

THE SOVIET CENTURY

Laboratory for Research on the
Structure of Matter (LRSM)

MW 11-12

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Comrade Lenin Cleanses the World of Scum (1920)



The Motherland Calls (1941)

In *The Age of Extremes*, Eric Hobsbawm writes that “the world that went to pieces at the end of the 1980s was the world shaped by the impact of the Russian Revolution of 1917. We have all been marked by it.” The birth of the Soviet Union punctuated the opening of the “short twentieth century” (1914-1991), and its demise signaled that “short” century’s end. During its lifetime, much of the world viewed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the defining political experiment, the great modern challenge to capitalism and liberal democracy. The subject of this course, then, is the Soviet century.

We will follow the emergence of the Soviet Union from the ruins of a backward empire and its transformation to ostensible showcase of the future. Lectures, readings and discussions will explore the building of the world’s first socialist society and its attempts to recast human relations and human nature itself. Topics include the origins of the Revolutions of 1917, the role of ideology in state policy and everyday life, the Soviet Union as the center of

world communism, the challenge of forging a new society from an ethnically diverse population, the Soviet Union's role in defeating Nazi Germany, its rise to the status of superpower, and its sudden implosion in 1991. We will follow the rulers (from Nicholas II to Lenin, from Stalin to Gorbachev) as well as the ruled (peasants, workers, intellectuals; Russians and non-Russians alike).

Curiosity about Soviet history and a willingness to explore its drama and complexity are the only prerequisites for this course. No prior knowledge of the subject is assumed.

REQUIREMENTS:

Each week students will attend two lectures and one discussion section ("recitation"). If you cannot attend a lecture or recitation, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed. Please come to each lecture class having completed the readings for that day. This means allowing yourself sufficient time to read through the assigned materials and to think about them. Bear in mind that active participation means asking good questions as well as proposing good answers. We are happy to take occasional questions during lectures. Recitations will explore the assigned readings—including primary source material in translation—as well as the lectures. Students will write a short paper (due Feb. 7), take an in-class exam (Feb. 28), and a take-home final (handed out Apr. 18, due Apr. 25).

GRADING:

Participation in discussion:	25%
Six-page paper:	25%
In-class exam:	25%
Take-home final exam:	25%

NOTE: Students in this course are expected to abide by the University of Pennsylvania Code of Academic Integrity. You may find the code at: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>

READING:

Reading assignments will be ca. 150 pp. per week, plus occasional films. Please note that in some weeks the reading load will be heavier, and in some weeks—lighter.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Penn Book Center, 34th and Sansom Streets):

Catherine Evtuhov & Richard Stites, *A History of Russia since 1800: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces*

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Lydia Chukovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna*

John Scott, *Behind the Ural: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*

Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*

A two-volume **course packet** is also required and available for purchase at Wharton Reprographics, Suite 400, Ground Floor of the Wharton School, Locust Walk. Part 1 is currently available for purchase: ask for Repro #13776.

FILMS:

In the course of the semester, we will view five films [location TBA]. All films are also on reserve in Van Pelt Library for those students who are unable to attend the screenings.

Sunday Jan. 21, 8pm: *The End of Saint Petersburg* (Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1927; 89 mins.)

Sunday Feb. 11, 8pm: *Bed and Sofa* (Abram Room, 1926, 100 mins.)

Sunday Mar. 25, 8pm: *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (Vladimir Menshov, 1980, 150 mins.)

Sunday Apr. 8, 8pm: *The Rise and Fall of Mikhail Gorbachev* (BBC, 58 mins.)

Sunday Apr. 15, 8pm: *Prisoner of the Mountains* (Sergei Bodrov, 1996, 99 mins.)

[Note: the course packet contains full bibliographic information on all readings included therein.]

WEEK ONE: [101 pp.]

Jan. 8: Why Study Soviet History?

Jan. 10: The Russian Empire Under the Tsars

- Evtuhov and Stites, chs. 6-9 (78 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Alexander Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism" (2 pp.)
- S. I. Kanatchikov, *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia* (21 pp.)

WEEK TWO (128 pp.)

Jan. 15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no classes)

Jan. 17: The Revolutionary Movement and Marxism in Russia

- Evtuhov and Stites, chs. 10-11 (34 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- *The Communist Manifesto*: Introduction (by Martin Malia, pp. vii-xxviii), preface to the Russian Edition of 1882 (pp. 33-34), and the Manifesto (49-76) (78 pp.)
- Karl Marx, "Letter to the Editorial Board of *Fatherland Notes*" (4 pp.)
- Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, pp. 3-15 (12 pp.)

Sunday Jan. 21, 8pm

FILM: *The End of St. Petersburg* (Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1927; 89 mins.)

WEEK THREE: (184 pp.)

Jan. 22: The End of the Old Regime

- Evtuhov and Stites, chs. 12-13 (38 pp.)

Jan. 24: The Russian Revolutions (I)

- Evtuhov and Stites, chs. 14-15 (39 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, pp. 136-179 (43 pp.)
- Sergei Mstislavskii, “The February Rising” from *idem, Five Days Which Transformed Russia* (see glossary at conclusion of this section; use this for other sections of Mstislavskii below) (37 pp.)
- Vladimir Lenin, “April Theses” (3 pp.)
- Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution* (5 pp.)
- Documents on war aims and new diplomacy (19 pp.)
 1. Soviet Appeal to the Peoples of the World (March 27, 1917)
 2. Provisional Government on War Aims (April 10, 1917)
 3. Manifesto of the Ukrainian Rada (June 24, 1917)
 4. The Soviet Decree on Peace (November 8, 1917)
 5. Third Universal of the Ukrainian Rada (November 20, 1917)
 6. Soviet Appeal to the Toilers of the East (December 7, 1917)
 7. The Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson (January 8, 1918)

WEEK FOUR: (158 pp.)

Jan. 29: The Russian Revolutions (II)

DOCUMENTS

- Sergei Mstislavskii, “The October Revolution,” from *idem, Five Days*, pp.111-31 (20 pp.)
- Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 3, pp. 276-301, 344-349 (30 pp.)
- “To the Citizens of Russia!” “Decree on the Formation of a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government,” and assorted Bolshevik revolutionary legislation (6 pp.)
- Sergei Mstislavskii, “The Day of the Constituent Assembly,” from *idem, Five Days*, pp. 135-55 (20 pp.)
- “Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly” (2 pp.)

Jan. 31: Civil War

- Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 16 (20 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901-1914*, pp. 70-114 (44 pp.)
- The Brest-Litovsk Treaty: Lenin’s Defense (3 pp.)

- Map: Civil War and Foreign Intervention, 1918-21 (1 p.)
- Lenin, “All out for the fight against Denikin!” (2 pp.)
- Letter from Lenin on Dealing with Peasant Revolts (SECRET) (1 p.)
- Cheka Response to Attempt on Lenin’s Life and the Murder of Uritskii (2 pp.)
- Letter of Invitation to the First Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) (3 pp.)
- Manifesto of the Communist International to the Proletariat of the Entire World (2 pp.)
- Theses on the Conditions for Admission to the Communist International (3 pp.)

WEEK FIVE (93 pp.)

Feb. 5: The Communist Party as Institution and as Culture

DOCUMENTS

- E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution* (1969), vol. 1, pp. 191-219 (28 pp.)
- Instructions for Carrying out Verification of Party members, 1921 (4 pp.)
- Chart: The Party Hierarchy (1 p.)

Feb. 7: Soviet Union—A Reconstituted Empire?

- Evtuhov and Stites, ch. 18 (16 pp.)
- Ronald Grigor Suny, “State-Building and Nation-Making: The Soviet Experience” (1993), pp. 84-126 (42 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- The Union Constitution of 1924 (2 pp.)

***** SIX-PAGE PAPER DUE IN CLASS *****

Sunday Feb. 11, 8pm

FILM: *Bed and Sofa* (Abram Room, 1926, 100 mins.)

WEEK SIX (146 pp.)

Begin reading Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna

Feb. 12: The New Economic Policy (NEP): Revolution Lost?

- Evtuhov and Stites, ch. 17 (18 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- “Bublichki” (1 p.)
- Lenin, “The Tax in Kind” (2 pp.)
- Correspondence of Bukharin and Dzerzhinsky (SECRET) (2 pp.)
- Peasant letters to Stalin (2 pp.)

Feb. 14: Socialist culture

- John Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 3-51, 55-67, 82-92, 117-139 (91 pp.)
Interested in John Scott's father, who was fired from the Wharton School in 1915 for being too radical?
Go to <http://www.jeanhay.com/OTHER/SCOTT.HTM>

DOCUMENTS

- Richard Stites, "Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution" (19 pp. text)
- Mikhail Gerasimov, "We" (1 p.)
- LEF (Left Front in Art), "Manifesto" (2 pp.)
- Central Committee, "On the Policy of the Party in the Field of Literature" (2 pp.)
- Alexandra Kollontai, Excerpts from "The Family and the Communist State" (2 pp.)
- Lev Trotsky, "Vodka, the Church, and Cinema" (4 pp.)
- View the works of Kazimir Malevich and Marc Chagall at the following sites:
<<http://www.abcgallery.com/M/malevich/malevich.html>>
<http://www.russianavantgard.com/master_pages/Master%2001%20-%20Kazimir%20Malevich.html>
<http://www.russianavantgard.com/master_04_artists_union_of_youth/mark_chagall-Master%2004.html#paintings>

WEEK SEVEN (295 pp., 120 pp. of which are *Sofia Petrovna*)

Feb. 19: Building Socialism, I: Collectivization and Industrialization

- Evtuhov and Stites, chs. 19-20 (30 pp.)
- Scott, *Behind the Urals*, pp. 173-206 (33 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Kamenev to Ordzhonikidze, Dec. 10, 1927 (1 p.)
- Stalin, "The Right Deviation in the CPSU(B)" (4 pp.)
- Lev Kopelev, "The Last Grain Collections (1933)" (29 pp.)
- "Report on the Political Attitudes and Morale of the Transportation Workers, June 1933," (SECRET) (3 pp.)
- Discussion of the Law on Abolition of Legal Abortion, June 9, 1936 (2 pp.)
- Maxim Gorky, "Soviet Literature" (3 pp.)

Feb. 21: Building Socialism, II: Terror and Retrenchment

- Scott, *Behind the Urals*, pp. 209-249 and 280-306 (66 pp.)
- Lydia Chukovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna* (120 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Excerpt from Report on the Verification of Party Documents (1 p.)
- Letter from Bukharin to the Politburo, February 20, 1937 (1 p.)

- Letter from Bukharin to the Supreme Soviet, March 13, 1938 (2 pp.)

WEEK EIGHT (42 pp.)

Feb. 26: The “Great Patriotic War”

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch. 21 (16 pp.)
- Scott, *Behind the Urals*, pp. 253-266 (13 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Order by Marshall Voroshilov Concerning a Counterrevolutionary Fascist Organization in the Red Army, June 7, 1937 (SECRET) (3 pp.)
- German Documents on Operation “Barbarossa” (1940-41) (8 pp.)
- Mobilization Against the German Invasion (2 pp.)

Feb. 28: ***** IN-CLASS EXAM *****

Mar. 3-11: Spring Break

WEEK NINE (83 pp.)

Mar. 12: Red Triumph

DOCUMENTS

- Stalin and the Orthodox Church (2 pp.)
- Konstantin Simonov, “Wait For Me” (July 1941) and “Smolensk Roads” (November 1941) (3 pp.)
- Lev Kopelev, *To Be Preserved Forever*, pp. 1-3, 35-59 (27 pp.)
- Stalin on the Great Russians (1 pp.)
- Stalin’s Analysis of Victory (4 pp.)
- The Internationale and Soviet State Anthem (1944) (1 p.)

For background on Russian/Soviet anthems, with downloadable audio versions, go to:

http://www.stanford.edu/class/slavgen194a/hymn/anthem_history.htm

Mar. 14: Victory and Devastation: Stalinism Triumphant

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch.22 (14 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Varlam Shalamov, “Major Pugachev’s Last Battle” and “Lend- Lease,” from idem, *Kolyma Tales*, pp. 89-103, 173-180 (21 pp.)
- The Zhdanov Movement (4 pp.)

- Party Control of Science – Genetics (2 pp.)
- The Campaign against “Cosmopolitanism” (4 pp.)

WEEK TEN (48 pp.)

Mar. 19: From War to Cold War

DOCUMENTS

- The following texts are from Martin McCauley, ed., *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1949*, pp. 131-41 (10 pp.):
 - George Kennan, The Long Telegram
 - Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” Speech
 - Stalin’s Reply to Churchill’s Speech
 - Byrnes’s Speech at Stuttgart
 - Henry Wallace, “The Tougher We Get...”
 - Molotov on “Equal Opportunity”
 - The Truman Doctrine, The Marshall Plan
 - The “Mr. X.” Article
 - Vyshinsky on the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan
- The Cominform (4 pp.)
- Comments to Stalin from Zhukov and Litvinov on American Proposals for Disarming and Demilitarization of Germany and Japan (SECRET) (4 pp.)

Mar. 21: Stabilizing Socialism

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch.23 (15 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” (De-Stalinization) (4 pp.)
- Stalin’s Coffin (4 pp.)
- Directive to the Central Committee Revising Procedures for Informing Families of Causes of Death of Relatives While in Police Custody (SECRET) (2 pp.)
- Glavlit List of Politically Defective Books (SECRET) (5 pp.)

Sunday Mar. 25, 8pm

FILM: *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (Vladimir Menshov, 1980, 150 (mins.))

WEEK ELEVEN (195 pp.)

Mar. 26: Refrigerators and Apartments

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch. 24 (12 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Joseph Brodsky, “In a Room and a Half,” from idem., *Less than One: Selected Essays*, pp. 447-501 (54 pp.)
- Efim Etkind, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator* (1978), pp. 1-8, 84-110, 247-63 (50 pp.)
- Tour two Russian communal apartments:
<http://www.kommunalka.spb.ru>
 (It’s in Russian, but fear not. On the upper left side of the screen, click on “экспозиция” and then explore the apartment.)
- Khrushchev and Nixon: The Kitchen Debate – see:
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/14/documents/debate/>

Mar. 28: The Soviet Union as Superpower

- Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, pp. 210-74 (64 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- The following texts are from Alvin Z. Rubinstein, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, pp. 266-80 (15 pp.):
- The following texts are from Alvin Z. Rubinstein, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, pp. 266-80 (15 pp.):
 - Khrushchev, “Speech to the Higher Party School of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU”
 - Andrei Gromyko, “Some International Implications of the Cuban Missile Crisis”
 - Open Letter from CPSU Central Committee to Party Organizations and All Communists of the Soviet Union [re: China]”

WEEK TWELVE (135 pp.)

Apr. 2: Varieties of Dissent

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch.25 (18 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs*, pp. 190-95, 281-94 (19 pp.)
- Currents of Dissent - Andrei Sakharov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Roy Medvedev (10 pp.)
- KGB and Central Committee reports on Sakharov (SECRET) (4 pp.)
- Letter from Andropov to Brezhnev, 7 February 1974 (SECRET) (4 pp.)
- Andrei Sinyavksy, “Dissent as a Personal Experience” (6 pp.)
- Vladimir Vysotskii, “They’re Hunting Wolves” (1 p.)
- Vladimir Vysotskii, Letter to the Central Committee Secretary (3 pp.)
- Vladimir Vysotskii Website (texts and songs in Real Audio): <http://www.kulichki.com/vv/> (to the right of the photograph, click on “25+”)

Apr. 4: Stagnation and Détente

- Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, 1-57

DOCUMENTS

- The Brezhnev Doctrine (3 pp.)
- The Helsinki Accords (4 pp.)
- Report from the KGB on the “Group for Implementation of the Helsinki Accords in the USSR” (SECRET) (2 pp.)
- Tatiana Zaslavskaja, “Novosibirsk Report” (4 pp.)

Sunday, Apr. 8, 8pm

FILM: *The Rise and Fall of Mikhail Gorbachev* (BBC, 58 mins.)

WEEK THIRTEEN (151 pp.)

Apr. 9: Gorbachev and “Restructuring”

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch. 26 (15 pp.)
- Kotkin, 58-112 (55 pp.)

DOCUMENTS

- The Gorbachev Years: A Timeline
- Gorbachev’s Speech on the 70th Anniversary of the October Revolution (“Reopening the Past”) (5 pp.)
- Nina Andreyeva, “I Cannot Forego Principles” (3 pp.)
- Gorbachev, “The New Thinking” (4 pp.)
- Eduard Shevardnaze, Excerpts from *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (3 pp.)

Apr. 11: End of Empire

- Kotkin, 113-141 (28 pp.)

DOCUMENT

- The following texts are from Victoria Bonnell et al., eds., *Russia at the Barricades: Eyewitness Accounts of the August 1991 Coup*:
 - “Appeal to the Soviet People” from the State Committee for the State of Emergency (August 19, 1991), pp. 33-38 (6 pp.)
 - Interrogation of Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov (Aug. 22, 1991), pp. 55-63 (9 pp.)
 - Moscow’s M. V. Khrunichev Machine-Building Factory Reacts to the August Coup, pp. 111-19 (9 pp.)
 - Letter from St. Petersburg, pp. 147-57 (11 pp.)
 - Interrogation of Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov (Aug. 22, 1991), pp. 55-63 (9 pp.)
- The Rejection of Imperial Ambition: *Izvestiya*’s Comment (3 pp.)

Sunday Apr. 15, 8pm

FILM: *Prisoner of the Mountains* (Sergei Bodrov, 1996, 99 mins.)

WEEK FOURTEEN (90 pp.)

Apr. 16: Under the Rubble

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch. 27 (20 pp.)
- Kotkin, 142-196 (54 pp.)

Apr. 18: Concluding Thoughts

- Evtuhov & Stites, ch. 28 (16 pp.)

***** Take-home final exam handed out in class - due by noon on Wed. April 25 *****