table conference on Solzhenitsyn's article "Reflections on the February Revolution"[41] at the Russian State Humanistic University in Moscow. Here Vladislav Surkov, Putin's vice chief of staff and the theoretician behind the concept of "sovereign democracy," gave a programmatic speech entitled "A Resignation Speech of a Growing Liberal." It says a great deal about Solzhenitsyn's influence on Putin's inner circle. Surkov repeated the thesis that the liberal leaders who came to power in February, 1917, in practice prepared the soil for Bolshevism:

> In my opinion, October had already taken place in February. At least it was predetermined and power did not belong, in my opinion, to the democratic public for a minute at that time. It is a fact that the real power, the revolutionary energy, the real political power was on the side of the most radical, the extremist groups. . . . Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn calls on to protect the people, and we are happy to support this idea, and the president [V. V. Putin] has used this expression in one of his speeches. We have to remember that revolution, first and foremost, is a waste of human beings, it is first and foremost about destruction.[42]

It can be said that Putin's concern about not offending anybody works against the wish to create an inner coherence and continuity in history, because his strategy is oriented not towards mastering the past, but rather towards ignoring it. Yet even an outright condemnation of the idea of revolution (as above) does not fit into the great power scheme. Even if the Great War has been rehabilitated and cleared as a necessary stepping stone between the imperial period of Russian history and the Second World War, the foundation of the Soviet order, that is, the revolution, still has to be worked somehow into the new metanarrative of Russian history. It is significant that in 2017 the Kremlin did not find it suitable to erect any kind of memorials devoted to the revolution, and there was no official commemoration of the centenary of 1917. The official response to this particular jubilee has clearly been "underwhelming."[43]

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40 Nielsen, "Å skape mening i konsolideringens navn," 32–33.

41 Published for the first time in A. I. Solzhenitsyn, *Publitsistika*, vol. 1 (Iaroslavl′: Verkhniaia Volga, 1995), 457–503, but written already in the 1980s.

42 *Vremia novostei*, 50, March 23, 2007.

43 Matthew Rendle and Aaron B. Retish, "Silences and Noises: Commemorating 1917," *Revolutionary Russia* 30, no. 2 (2017): 151.

The whole question of the meaning and historical significance of the Russian Revolution was handed over to academia, which by and large was not ready to take part in the Kremlin's remembrance policy.

Putin was not completely silent about the revolution, though. In greetings to conferences in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other places, he again urged Russians to use the centenary to put an end to the division that the revolution had created. Furthermore, he warned against the schisms that revolutions necessarily create. But what is more important, if not directly then indirectly, he condemned the Russian Revolution one week before November 7, 2017. In 1889, the French built the Eiffel tower to mark the centenary of the Great French Revolution; Putin marked the birthday of the Russian Revolution by opening the Pandora's box of Stalin's crimes. On October 30, he was present at the opening of an impressive memorial on the Sakharov prospect, devoted to the victims of political repressions in the USSR, the thirty-meter long Wall of Sorrow (*Stena skorbi*). He did not attempt to hide that, in his opinion, the opening of this memorial was particularly topical in the year of the centenary of the Russian Revolution.[44] At the unveiling ceremony, he stated that "this terrible past is impossible to erase from the national remembrance and even more impossible to justify with any higher so-called common good of the people."[45]

Still, there is a problem with Putin's anti-revolutionary, anti-Bolshevik position. The issue is the nexus created between the Great War and the Great Patriotic War in the infrastructure of remembrance. Paradoxically, while it is easy to stigmatize the Bolsheviks as traitors in the First World War, when they tore down the old tsarist state, they are inextricably linked with the victories in the Second World War. Even if the Russian Revolution ruined the tsarist state, apparently it did not weaken Russian statehood in the long run. Quite on the contrary, the Bolsheviks, by industrializing the country and centralizing its political power structures, opened a new era of Russian state-building, which exceeded everything that Russia had achieved in the past. Without October, it is indeed doubtful that Russia could have done so well during the Second

44 "Putin prizval v god stoletiia revoliutsii podvesti chertu pod raskolom naroda," *RBC.ru*, accessed July 18, 2018, https://www.rbc.ru/politics/30/10/2017/59f723f89a794713e. October 30 is the official Day for commemorating the victims of political repressions in Russia.

45 "V Moskve otkryli memorial zhertvam repressii," *Novaia gazeta*, October 30, 2017, accessed May 9, 2018, https://www.novayagazeta.ru/news/2017/10/30/136550-v-moskve-otkryli-memorial-zhertvam-repressiy-na-tseremoniyu-otkrytiya-steny-skorbi-priehal-putin. See also James Ryan, "The Politics of National History: Russia's Ruling Elite and the Centenary of 1917," *Revolutionary Russia*, 31 (2018): 13-14.

World War. This dilemma is difficult to resolve, and it manifests itself in Stalin's person and his dual role as Lenin's successor and Generalissimo during the Great Patriotic War.

Could it not have been different? Is it possible that October could be included in Putin's metanarrative of Russia's history? Putin did take a step further with his history policy when in 2007 he put forward a plan for a new series of textbooks on history for Russian schools. The first result of this was a new instruction book for history teachers, which turned out first and foremost as an account of Russia as a great power.[46] As was to be expected, it underlines the continuity of Russia's state tradition, and its author, A. V. Filippov, went to considerable lengths to integrate the revolution into this narrative. In his scheme, not only the Great War but also the Russian Revolution becomes a necessary stepping stone onwards to today's post-Soviet Russia. To achieve this, Filippov even invoked the philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev (1874–1948), who considered Bolshevism a kind of modern "anti-national" manifestation of Russian nationalism. To replace "Moscow as the Third Rome"—the idea that after the fall of the East Roman Empire (1453) the Russian Orthodox Church became the true defender of Christianity—the Bolsheviks organized the Third International" (Comintern). And many traits of the Third Rome idea were transferred to it. The Third International, wrote Berdiaev, "is not an International, but the Russian national idea."[47]

Olga Malinova points to a less far-fetched theory which could serve the same purpose: the construction of Russian history developed by G. A. Ziuganov and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in the early 1990s. This is a theory about the Soviet epoch as an organic period in Russia's history rather than a deviation from its general course. Ziuganov's scheme is not an outright acceptance of the Soviet foundation myth, but its partial transformation, from the revolution being a war between classes to becoming more like "a clash between civilizations."[48] This is Lenin's thesis back to front. In this scheme, October, 1917, becomes a significant episode in the centuries-long antagonism between the West and Russia, when Russia once more stood forward as a counterweight against Western hegemony. In this connection, October changed its character as foundation myth from being an event "before" and "after," to

46 A.V. Filippov (ed.), *Istoriia Rossii 1945–2008 gg. Kniga dlia uchitelia* (Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 2008).

47 N. Berdiaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* (Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University, 2013).

48 Malinova, *Aktual'noe proshloe*, 49–53; eadem, "Neudobnyi iubilei," 25–26.

becoming, as it were, a peculiar manifestation of the Russian idea. It seemed, wrote Ziuganov,

> that the Russian Revolution of 1917 could justify the hopes of the West to get rid of its main geopolitical rival, but they were unavailing. The Revolution did not destroy the Russian statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*). On the contrary, it renewed and strengthened it, cleaning it of its obsolete feudal-bourgeois forms. However, having thrown off the form, the Soviet regime at the same time rather quickly inherited from the historical Russia her moral ideals, as well as her experience as a great power in building a powerful state.[49]

No doubt, if Putin had accepted this way of approaching history, the connection between the First and the Second World Wars would have become clearer, and post-Soviet Russia could have continued to lean on the infrastructure of remembrance, inherited from the USSR, including the revolution. So why was this unacceptable for Putin, when we know that in the beginning of his reign he was more open to Zyuganov's theory (compare his inclusion of Soviet symbols in the Russian symbolic field)? The problem is that what Zyuganov's scheme gains in historical continuity is lost in a *continuity of regimes*.[50] Obviously, Putin's remonstrance is related to the so-called color revolutions in the post-Soviet space, which has created fear that a color revolution can take place in Russia too. Ziuganov's scheme is, as Malinova underlines, less advantageous to a party in power than to a party hoping to obtain power. And the message that the revolutionary deconstruction of one state apparatus or regime can result in a state or regime that is even stronger is not a message that the Kremlin leadership today is ready to convey to the Russian people.

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49 G. A. Ziuganov, "Vzgliad za gorizont," *Obozrevatel'* (Moscow) 18 (1994): 144, accessed May 19, 2018, http://www.observer.materik.ru/observer/N18_94/18_20.htm.

50 See Inozemtsev, "Razdvoenie soznaniia."

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