

Third Annual Conference



Graduate School
for East and Southeast
European Studies

THE CULTURE OF THE
RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
AND ITS GLOBAL IMPACT
Semantics – Performances – Functions

Book of Abstracts

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Third Annual Conference

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June 2, 2016

Senatssaal, LMU Main Building, Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, 80539 München

June 3 - 4, 2016

Internationales Begegnungszentrum der Wissenschaft e.V. (IBZ), Amalienstraße 38, 80799 München

Aust, Martin (Bonn)

Globalizing the Russian Revolution. Some Remarks on Historiography

[Panel “Global Implications I”]

The centenary of the Russian Revolution promises a number of new general accounts of 1917. This paper discusses how such an account might bridge the gap between existing general accounts of the Russian Revolution and recent research of the past two decades. Basically accounts of the Russian Revolutions have reflected paradigm shifts of historiography. Accounts by e.g. Richard Pipes, Dietrich Geyer, Sheila Fitzpatrick and Orlando Figes reflect the tides of political, social and cultural history. But beyond these shifts they all share a focus on the capitals Petrograd and Moscow and the Russian heartland. Recent research has made inquiries into the regions and processes of nation-building on the territory of the late Russian Empire and the early Soviet Union. This paper discusses how to include those findings into a general overview of the Revolution. Further the paper delivers an outlook how global perspectives will play out in writing on the Russian Revolution.

Clark, Katerina (New Haven, CT)

The Baku Congress of 1920 and the Language of Revolution: the Persian Examples of Velemir Khlebnikov and Abolqasem Lahuti

[Panel “Global Implications I”]

In September 1920 the Congress for the Peoples of the East was held in Baku and attended by 1,800 delegates, mostly from Asia. Among them were Velemir Khlebnikov, the avant-garde Russian poet, and Abolqasem Lahuti, a Kurdish Persian who was both a poet and a political activist. Khlebnikov was inspired by what he witnessed at Baku and this was allegedly in large measure responsible for his signing up to join an expeditionary force of the Persarmia (Persian Red Army), sent to help the fledgling Gilian Republic in Persia. While there, he worked as a lecturer and journalist. Lahuti, a political activist, and from 1923 a student at the Communist University of Toilers of the East (KUTV), went on to become a leading figure in the Writers’ Union of Tajikistan. My paper will draw a contrast between the literary responses of these two poets to the 1917 Revolution, Baku and Persia. Khlebnikov’s poems on Persia, many of them submitted to Red Army journals there, were, though no longer trans-sense, idiosyncratic and avant-garde. Several of them concern the liberation of the common people, but for them he draws his imagery primarily not from Marx or Lenin, or from Comintern rhetoric, but from the great classical traditions of Persian and Sanskrit poetry. Lahuti, by contrast, is conservative in his formal strategies, largely using traditional Persian prosody, and at the same time more conventionally Soviet in his choice of imagery.

Davies, Franziska (Munich)

Reform or Revolution? Muslims in Russia’s Revolutions of 1905 and 1917

[Panel “Revolutionary Semantics of Religion”]

Due to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Russian Empire’s Muslim population, the nature and extent of their participation in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 varied. Depending on specific local contexts, the revolution of 1917 played out differently in the empire’s Muslim

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peripheries. In my paper I will focus on the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region. While in 1905 the Volga-Ural region and its Muslim population had not been at the forefront of revolutionary upheavals, it was nonetheless an important event for the politicization of the Muslim intelligentsia. The first all-Russian Muslim congress took place in Nizhny Novgorod and with the founding of the Union of Muslims of Russia (Ittifak) an attempt was made to create an empire-wide organization representing the interests of Muslims. In the aftermath of the political liberalizations brought about in 1905 the Muslim intelligentsia emerged as the most visible proponents of reform in the Volga-Ural region. Historian Mustafa Tuna has recently shown that in contrast to the elder generation of the reformist “Djadidists” who had still defined themselves as part of the ulema, members of this younger generation understood themselves as intellectuals. This difference in social identity went hand in hand with an ideological shift: they were less concerned with the religious renewal of Islam, but positioned themselves as proponents of cultural and social progress and reform in service of the “nation” or the “people”. A number of these intellectuals became important political actors after the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917. A social group which had been largely absent in 1905 and only emerged as agents of change in 1917 were Muslim soldiers who had been politicized due to their service in the Russian army during the First World War. The political language employed by them in 1917 points to their exposure to and appropriation of the revolutionary culture of the Russian imperial army. They were able to speak the language of social and political revolution and at least some of them were drawn to Bolshevik ideology and became proponents of its ideas. In general, the political language employed by Muslims in the revolution of 1917 was remarkably secular. While religion was not absent in political debates, it was mostly confined to claims of cultural and political autonomy. The strata of Muslim society most involved in the revolution of 1917 had been transformed through specific experiences in the late imperial period: The Muslim intelligentsia was a product of the social and cultural transformation in the Volga-Ural region since the late 19th century, while soldiers were deeply influenced by their experiences at the front during the First World War.

Drubek, Natascha (Berlin/Regensburg)

Revolution and Religion in 1917 – Eisenstein’s Intellectual Montages of 1927

[Panel “The Performance of Revolution”]

My talk will look into the possibilities and boundaries of cinematic representation of Revolution, with special reference to Eisenstein’s film *October*. Commissioned to celebrate the decennial of the October Revolution, it introduces visual expressions of this historical event as well as the philosophical concept. I will suggest that Eisenstein succeeded only in some of his audacious experiments of „intellectual montage“. The initial scene of his 1927 film shows Revolution as the metaphorical dismembering of the body politic of the old regime, carried out by the masses storming a monument of Aleksandr III. In a later sequence the film likens the situation after the February revolution 1917 to a rollback, reminding us of the original meaning of revolution as astrophysical cycle; from a Bolshevik perspective the Russian revolutionary movement is under threat of returning to Restoration. *October* demonstrates this danger through a powerful film trick showing a reinstatement of the sculpture and with it the Tsar’s power. The preceding montage of the gods I will analyse as the film’s

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attempt to neutralize the persisting influence of religion ten years after the Revolution. October's anti-religious frenetic sequence provides a key to the understanding of the failed project of secularization launched after the October Revolution.

Fastovskij, Vitalij (Munich)

Dying for the Common Cause: The Value of a Good Death in the Moral Framework of the Revolution (1881-1910)

[Panel "Revolutionary Semantics of Religion"]

The presentation deals with farewell letters and suicide notes of Russian revolutionaries written in different contexts and at different points in time: from hideouts on the eve of a terrorist attack, from death row as well as from prison and Siberian exile. The earliest text dates from 1881, the year of the assassination of Alexander II and the execution of the Pervomartovcy, the oldest from 1910, the year of Egor Sozonov's suicide. The talk focuses on the revolutionaries' visions of a *good life* and a *good death* and the moral sources that empowered them to lead a life dedicated to the "common cause" and to embrace a meaningful death.

Grill, Tobias (Munich)

'Another Messiah Has Come: Jewish Socialist Revolutionaries in Russia and Their Attitude Towards Religion (1890s-1920s)

[Panel "Revolutionary Semantics of Religion"]

"Jesus performed great services for the Russian revolutionary movement." Jay Bergman's statement describes the fact that despite the secularism of their ideology Russian Marxists, also Bolsheviks, invoked "religious imagery as part of an effort to gain popular support, particularly among classes of the population for which Christianity was still a principal source of attitudes and beliefs about political figures and events". Even though Jews and people with Jewish background played a crucial role in the Russian revolutionary movement, so far no research has been devoted to the question of religious semantics in Jewish socialists' revolutionary rhetoric. In my talk I will not only discuss the attitude of Russian Jewish revolutionaries towards religion, but also the significance of religious symbols and imagery in their propaganda.

Grüßhaber, Gerhard (Munich)

From the Baltic to Anatolia: The German Officer Hans Tröbst between Freikorps, Wrangel, Kemalists and Bolsheviks, 1919-1923

[Panel "Global Implications I"]

This presentation will analyze the unusual postwar career of Hans Tröbst (1891-1939) against the background of the Russian revolution and the Greco-Turkish war. Using his personal papers and publications I will focus on his personal knowledge transfer from this turbulent period on the periphery of the Russian Civil War. Hans Tröbst was a wanderer between the worlds. Having served in the imperial German army as a regular officer he was

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dismissed after the armistice in 1918 and henceforth made a living as a soldier of fortune until late 1922. He consecutively joined several German Freikorps as the Grenzschutz Ost in their struggle with Polish troops, the Iron Brigade in the Baltic in their war with the Bolsheviks and the Marinebrigade Erhardt. After his participation in the Kapp Putsch in Berlin in 1920 he decided to join General Wrangel's army on the Crimea, whose defeat led to Tröbst's turning towards the Turkish Nationalist in their struggle in Western Anatolia. This staging point was followed by an unsuccessful application for the Red Army in the Bolshevik's Ankara office and finally Tröbst's participation in the preparation of the Hitler Putsch back in Germany in November 1923.

Ikeda, Yoshiro (Tokyo)

Time and the Comintern: Rethinking the Cultural Impact of the Russian Revolution on Japanese Intellectuals

[Panel "Global Implications II"]

As Stephen E. Hanson's *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* shows, the Bolsheviks were obsessed with the notion of time, tirelessly interpreting their own actions as something accelerating the course of history. This time-oriented feature of the Bolshevik philosophy deeply influenced their attitude towards foreign comrades. By the directives of the Comintern, Moscow instructed to communists of capitalist states how to understand the historical locus of their countries and their activities. In my presentation I will analyze how this guidance of the Comintern was accepted among Japanese intellectuals during the 1920s and 1930s.

Kalinin, Ilya (St. Petersburg)

How Lenin's Language Was Made: Russian Formalists on Material of History and Technique of Ideology

[Panel "The Rhetoric of Revolution"]

There is a connection between the formal theory and the history in which formalists were submerged and which they represented and upon which they reflected in their scholarly and literary works. This connection is not limited by the use of historical, biographical or artistic material for the illustration of theoretical ideas. This is a two-way connection in that both text and context, device and material constantly exchange their statuses. The formalists described literature as the destruction of the habits of perception and interpretation formed by the everyday life. In this sense the mechanisms of literature and history turned out to be isomorphous with each other. The concept of defamiliarization formulated by Shklovsky becomes, then, not only the universal mechanism of art but also the immanent law of history; while the formalists tended to bare the device – the "literariness" of literature, the revolution (history par excellence) was seen by them as "baring" the historical device of history itself. As well as a language of the historical genius bares erasing devices belong to his political opponents and starts up the estranging mechanisms of history. Russian Formalists used their studies of Lenin's language (collected in the special issue of LEF, 1924) as an opportunity to extrapolate their theory of literary evolution and poetic language to the sphere

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of social and political history. They interpreted Lenin's language as a language that materialized the law of a poetic language, discovered by formalists. According to their analyses, the alien automatized rhetoric, belonging to a high oratorical tradition, Lenin opposes his own "lively" or vivid poetics, resting upon a shift of perception, a deception of expectations, bringing in the speech elements of low everyday language. Instead of deforming the very material, that is making history as itself such an automatized political language glides on the surface of abstract ideology and compensates its historical and poetical weakness with rhetoric superfluity. Lenin as "one of the most famous Russian formalist" bares the device of revolution (or counterrevolution which are similar in this case) ideology. And as the formalists do it Lenin – according to their interpretation – equates the historical and poetical mechanisms (Boris Kazansky: "Lenin saw a speech, a paper, a book as an 'art', the same 'art' that according to Marx, a revolt had to be"). And in the same time, the very study on Lenin's language undertaken by the formalists bares their own device, explicates their own political message, the statement of their meta-language as the language possessing with a dynamic historical power.

Lee, Steven (Berkeley, CA)

The Bolshevik Revolution as Asian Revolution: From Vladimir Tatlin to Ai Weiwei
[Panel "Global Implications I"]

This paper begins with a discussion of Vladimir Tatlin's constructivist icon "Monument to the Third International" (1920). Composed of two intertwined iron spirals cutting through the heavens like a telescope or a cannon, Tatlin's tower was to have served as both monument and headquarters for the Comintern: its seemingly random trusses gathered into a coherent movement would have reflected the organization's diverse yet coordinated activists working in different spaces and different stages of historical development. I use Tatlin's merging of form and function, avant-garde and vanguard, to revisit expansive, eccentric understandings of the Bolshevik Revolution from the late 1910s and early 1920s. I focus specifically on efforts to reimagine the revolution as distinctly Asian, and connect the tower to the poetry of Aleksandr Blok and Velimir Khlebnikov, as well as to Grigorii Zinoviev's pledge (at the Comintern's 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East) to support the world's "oppressed peoples" in a "holy war" against Western imperialism. More abstractly, though, the paper also presents Tatlin's tower as the key to a revolutionary model of world culture that de-centers Western modernism and continues to resonate around the world – as evidenced by Ai Weiwei's 2007 homage to Tatlin, "Working Progress (Fountain of Light)". I argue that, through the radical, still-extant cultural circuits fostered by the Third International, visions of an Asian-inflected Bolshevik Revolution persist.

Linkhoeva, Tatiana (Munich)

The Russian Revolution and the ‘Bolshevization’ of Asia during the Foreign Intervention, 1917-1925

[Panel “Global Implications II”]

After the Bolshevik coup in November 1917 and the subsequent Russian Civil War (1918-1922), the Japanese government and army used the power vacuum in North East Asia to intervene into Russian territory. The Intervention’s rationale quickly developed into defending Japan’s Empire and nation from external radical enemies (Korean and Chinese communist national liberation fighters) and internal subversion (Japanese socialists and liberals). There was also a genuine concern for the Bolshevization of Japanese soldiers stationed in Russia. This paper traces the discourses on the “Bolshevization” of Asia offered by the Japanese ruling elite and public intellectuals that ultimately constrained or enabled the economic, social, and political conditions of Japanese actions in North East Asia.

Raev, Ada (Bamberg)

Russian Avant-garde Artists on the Stages of Revolution

[Panel “The Performance of Revolution”]

Russian Theater activists and authors of the early 20th century, among them Nikolai Evreinov, Platon Kershenzev and Vsevolod Gerngross, declared theatricality to be a constant anthropological factor in human being and stressed the significance of this category in Russian culture. This speech deals with the connections between bolshevist politics, the concept of theatricality and the astonishing activities of Russian avant-garde artists like Kazimir Malevich, Juri Annenkov, Natan Altman, Alexander Rodchenko or Liubov Popova in the sphere of theatre in the first years after the Revolution. Quite different types of theatrical forms will be considered like puppet theatre, agit-trains, mass festivities, cabaret and constructivist plays. It will be shown how particularly the visual elements of those performances aimed at strengthening the identification of the audience with the ideas of Revolution and how they inspired the development of soviet film.

Senelick, Laurence (Medford, MA)

Order Out of Chaos. First Steps in Creating a Bolshevik and Proletarian Theatre

[Panel “The Performance of Revolution”]

The Bolshevik coup left the theatre world in Petrograd and Moscow in disarray. The state-supported companies with their elaborate bureaucracy, the privately subsidized theatres and the commercial playhouses all lost funding, audiences, an artistic compass; they were assailed by strikes, political dissension and vandalism. Almost immediately after taking power, the Bolsheviks made strenuous efforts to re-organize the theatre. This was in line with the long-standing Russian belief that theatre is an invaluable tool of education; by providing free performances for the working classes, the new regime could shape a constituency. Many theatre workers shared this goal, looking forward to a proletarian art form. A conflict of interest soon became apparent, however: the theatrical avant-garde called for a Stunde Null in stage practice and looked to innovative forms to appeal to the new public; the Bolshevik

leadership preferred a classic and romantic repertoire and traditional styles of performance. Moreover, centralization gradually elbowed out styles and programs that failed to fit the preferred mold. This early contradiction between artistic impulses and government policy would bedevil Russian theatre until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Witte, Georg (Berlin)

'The Rhythmic Drum': Revolutionary Bodies and Revolutionary Languages Between Organization and Ecstasy

[Panel "The Rhetoric of Revolution"]

Rhythm is power. This particularly applies to revolutionary situations, periods of implementing new political structures, new economics of movement/gestures, new regimes of perception. Rhythm is power in a twofold sense. (1) As a "drum" (cf. Eisenstein, "The rhythmic drum") it attaches and involves affectively people exposed to it, synchronizes the individual body with the movement of collective bodies. Politics of rhythm in the early Soviet Union establishes an all-embracing order of kinetic resonance (cf. Mandelshtam, "State and rhythm"). (2) Rhythm doesn't merely "infect" people with the "enthusiasm" of revolutionary movement. It's a power not only due to its mobilizing effect, but also due to its organizing impact. Rhythm imposes meter, regularity, routine on the movement of people. It's a discipline tool. "Scientific organization" of labor, automatization by means of rhythmical adjustment, scheduled movement of actors, workers, soldiers, children – these are key imperatives in Soviet politics of rhythm. Rhythm is not only "drum", it's "clock" no less. The dancing body is the measured body. This regards also to the Avantgarde's concepts and practices of rhythm. Rhythm is both the elementary manifestation of organic and kinetic energies and the regulation of those energies. In Sergei Eisenstein's evolutionary-anthropological view on art and cinema the rhythmic intensity of film goes back to "protoplasmatic" energy. Kinetic and kinesthetic dynamics in theatre and dance are conceived of as a dialectics of rhythmical drive and adjustment, of "impulse" and "control". The same applies to concepts of poetic language and it's rhythmic foundations, and as in the case of Andrei Bely even extends to highly speculative connections between rhythmic "impulse" and revolutionary "mandate" ("Rhythm as dialectics"), between oral articulation and cosmic energy ("Glossolalija").

Zhang, Jianhua (Beijing)

The Memory of Restaurant Moscow in Beijing: the Changes of Image of October Revolution and Soviet Culture in contemporary China

[Panel "Global Implications II"]

The Restaurant Moscow, built in 1954 (Beijingers used to call it Lao Mo, meaning old Moscow), is an important symbol in the history of Beijing and it's also an important symbol to the Sino-Soviet Relation. What Chinese (especially Beijingers) got from this restaurant was not only the Russian-style meal (Chinese used to call it Soviet-style meal). And it's most important that Chinese knew about October Revolution, the Soviet culture on behalf of it and Soviet political and cultural elites like Lenin, Stalin, Gorky, Ulanova as well. As a common and special public space, Restaurant Moscow once had played an important role in the

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contact between China and Soviet Union. From comrade and brother to enemy and traitor, then to the normalization of the Sino-Soviet Relation, the restaurant witnessed the changes of Chinese society, Beijingers' private space and personal emotion. Restaurant Moscow has experienced the transformation from political symbol to cultural symbol from its opening to now. In fact, this transformation process related to the modern history of China and city history of Beijing more than a history of a restaurant. Most important, it's indispensable part of the history of Sino-Soviet Relation. This essay refers to the politics of space theory of French scholar Henri Lefebvre and Public sphere theory of Germanic scholar Jürgen Habermas. The research method includes questionnaire survey, interviewees of which are born in 1930s to 1940s, 1960s to 1970s and 1990s to 2000s, and basic methods of historiography, sociology and politics.

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