

## **Red Press: Radical Print Culture from St. Petersburg to Chicago**

The Russian revolution simmered for decades before finally toppling the imperial government in early 1917 and bringing to power the world's first Communist government later that same year. Like no other political event the Bolshevik revolution reverberated around the world, carried by political networks via print and visual media. The University of Chicago has a privileged vantage point on the revolution's "red press," in large part thanks to Samuel Northrup Harper, son of the University's founding president, William Rainey Harper.

During his extensive sojourns in Russia Samuel Harper collected first-hand documentation of Russian culture and politics from 1904 to the late 1930s, with a particular emphasis on the revolutionary decade between 1905 and 1917. In January 1905 he was on Palace Square in St. Petersburg during the infamous Bloody Sunday encounter. In the summer of 1917 he was back in the imperial capital, now named Petrograd, to witness the tumult between the February and October revolutions. In between he spent half of each year at the University of Chicago teaching courses in Russian, laying the foundations of the University's programs in Russian studies. Red Press augments Harper's collection of handbills, pamphlets, and other revolutionary ephemera with material from other holdings in Special Collections that document how Russia's revolution was described, imagined and disseminated, from the Far East to the streets of Chicago.

### **ANDO CASE**

#### **Soviet Propaganda Posters**

The transformation of the former Russian Empire into a socialist state required the mass organization of people, material and minds. Such an upheaval demanded media capable of disseminating Soviet ideas to all reaches of the far-flung Soviet public. The Soviet propaganda poster was one such means of producing a mass public. The Soviet poster drew both on the ancient visual traditions of the icon and popular woodcuts called *lubki*, and on the more recent precedents of the advertising poster, the satirical journal, and political caricature.

Most of the posters on display here were collected by Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin during two trips to the Soviet Union, particularly to the Ukrainian SSR, at the turn of the 1930s. For this reason a number of the posters displayed contain text in Ukrainian rather than in Russian and concern the industrialization of the Don Basin in eastern Ukraine, one of the major targets of Stalin's Five-Year Plans.

These posters call on the Soviet public to fulfill a number of duties, but primarily to be always prepared for war against capitalists encircling the USSR and to labor at heavy industry, to remember the perpetual proletariat struggle against capitalism. Repeated imagery includes scenes of exploitation of the proletariat class by capitalists (often in grotesque caricatures), the shining Soviet factory, and the lone Soviet fighter, ready to defend the young Soviet state to the utmost.

The posters also depict exhortations to remember leftist struggles beyond the borders of the Soviet Union: one poster displayed here praises the efforts of the German Rot Front (Red Front)

movement; another commemorates the failure of the Paris Commune of 1871 as a precursor of Russia's own successful October Revolution.

The posters take part in a range of artistic styles, from the abstract to the realist, from the avant-garde to the traditional. Pay attention to the multiple types of perspective used from poster to poster. Text—slogans, poetry, and more—is incorporated in ways that variously intrude on, interact with, and abstain from the poster's central imagery. These posters were created right on the cusp of the imposition of Socialist Realism as the official artistic style of the Soviet Union in 1932 and reveal a moment of aesthetic diversity in Russian and Soviet visual art.

## 1.

Kaplan and Fridkin

Agit-Poster No. 2. The All-Ukrainian Association of Proletarian Artists of the Former Society of Artists of Red Ukraine

lithograph

n.d.

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

[Verse in upper right:]

Strike without warning

The old techniques.

In the new situation

Work in a new way.

[Caption to caricature of bourgeois in hammock:]

Reliance on self-management.

“We still have many managers who ‘don’t believe’ in mechanization or in contracts with collective farms. These are the same managers that fail to understand the new situation, refuse to work in the new way and miss the ‘good old times’ when the workforce came to enterprises ‘by itself.’” – Joseph Stalin

[Caption to caricature of worker on right:]

“Down with specialists!”

“‘Specialist-baiting’ was always and remains a harmful and shameful phenomenon in our country.” – Joseph Stalin

“What is de-personalization? De-personalization means the lack of responsibility for the assigned work, the lack of responsibility for mechanisms, for work-stations, and for instruments of labor.” – Joseph Stalin

[Caption under silver rouble:]

State Accounting

[“Opportunist” wrestling with “Bureaucrat” over pen bearing legend:]

Opposition to state administration

2. [folder 18]

V. Deni

"Rot Front"

lithograph

105 cm x 68 cm

1932

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

Red Front (rendered as *Rot Front* in Russian, or Roter Frontkaempferbund in German) was a paramilitary wing of the German Communist Party in the 1920s. The poster depicts a worker standing over banking and exchange buildings, with a poem below by Dem'yan Bednyi.

“Rot Front!” is the workers’ universal battle cry,  
A threat to the whole band of bankers and stockbrokers.  
The brokers have nary a day of peace,  
Constantly faced with this.  
They would attack us, but they’re afraid:  
What an insult they’d get! Thunder strikes in our response:  
“Hail the worldwide ROT FRONT!”  
And no cannon or tanks will save the bankers then.  
Their exchanges and banks will never withstand  
The charge of the Rot-Fronters!  
And the stockbrokers’ remains will fly  
To the garbage heap!

3. [folder 13]

Here, There and Everywhere We’re Building Socialism

lithograph

71 cm x 51.7 cm

undated

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

4.

N.V. Tsivchinskii

"The Victory of the Five Year Plan is a Strike Against Capitalism"

lithograph

104 cm x 70.2 cm

1931

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

5. [folder 7]

“The Paris of the workers...” [on the Paris Commune in 1871.]

lithograph

104 cm x 68.5 cm

undated

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

6. [folder 17]

"Long live the international socialist revolution!" (Lenin).

Banner reads: All power to the Soviets!

lithograph

99.5 cm x 65.5 cm

undated

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

7. [folder 8]

"Donbas -- Until We Overcome"

lithograph

102 cm x 70 cm

undated

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

8.

[folder 19]

"Komsomol Member, Be Ready to Defend the USSR. Learn to Shoot Accurately!"

lithograph

100.5 cm x 71 cm

1932

Dr. Harry Bakwin and Dr. Ruth Morris Bakwin Soviet Posters Collection 1930-1932

9.

V. Briskin, V. Viktorov

I go, I stride across the moon.

lithograph

87.2 x 58.5 cm

1970

Ladis Donabed Kristof, Collection of Soviet Posters

10.

Lenin's Name and Cause Will Live Forever

Ladis Donabed Kristof, Collection of Soviet Posters

Satirical Journals (for Ando case)

Boris Kustodiev. "Olympus: Count Ignat'ev." *Adskaia pochta* no. 3, 1906, p.1. St. Petersburg: Tovarishchestvo R. Golike i A. Vil'borg.

"After the pogrom." *Maliar* no. 3 1906, p. 1. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia "Sirius."

"Every sandpiper praises his own swamp." *Iumoristicheskii al'manakh. No. 50. Politiko-iumoristicheskoe boloto: Napravlenie osushitel'noe*, p. 1. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Tovarishchestva "Narodnaia pol'za."

Mstislav Dobuzhinskii. "The October Idyll." *Zhupel* no. 1, 1905, p. 4. St. Petersburg: Tovarishchestvo R. Golike i A. Vil'borg.

Ivan Bilibin, "Once the Great and Glorious Tsar Dodon." *Zhupel* no. 2, 1905 p. 1. St. Petersburg: Tovarishchestvo R. Golike i A. Vil'borg.

Mstislav Dobuzhinskii, *Reconciliation*. *Zhupel* no. 2, 1905, p. St. Petersburg: Tovarishchestvo R. Golike i A. Vil'borg.

Among the reforms and freedoms promised by the Tsar Nicholas II's Manifesto of October 17, 1905, issued amidst nationwide unrest, was the freedom of speech. For fourteen chaotic months, between December 1905 and January 1907, the Russian press functioned *de facto* without preliminary censorship for the first time. As Vladimir Lenin later recalled, "No publisher dared to present the authorities with their obligatory copy, and the authorities didn't dare to take any measures against this." (V. I. Lenin, "Doklad o revoliutsii 1905 goda," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 30, p. 321.) This anarchic situation facilitated the rapid spread of a new type of satirical magazine, which skewered the government, including the Tsar himself, in word and image. Most of the magazines that emerged in this period were short-lived, many of them closed down by police order after publishing features deemed offensive to church, state or public morality. But they nonetheless laid a firm foundation for a popular satirical print culture in revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union.

In design and print technology such satirical magazines as *Adskaia pochta* (The Infernal Post) and *Zhupel* (Bogey) represent the cutting edge of early modernist culture in Russia. They numbered many elite writers and artists among their founding contributors, from "realist" novelist Maxim Gorky to symbolist poet Konstantin Bal'mont, and from modernist painter Valentin Serov to future socialist realist Isaak Brodskii. The third issue of *Adskaia pochta* for 1906 consisted wholly of a portrait gallery of the Tsar's cabinet by Boris Kustodiev and Zinovii Grzhebin, titled "Olympus"; the front cover, displayed here, shows Count Aleksei Ignat'ev, who was assassinated soon thereafter, in December 1906. The cover of *Zhupel* (no. 2, 1906) features Ivan Bilibin's updating of a Russian folk motif about the stupidly evil Tsar Dodon, who transparently represents Nicholas II. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii's "October Idyll," adorning the cover of the opening issue of *Zhupel*, captures the ambivalence of the intelligentsia to the revolutionary violence, a theme he picked up in "Reconciliation" (*Zhupel* no. 2) which shows a rainbow rising over the Kremlin; this seemingly

affirmative message is compromised by the sea of blood that has drowned the rest of Moscow and which lines the rainbow itself.

The cheaper, more popular face of the satirical press is represented here by the magazines *Iumoristicheskii al'manakh* (Humor Almanac) and *Maliar* (Dauber), which adopted lower production values, scrappier humor and more decisively radical politics. The cover of *Iumoristicheskii al'manakh* (here represented by issue no. 50, subtitled *The Political Humor Swamp*) shows a drowning government minister over the caption "Every sandpiper praises his own swamp." The cover of *Maliar* (no. 3, 1906) reproduces a photograph of victims of a pogrom. Frequently these popular magazines adapted caricatures from the foreign press, with captions translated into Russian.

As eyewitness to the 1905 revolution Samuel Harper avidly collected the satirical magazines published in St. Petersburg, with the result that the University of Chicago holds an unusually rich collection of these rare ephemera, which provide a sense of the visual language that rapidly developed for political satire in pre-revolutionary Russia.

#### Pamphlets (Ando Case)

The printing press is strongly associated with Revolution. In the English Civil War of 1642 and the French and American revolutions, dissent was clarified in pamphlets and broadsides, the social media of the day. These ephemeral publications have often made deep imprints in history: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* crystalized support for independence from Britain, which was formally declared in a broadside printed the night of July 4, 1776.

The relationship between press and politics is often reciprocal, however, as political movements also stimulate the growth of media. This was true of England in the 1640s, and is also the case with Russia in the beginning of the twentieth century, where a publishing boom followed the 1905 revolution, expressing and contributing to a growing state of unrest. After the February Revolution of 1917 relaxed censorship allowed a relatively free exchange of ideas for a new system of government to take place, and various parties competed in print for popular support.

Harper's collection of 1917 pamphlets may reflect his bias against the "radical minority," but it is also representative of the reality on the ground. The Bolsheviks were gaining strategic political authority through the soviets, or elected councils, but were in a weaker position in terms of popular and financial support. They also lacked the printing capacity that their opponents enjoyed. Boris Kolonitskii has calculated that moderate socialists printed over 27 million copies of over 500 titles that year, while the Bolshevik press *Priboi* printed about 1.5 million copies of some 50 titles.

#### Anti-German Pamphlets

The public fervor of 1905-1907 soon ceded to widespread malaise, only to come roaring back with the onset of the Great War in July 1914. This time almost all ideological factions from left and right were united in a paroxysm of messianic patriotism and the demonization of Russia's enemies, primarily Germany. Even such avant-garde artists as Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Mayakovsky chimed in with caricatures of the German foe. This wartime imagery drew on the satire of the 1905

revolution in ways that foretold the development of satirical imagery during the 1917 revolutions and the Civil War.

### Explanatory Power

1. Dobrov, M. : *Chto takoe burzhuaziia?* (What is the Bourgeoisie?). Petrograd: Petrogr. Torg. Prom. Soiuz, tip. "Kopeika," 1917
2. Neslukhovskii, S.K.: *Chto takoe sotsializm?* (What is the Socialism?). Petrograd: K-vo "Svobodnyi put'"
3. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Kto takie sotsial-demokraty i chego oni khotiat'?* (Who Are the Social Democrats and What Do They Want?). 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Petrograd: Izdatel'stvo i sklad "Kniga," 1917.
4. Vatin (V. A. Bystrianskii), *Chto takoe kommuna?* (What is a Commune?). Petrograd: Petrogradskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Krasnoarmeiskikh Deputatov, 1918.
5. Kin, L.: *Chto takoe respublika?* (What is a Republic?). Petrograd: Revoliutsionnaia biblioteka, 1917.
7. Kryzhitskii, G.K.: *Chto takoe federativnaia respublika? (Rossiiskaia federatsiia).* (What is a Federal Republic? (The Russian Federation)). Petrograd: Znamenskaia skoropechatnaia, 1917.

The February Revolution brought new terms to the forefront of public debate, and with them a struggle over their meaning, often for the purported benefit of the mass reader. In his pamphlet displayed here, L. Kin notes the omnipresence of the words "democratic republic" on flags in street demonstrations, but wonders if people know what they mean. At least ten different pamphlets with the title *What is a Democratic Republic?* offered answers in 1917, while another ten asked *What is Socialism?*

The naïve political subject is often both addressee and hero in these texts. Aleksandra Kollontai notes that the new political parties in Russia all promise something to the peasants and workers, but that it is hard for the latter to distinguish between friends, enemies, and wolves in sheep's clothing. In *What is the Bourgeoisie?* M. Dobrov reports that workers on the Volga have begun talking of the *Bargeousie*—owners of barges, while another variant associates the term with the *birzha*, or Russian stock exchange; but the more educated are also guilty of misusing this word, according to Dobrov. Bolshevik papers, for instance, have been describing opposing socialist parties as petite bourgeoisie in nature, a designation that Dobrov suggests is equally suited to Lenin himself, to many who had made great sacrifices for the revolution. The masses, he argues, are more capable of seeing the living person in front of them than they are of applying this abstract term. The *ad hominem* attack would continue to be used by the architects of Bolshevik discourse, at times with dire consequences for the working masses. In *Who Are the Social Democrats and What Do They Want?*

### Group 1B

9. E42. Vol'kenshtein, O.A. (Ol'govich): *Federalizm v Rossii* (Federalism in Russia). Knigoizdatel'stvo "Luch"
10. E33. Ignatov, I.N. : *Gosudarstvennyi stroi Severo-Amerikanskikh Soedinenykh shtatov:*

*Respublika* (The Form of Government of the United States of America: Republic). Moscow: t-vo I. D. Sytina, 1917.

11. E34. Parchevskii, K. : *Polozhenie prezidenta v demokraticheskoi respublike* (The Position of the President in a Democratic Republic). Petrograd: Rassvet, 1917.

12. H35. Sviatlovskii, Prof. V.V.: *Anarkhizm, ego sushchnost' i uchenie* (Anarchism, its Essence and Teaching). (Biblioteka "Svoboda") Petrograd: Iasnyi-Popov, 1917.

13. H5. *K chemu stremitsia S-D Rabochaia Partiiia? (Bol'sheviki i mensheviki). Programma v populiarnom izlozhenii* (What Does the S.-D. Workers Party Work For? (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks). A Popular Exposition of the Program). Petrograd: Knigoizdatel'stvo "Svobodnyi Put'," 1917.

Another large group of pamphlets examined other governments as possible models for Russian development. Il'ia Ignatov published a series on the government structures of England, France, and the United States. In the latter he makes much of the distinction between state and federal authority, but does not venture to comment on how this might work in Russia. Olgovich takes up this problem, also with a focus on the United States, linking its successful model of federalism to its strong legal system. Others, such as Parchevskii's analysis of the role of the president in a democratic government, examined particular institutions. Vladimir Sviatlovskii examined the possibility of a state without such structures, drawing on Proudhon and Kropotkin. *What Does the S.-D. Worker's Party Strive For?* represents an entirely different approach, setting forth in popular language the Social Democrats Party's program, which included an 8-hour workday, universal education to the age of sixteen, and full equality for all citizens regardless of gender, religion, race or nationality.

## Group 2: The Pamphlet & Tactical Struggle

14. Lenin, N.: *Pis'ma o taktike. Pis'mo 1-e* (Letters on Tactics. 1st Letter). Petrograd: Priboi, 1917.

15. Pimenova, E[miliia] *Narodnyia sobraniia ili mitingi* (Popular Meetings and Demonstrations). Petrograd: Narodnoe delo, 1917.

16. I. Prilezhaev: *Zadachi rabochikh v kontrole i organizatsii proizvodstva* (Tasks of the Workers in the Control and Organization of Production). Petrograd: Rev. mysl', 1917.

17. Iaroslavskii, Em. : *Otchego net tovarov v derevne, khleba v gorodakh?* (Why Are There No Goods in the Village and No Bread in the Cities?). Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Volna," 1917.

18. Lilina, Z.: *Organizuite zhenshchin!* (Organize the Women!). Petrograd: Izd. Priboi, 1917.

19. Kautskii, K. : *Klassovye interesy* (Class Interests). Rabochaia i krest'ianskaia biblioteka. Petrograd: Luch, 1917.

20. Kollontai, A. : *Rabotnitsy i uchreditel'noe sobranie* (Working Women and the Constituent Assembly). Petrograd: Izd. Priboi, 1917.

The most portentous of the political pamphlets of 1917 were Vladimir Ulyanov's, published under his pseudonym "N. Lenin." His first *Letter on Tactics*, which includes as an appendix his "April Theses," suggests how to take advantage of the weak provisional government and introduces the pivotal slogan "All Power to the Soviets." Such emphasis on realpolitik rather than abstract reflections was characteristic of the Bolsheviks, who were already exercising their authority through their dominance in the elected local councils, or soviets. Their pamphlets asked not "what is a republic?" but instead "what is to be done?" Aleksandra Kollontai calls for women to join the "war

against war” and high prices, while Zlata Lilina points out the importance of organizing protest of the exploitation of women in labor. Prilezhaev’s tract on worker control of production bears the hallmarks of later Soviet publications, providing detailed analysis of class relations in labor. Emel’ian Iaroslavkii cites the mutual dependence of village and factory, and argues that capitalist exploitation can only be overcome through the union of workers and peasants. These strategies are leveraged with promises of a bright future following the defeat of capitalism, and follow the logic set forth in Karl Kautsky’s tract (despite his eventual break with Bolshevism), in which he argues that the narrow class interests behind the fight for workers’ rights are in fact the highest and most universal interests of humanity.

## Hygiene

Strashun, I. D., *Vodka—iad bednoty* (Vodka—Poison of the Poor). Moscow: Krestianskaia gazeta, 1926.

Strashun, I. D., *Na bor’bu za novyi trezvyi byt*. Moscow: Izd-vo narkomzdrava, 1925.

Byk, Dr. I., *Vred sueverii i predrassudkov dlia materi i rebenka* (The Harm of Superstitions and Prejudice to Mother and Child). Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe medetsinskoe izdatel’stvo, 1930.

Harper continued to collect pamphlets in the years following the revolution, often in new categories, such as social hygiene. The Soviets took up the battle against drinking with propaganda, rather than prohibition (with which the United States experimented from 1920-1933). In his introduction to Il’ia Strashun’s *Vodka—the Poison of the Poor*, Health Commissar Nikolai Semashko argues that drunkenness is the most sinister enemy of workers, undermining their health, but also their economic and cultural development. It should be fought in the same manner that had led to the vanquishing of the capitalists and landowners. Strashun directs much of his attack against home brewing in the villages, where, one of his sources reports, social institutions are not yet strong enough to carry out a winning campaign on this front. Doctor Byk’s tract addresses superstitions regarding natal and prenatal care. Some of these might be relatively harmless (if an expectant mother drinks water from a bucket her child will suffer from heartburn; if she looks an animal in the eye her child will have animal eyes; if she looks to the side while sifting flour her child will be cross-eyed; birthmarks are ascribed to the mother’s grabbing herself in fright or crossing the street during a funeral), while others could have real implications in the healthy carrying of the child (feeling prenatal movement meant that the child’s soul had found its place and a miscarriage could no longer take place). These, he argues, are a legacy of the pre-Revolutionary period, and can be stamped out through education.

## Calendars

1. *Sotsialisticheskii zemledel’cheskii kalendar’ na 1919 g.* (Socialist Agricultural Calendar for 1919). Moscow: Izdanie Narodnogo kommissariata zemledeliia, 1919.
2. *Sovetskii kalendar’. 1920* (Soviet Calendar. 1920). Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1919. On loan from William.
3. *Vseobshchii nastol’nyi kalednar’ na 1927 g.* (Universal Table Calendar for 1927). Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1926.

Early Bolshevik calendars reveal a regime attempting to establish the legitimacy of a new era in literal terms. The 1920 *Soviet Calendar* features monthly illustrations showing a progression from primitive Homo sapiens (January) to industrialization and the bright future (December), and in the 1927 calendar a section titled “Our Epoch” describes a radical leap forward. But at the same time, these calendars concede to continued observance of rites of the past. Each refers to three cycles of time—the revolutionary, the Christian, and the agrarian, and in the anniversary year of 1927 there are still surprising accommodations to the latter two. Christian holidays are scrutinized from an anthropological point of view, connecting them to practices in other belief systems (including pagan ones)—but they are nonetheless described in detail.

Calendars were printed in many different forms, but many of them were like almanacs, providing an opportunity to incorporate new ideas and practices into the rhythm of daily life. They were particularly useful in promoting literacy in the functional, cultural and political senses of the term. This was of special importance in the village, where greater resistance to Soviet ways was found, and where the calendar could play a unique role. As noted in the 1919 *Socialist Agricultural Calendar*: “The village has long been accustomed to the calendar. One could find a calendar in places where no newspapers were read, where nothing was known of journals and there were no libraries.”

Pre-Revolutionary calendars, however, had cultivated Christian traditions. In a section called “The Priests’ Calendar and the Soviet Calendar,” the 1919 edition addresses this confrontation, which had been made explicit in the transition from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, adopted by the Bolshevik government in 1918. The calendar moved forward 13 days, shifting anniversary celebrations of the October revolution to November, and the traditional Orthodox day of Christmas into January. For those concerned about shifting the celebration of holy days, the editors offered advice that would become typical of the atheist propaganda of the regime: “It is very simple: it is best not to celebrate the church holidays.” The same solution was recommended for the marking of name days, which linked birthday celebrations to the feast days of Orthodox saints. The Russian Orthodox Church refused to accept this reform, and to this day celebrates religious holidays according to the old calendar.

V. N. Deni

*III-i Internatsional*

*Russkii revoliutsionnyi plakat*

Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925

Rare Book Collection

Viacheslav Polonskii celebrated the political poster and its vital contribution to the revolution with a lavish 1925 album, *The Russian Revolutionary Poster*. In the introduction, he argued that the poster had achieved unparalleled development during the proletarian revolution, and predicted its bright future in the USSR. Bolshevik posters, he explained, had unique power because of their dual provenance—they were works of Russian art, but were also “born of the revolutionary street.”

A shocking red pen self-consciously demonstrates this power in Victor Deni's 1921 poster for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Communist International. Deni created a number of the most compelling images of the early Bolshevik period, but by the time of Polonskii's album he had abandoned the poster for the political cartoon. Polonskii was a key proponent of the red press; he was head of the House of Print publishing house, and edited a number of the most important journals of the day, including *Red Virgin Soil*, *New World*, and *Press and Revolution*.

## Handbills

Handbill, "Third Message of the Priest Georgy Gapon to Workers and Soldiers," undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Sam On January 9, 1905 large crowds descending on Palace Square to deliver a petition to the Tsar were dispersed with gunfire, with hundreds of casualties. This was the infamous Bloody Sunday that many believe set the course for the revolutions that followed. The demonstration was organized by the enigmatic Father Georgii Gapon, an Orthodox priest who had ties with the secret police. Taking refuge in Maksim Gorky's apartment, Gapon sent out messages calling the people to unite in their struggle for freedom and placing a "priest's curse" on those responsible for the massacre. "Reprint, copy out by hand if you can, and spread among you and throughout Russia my testament message, calling all the oppressed, insulted and humiliated of Rus to stand up in defense of their rights."

Handbill, "On the occasion of the departure of the first volunteer battalion of Disabled veterans for the front," undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

A rally supporting the group features Alexander Kerensky, as well as Georgii Plekhanov, Vasily Maklakov, Matvei Skobolev and Petr Kropotkin (the latter two with misspelled initials)—the leader of the Provisional government, a Marxist theoretician, a socialist, a Menshevik, and an anarchist. Support for the allied cause came from many quarters, while Lenin was one of its most vocal opponents. The text of Kropotkin's speech at the event can be found on one of the handbills on the wall.

Handbill, "Deserters from the front: "Go away – you're no son of mine!," undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Russia had opened the war with the world's largest army, which at one point swelled to five million enlisted—but suffered horrific casualties, with estimates of one half to one million killed, three million wounded, and another two to three million captured. As suggested by the apparent need for this poster, many deserting sons would have been welcomed back home from this unpopular war.

Handbill, "Rise up all, as one! Drive away the enemy. Il'ya, buried alive, has risen," undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

The Russian folk hero Ilya Muromets rises from a premature grave dug by a pacifist, whose sign reads “Down with the war. Peace at whatever the cost.”

Handbill, “Renunciation of the throne by Grand Prince Mikhail Aleksandrovich,” undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Nicholas II abdicated the throne on March 2 (15), 1917, paving the way for his youngest brother to assume power. Citing unprecedented war and unrest, Mikhail defers, asking the populace to submit to the authority of the Provisional Government and promising to take power only if elected. After the revolution he was arrested and executed.

### **Revolutionary Link to the East: Civil War, Geopolitics and Bolshevik Ideology in Russia’s Eastern Territories**

Both Russian revolutions of 1917 took place in St. Petersburg, yet they had serious repercussions for all of Russia’s regions—including Russia’s frontier territories in Siberia and the Far East. The Russian Civil War began immediately following the 1917 Revolution, and, while most major battles in Western Russia were decided in favor of the Bolsheviks by 1919, resistance to the Bolsheviks was especially prolonged in Siberia and the Far East, where skirmishes were still being fought into 1923. Notably, the Russian Civil War in this region was not limited to the participation of the Reds and the Whites as belligerents. In fact, Russia’s eastern territories became a geopolitical epicenter in the struggle to control Russia’s revolutionary future in the wake of the events of 1917.

Assembled here are documents that give a glimpse into the ways in which Russia’s geopolitical situation vis-à-vis its Eastern territories in the years following the 1917 revolutions was portrayed in print media. Of particular interest are: Bolshevik “link to the East” ideology in theory versus in practice, as Bolsheviks in Moscow attempt to reach out to the region’s neighboring Chinese and Korean peasants, even as they fight Japanese imperialists in that same region; Bolshevik creation of the nominally sovereign “Far Eastern Republic” as a buffer zone between the new communist regime in Russia and imperialist regimes in Asia; and Bolshevik portrayals of these events in ideological novels and historical books for Soviet children.

Typescript translation, Pek Dinshun, “The Revolutionary East and the Immediate Problems of the Communist International,” *Pravda*, July 20, 1920.  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

An English translation of Korean delegate Pek Dinshun’s speech, given at the Third World Congress of the Communist International in the summer of 1921. The speech was originally published in Russian newspapers. Dinshun relates the failure of the Second International to a failure of Communists to address the problem of the “colonial peoples” of East Asia. The East in general, but especially Asia, is construed as a geopolitical reservoir of European, or Western, colonial power. The speech suggests that a full Communist victory necessitates fighting imperialism on the Eastern front in Asia, not only on the Western front in Europe.

Typescript translation, "Nikiforoff's Speech Held at the Meeting of the Conference of October 23, 1920", undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Pyotr Nikiforov's inaugural address on the creation of the semi-autonomous Far Eastern Republic. Compare the language of peace and coexistence here with the rhetoric of anti-imperialist struggle in Pek Dinshun's speech to the Third World Congress. The creation of the Far Eastern Republic is widely considered to have been a time-biding device that allowed the Bolsheviks to consolidate victories against the Whites in the immediate wake of the Russian Civil War before having to deal directly with encroaching imperialist regimes in East Asia, especially Japan.

Typescript "The Far East", undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Summary and translation of items in Bolshevik newspapers. News media revealed the attitude of Russian revolutionaries toward East Asia, as Bolshevik forces moved into Siberia and the Far East during the fighting in the Civil War. The Bolsheviks were most wary of the Japanese, who had encroached on the Russian Far East before, had come out of the Russo-Japanese War victorious, and had also helped the Whites during the Russian Civil War. Russian print media at the time therefore emphasized Russian ties with Korean and Chinese peasants more than it emphasized any ties between Russia and Japan.

I. Kholodov  
*Osobaia Dalnevostochnaia*  
[The Special Far-Eastern Army]  
Leningrad: OGIZ - Molodaiia gvardiia, 1932  
Historical Children's Book Collection

A children's book for Soviet children, highlighting the Red Army's activities in the Far East during the Russian Civil War. The forces of the Special Far Eastern Army are depicted as revolutionaries who are accepted by Chinese peasants as saviors against bourgeois Chinese generals and Japanese imperialists-capitalists. The last page of the book details a Japanese imperialist, capitalist, Manchurian-style plot to put the Whites into power in the Russian Far East, in order to rule the region by proxy. Even after the Whites are defeated by the end of the Russian Civil War, the Special Far Eastern Army is said to be on watch, day and night, to defend against this Japanese plot.

Lev Rubinshtein  
*Na sopakh Man'chzhurii*  
[In the hills of Manchuria]  
Moscow: DETGIZ, 1948  
Historical Children's Book Collection

Na sopakh Man'chzhurii/In the hills of Manchuria (Spot 2, display pages 14-15)  
A Soviet book for children, on the Soviet military command in Manchuria during World War II. Tensions between the Russians and the Japanese, which had been exacerbated during the Russian

Civil War, come to a head during World War II, when Soviet troops move to drive the Japanese out of China's Manchuria region. In this children's book, the events are portrayed as the moment when the Soviet forces finally drive the imperialist Japanese out of revolution-ready China.

## **Assassinations**

N. Sokolov. *Ubiistvo tsarskoi sem'i* (The Murder of the Imperial Family). Berlin: Slovo, 1925.

After Nicholas II abdicated the throne in March 1917 the imperial family was shunted around several sites of confinement. In the early summer of 1918 agents of the new Soviet government brought them to the Ural region and executed them, on Lenin's direct order. The former Tsar and his immediate family—Tsarina Aleksandra, Grand Duke Alexis, and Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia—were shot in the basement of a former merchant's house in Ekaterinburg on the night of 16-17 July. Other close relatives were executed in Alapaevsk and Perm. When the Soviets lost control of the Ural region later that year, Admiral Kol'chak commissioned an investigation of the assassinations, the results of which were published abroad, after the Red Bolsheviks defeated the White counterrevolutionary armies.

Nikolai Sokolov's 1925 book is remarkable not only as a comprehensive forensic investigation of the assassinations, but also as an early use of photography to document war crimes. The book not only became an important source for anti-Soviet propaganda (for example, some of the photographs are reprinted in editions of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*), but also a precedent for photographic studies of the Holocaust and other atrocities.

## **Satirical Journals**

Constitution, Revolution, Provocation

The three key words of 1905 were constitution, revolution and provocation. Constitution was the formal demand and, to a limited degree, the prize of the broad uprising. Revolution, advocated by relatively small radical parties, was widely feared as the unintended result of the uprising and the government's truculence. Provocation arose as a name for the government's bloody efforts to discredit the revolutionary parties, sometimes by initiating or allowing terrorist actions against itself.

The satirical journals that sprung up in 1905, with the temporary end of preliminary censorship, frequently addressed these three concepts, often with humor. A series of caricatures in *Kliuv* (The Beak) shows "revolution" hatching from out of the egg of "constitution," nurtured by the government. Zinovii Grzhebin's caricature "The Were-Eagle" shows the serpents of revolution as the flipside of the double-headed eagle, symbolizing the imperial government. In Mitiai's caricature extends this gallows humor to the satirical journals themselves: each of the major journals is named on a window of the jail that stands as a monument to the brief window of freedom of speech in 1905.

The Results of the Revolution (to be included on text panel)

A poem from the satirical journal *Fiskal* presents a condensed history of the 1905 revolution from a standpoint sympathetic to the peasant and working-class parties on the Left. The “red laughter” mentioned in the introductory section (translated below) is a reference the writer Leonid Andreev’s apocalyptic novella of societal collapse (1904).

### The Prologue

A terrible year! A bloody year!  
Cries and groans surround us:  
The tired multitude is in chains;  
Destined only to suffer.

Darkness has fallen; discord reigns  
And tyranny’s burden is odious,  
A furnace of enmity, a pitch-black hell:  
The “red laughter” runs unchecked.

The chain of events rolled quickly on,  
A chain of good intentions, but the dust  
Of all our hopes has been trampled  
By a vile, slavish heel.

Cursed year! Nightmarish year!  
Soaked in blood and tears;  
The rallying cry, “Onward, my people!”  
Has been slandered by vile enemies.

The major events of the year are covered in the section headings: *January 9, On the War, On the Pogroms, The Potemkin, The Duma, Protests, Before the Manifesto, October 17* (the manifesto’s publication date), *After October 17, The Ministers, A Kaleidoscope of Events*. The mutiny on the battleship Potemkin, described briefly in this poem, would become a central event in the Soviet narrative of the 1905 revolution and the basis for Sergei Eisenstein’s 1926 film *The Battleship Potemkin*:

### The Potemkin

Perishing in unequal battle,  
The Potemkin fulfilled its duty.  
Bleeding to death drop by drop,  
It departed the stage as a hero.

*Fiskal* No. 3. St. Petersburg: Parovaia skoropechatnia G. Pozharova.  
ffDK262.R9 c.1.v.3

medium case *Fiskal* No. 4. St. Petersburg: Parovaia skoropechatnia G. Pozharova.  
ffDK262.R9 c.1.v.3

Anonymous, "Constitution," *Kliuv* no. 1, p. 4. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Tovarishchestva  
"Narodnaia pol'za."  
ffDK262.R9 c.1.v.4

*Kliuv* No. 2. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Tovarishchestva "Narodnaia pol'za."  
ffDK262.R9 c.1.v.4

Mitai, "A Monument to the Freedom of Speech, 1905," *Sekira* No. 2. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia  
Iu. A. Mansfel'da.  
ffDK262.R9 c.1.v.4

Anonymous, "Revolution," *Deviaty Val* no. 1, p. 1. St. Petersburg: Pushkinskaia skoropechatnia.  
ffDK262.R9 c.1.v.4

Z. I. Grzhebin, "The Were-Eagle," *Zhupel* no. 1, 1905, p. 8. St. Petersburg: Tovarishchestvo R.  
Golike I A. Vil'borg.

## **Young Worker**

The Young Worker was an American communist monthly published in Chicago, which aimed to unite young workers across America in the struggle for socialism. Amid the many ideological splits following the Russian Revolution and after much internal debate, the Young Worker decided not to affiliate itself with any American party directly so that it could continue to serve as a forum for all working youth in the United States. Though the newspaper maintained a largely pro-Bolshevik position and participated in the youth section of the Communist International, members of any party could potentially submit an article to the Young Worker without violating the rank-in-file demands of their own party. Many of its issues focus on the Russian Revolution in addition to reporting on American labor concerns.

Six years after the Russian Revolution, Young Worker editor Max Shachtman reflects on the revolution and the work of Lenin, whose use of the press is inspirational for the publication of the Young Worker. Shachtman will later break with the Communist International during the rise of Stalin and become one of the most significant American Trotskyites, influencing such figures as civil rights leader Bayard Rustin.

Labels 5 & 6 (v. 2, n. 2, February 1923)

“All contributions, whether of money, vegetables or eggs, will be gratefully accepted after the play. All decadent vegetables and moribund eggs will be sent to the starving stockholders of the Standard Oil Company.”

In “Risen from the Ranks,” the Young Worker parodies anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the United States. It tells the farcical tale of a worker, loyal to his boss Mr. Millionbucks, standing up to the evil Russian Bolshevik Kachooski and valiantly saving his boss from having to make concessions to his workers. The defeated Kachooski leaves shaking his fist and vows that “the red flag shall yet float over the Amalgamated Pretzel Company!” The play parodies capitalist decadence, but also the appeals to national prejudice made so often in anti-Bolshevik propaganda.

### **The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**

*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Protokoly sionskikh mudretsov) were first published by devotional author Sergei Nilus in the second edition of his 1905 book *Velikoe v malom* (The Great in the Small). Nilus had previously published other dubious documents, including the “conversations” between landowner Motovilov and Seraphim of Sarov, which were instrumental in the solemn canonization of Seraphim in 1903, in ceremonies led by Emperor Nicholas II.

*The Protocols* resurfaced in 1917 and quickly spread across the globe, fueling anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik fervor. Their authenticity was challenged in public trials, most notably in Berne in 1934-1935. However *The Protocols* remain a staple of anti-Semitic ideology throughout the world and continue to be published, especially in Russia and Eastern Europe and in the Arab world.

Adapting an image from the third “protocol,” some editions represent the interwoven networks of international Jews and Bolsheviks as a serpent twisting around Europe. But conspiracy requires counter-conspiracy: in prefaces and addenda, many of the editions scrupulously document their own origin, from the alleged congress of “the Elders of Zion” in 1897 to Nilus’s first publication of the protocols in 1905 and to its global spread in the wake of the Russian revolutions of 1917.

#### ***Protokoly sionskikh mudretsov*. MS 1293.**

A manuscript copy of the *Protocols* in Russian, probably copied from an early publication for private use and circulation.

#### ***The Jewish Peril. Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1920.** Rosenberger Collection 450E-23.

The first English-language translation of the *Protocols*.

#### ***The Jewish Peril. Protocols...* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. N.I.: The Britons, 1920.**

#### ***Les Protocoles des sages de Sion*. Paris: Editions B. Grasset, 1934.**

Rosenberger Collection 450E-31

***Jødefaren...* Lauritz Carlsen. Copenhagen: Eget Forlag.**

Rosenberger Collection 450E-21

***The Protocols...* Trans. Victor Marsden. Chicago, Ill.: The Patriotic Press, 1934.**

Rosenberger Collection 450E-35

This edition draws on Sokolov's *Murder of the Imperial Family* to provide photographic evidence of the international conspiracy; this photograph is captioned: "The Cabbalistic Inscription found on the wall of the Room in which Imperial Russian family was murdered."

***The Protocols...* Trans. Victor Marsden. N.l.: n.p., n.d.** (Reprinted from English edition of Briton Publishing Society. London, England)

Rosenberger 450E-36

Text: The English translation by Victor E. Marsden (1866-1920) quickly became the most popular in the US. Marsden was a journalist for the *Morning Post* of London, which quickly took up the cause of promoting the *Protocols*. His translation is frequently prefaced by a biographical note that links Marsden's early death to his final labor: "the diabolical spirit of the matter which he was obliged to turn into English made him positively ill."

***Præmonitus præmunitus: The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion. New York: The Beckwith Company, 1920.***

Rosenberger 450 E-34 c.1

As in many editions of *The Protocols*, the editors of *Præmonitus præmunitus* document the origin of their text.

***Præmonitus præmunitus: The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion. New York: The Beckwith Company, 1920.***

Rosenberger 450 E-34 c.2

1. Illustration with flyleaf after pg. 142, with cover of Nilus's *Velikoe v malom* (1905) with library stamp of the British Library.

2. Insert: "An Address Issued By The American Jewish Committee and Nine Allied Organizations as rebuttal to the implied indictment of *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion...*"

***The Protocols...* Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1920.**

Rosenberger Collection 450E-41

Display: Frontispiece: Nilus with Introductory Statement on Bolshevism

***I Protocoli...* Giovanni Preziosi. Casa Editrice Mondadori, 1944.**

This printing took place in February 1945, in the very last days of Fascist rule in Italy.

## **Factionalism**

Vladimir Lenin died in 1924, leaving multiple candidates for succession. A young hotheaded revolutionary from rural Georgia, Iosif Dzhugashvili (Stalin), had a cadre of loyal supporters. Lenin's reservations about Stalin – including indications his personality might not be well-suited for the job – were readily suppressed by Stalin's camp. Leon Trotsky had made major theoretical and practical contributions to the revolutionary movement, but he had had major disagreements with Lenin and was perceived by some as a distant intellectual.

Over the course of the 1920s, Stalin took control of the Soviet Union and exiled Trotsky, where the latter continued to organize both against capitalism and against Stalin's USSR. In the USSR, meanwhile, the charge of Trotskyism served as the pretext for arrests and show trials. Purported Trotskyites – many of whom had no idea what Trotskyism meant – were frequently sentenced to labor camps or executed. The personal struggle between Stalin and Trotsky came to an end in 1940 when the latter was assassinated in Mexico, but it continued to divide the communist movement.

In the United States, these factional disagreements had a profound impact on the already divided leftist movement. The Communist Party of the USA was closely linked to the USSR and held a strong anti-Trotsky line. Meanwhile, Pioneer Publishers served as the primary outlet for Trotskyist thought both before and after the death of Trotsky himself.

Founded in 1925, the International Labor Defense (ILD) offered legal support to beleaguered activists in the US, regardless of their factional affiliation. The ILD became especially notorious for its defense of high-profile political defendants, including Italian anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, and the famous Scottsboro Nine. The ILD was known for transcending the political divisions that split the American left. But even for the ILD, Trotskyist defendants were beyond the pale: they were not eligible for aid from the ILD.

All these movements lay claim to the legacy of Russia's October. These stakes were most evident in the context of another revolutionary moment: the Spanish Civil War of the late 1930s. Each group claimed ownership of the Spanish "revolution," framing it through their own interpretation of 1917. Ultimately, they all lost out when the Spanish Republic fell to dictator Francisco Franco.

## **International Press: The Revolution Resonates**

Alexander Trachtenberg, founder of International Press, was born to a Jewish family in the Russian imperial city of Odessa (modern-day Ukraine) in 1884. Trachtenberg began participating in leftist groups as a teenager, and took part in the first Russian Revolution of 1905. Fleeing the pogroms and

repression that accompanied that revolution, Trachtenberg left the Russian Empire and settled in the United States.

In the United States, Trachtenberg joined an active socialist movement, which was dominated by immigrants like himself. Trachtenberg welcomed the 1917 Russian revolution. Although he did not immediately support the Bolsheviks, he joined their cause after Lenin's coup in October 1917, and quickly became active in the Soviet-sponsored Communist Party of the United States (CPUS).

In 1924, Trachtenberg founded International Publishers with the goal of disseminating Marxist-Leninist thought in affordable editions, including a series of pamphlets on current issues, such as housing policy, race relations, education, religion, and the arts. The pamphlets exhibit strong influences from Soviet graphic art, such as photomontage. They also hew closely to the official Soviet line; for example, Trachtenberg stopped publishing works by Trotsky after he fell afoul of the Soviet regime.

In the 1950s, Trachtenberg was indicted twice under the Smith Act, which prohibited the "overthrow or destruction of any government in the United States." International Publishers put out two pamphlets in his defense. Thanks to an appeal that overturned his second conviction, Trachtenberg spent a total of only three months in prison, and he continued to work with International Publishers until his retirement in 1962.

### **Samuel Northrup Harper A Reluctant Sovietologist**

William Rainey Harper, first president of the University of Chicago, travelled to Russia in 1900 with Chicago business heir Charles Crane. This trip, which included meetings with Lev Tolstoy and Nicholas II, made a deep impression on Harper, who began collaborating with Crane to build up Russian studies back home. Crane funded a series of lectures in Russian Studies at the University, which over the next several years brought such eminent figures as Thomas Masaryk, Maxim Kovalevsky, and Pavel Miliukov as visiting scholars. The lectures of Miliukov, the exiled leader of the Constitutional Democratic party, were published in 1905 and expressed his hope for a liberal Russia—which seemed imminent in 1917, when he became Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government.

William Harper's new interest also had a profound effect on his son Samuel, who set out to become the first American specialist on Russia. He was one of five students in the University of Chicago's first Russian language course in 1902, taught without much skill by another student. Harper then studied with Paul Jean Marie Boyer, a known specialist in Russian language training at the School of Oriental Languages in Paris, and was soon asked to prepare an English edition of Boyer's *Russian Reader* with explanatory grammatical notes. Based on Tolstoy's readers for peasant children, this was the first American textbook of the Russian language.

During his second year in Paris, Harper roomed with twenty voluntary exiles from Russia—revolutionaries who had set up a food commune. Though he eventually lost their confidence, he would continue to follow the revolutionary movement at close hand. In Vasily Klyuchevsky's course on Russian history at Moscow University in November 1904, he saw notes circulating about

student protests, and soon classes were suspended until the following September. In January 1905 he was in Petersburg, where his hotel window, as he writes his father, gave him a clear view of the events of Bloody Sunday. Attending a tea at the American Embassy later that day, he reported on the events, perhaps the beginning of his career as a government advisor. In April 1906 he attended the first sessions of the Duma, an elected body that Nicholas hoped would satisfy demands for democracy.

In the years following, Harper fulfilled the commission of Charles Crane, teaching six months at the University of Chicago, and spending the next six in Russia. His archive includes a voluminous record of his travels and research, often in collaboration with Bernard Pares. Their copious interviews were recorded via an inventive method: one asked questions, while the other committed the conversation to memory. In 1917 Samuel Harper found himself in a familiar role: “During these critical July Days Huntington and I, as the two people at the Embassy knowing Russian, were often sent out to see what was happening in the streets.” Close observation, however, did not guarantee a correct diagnosis; in April, 1917 he wrote the French Ambassador, “You will recall that I refused to be worried with regard to the radical minority, advocating extreme measures. Also, I knew that the socialists, who were clearly under German influence, would be discredited immediately on their arrival in Russia. I am very glad they let Lenin proceed to Petrograd.” At a 1917 gathering in Mandel Hall, he reminded the audience of the university’s connection to Miliukov, the “political genius of democratic Russia” who was going to “assure the success of the new order.” This was what many people wanted to hear, and his prognostication was in high demand—both in the newspapers, and in the highest channels of the State Department.

Harper was given another opportunity to discredit the Bolsheviks in 1918, when Edward Sisson returned from Petrograd with a set of documents suggesting that Lenin, Trotsky and other party leaders had been in the pay of the German government. The Committee on Public Information printed the documents, with an appendix by Harper and L. Franklin Jameson suggesting their likely authenticity. Doubt as to this conclusion continues to this day, however, and Harper later recalled this episode with dismay, regretting that he had bowed to political pressure.

Despite his misgivings, Harper began working for the newly formed Russian Bureau, and was the leading State Department specialist on the Soviet Union from 1919-1921. In this capacity he received numerous documents of historical interest, such as a tally of votes for election to the Central Committee from the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1919. However, his political allegiances made Harper a *persona non grata* in Soviet Russia for a number of years. Finally acquiring a visa in 1926, he visited Moscow and adopted a more sympathetic view of the USSR in his 1929 *Civic Training in Russia*, which was well-received by the Soviets. His 1931 *Making Bolsheviks* showed him back in familiar territory: it was comprised of six lectures given at the University, based on an extended visit to the Soviet Union in 1930. Harper later wrote that watching his father create new traditions at the University of Chicago helped him understand what the Bolsheviks faced in the years after the Revolution.

JN6522.K86

Maxim Kovalevsky (1851-1916)

*Russian Political Institutions*

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1902  
University of Chicago Press Imprint Collection

DK262.M66

Paul Miliukov (1859-1943)

*Russia and Its Crisis*

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1905  
University of Chicago Press Imprint Collection

William Rainey Harper, first president of the University of Chicago, travelled to Russia in 1900 with Chicago business heir Charles Crane. This trip, which included meetings with Lev Tolstoy and Nicholas II, made a deep impression on Harper, who began collaborating with Crane to build up Russian studies back home. Crane funded a visiting lecturer position, which in its first three years brought Maxim Kovalevsky, Thomas Masaryk, and Pavel Miliukov as visiting scholars. All three combined scholarly expertise with political engagement: Kovalevsky was the father of Russian sociology and a specialist in western political institutions; Masaryk was also a sociologist, and became the first president of Czechoslovakia; Miliukov was an historian, the founder of the Constitutional Democrats, and the future Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government. The University of Chicago Press published the lectures of Kovalevsky and Miliukov, both of whom came to Chicago after being suspended from teaching in Russia for the political activity.

PG2117.B8 1932

Paul Jean Marie Boyer (1864-1949)

*Russian Reader*

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1932  
University of Chicago Press Imprint Collection

William Harper's new interest also had a profound effect on his son Samuel, who set out to become the first American specialist on Russia. He was one of five students in the University of Chicago's first Russian language course in 1902, taught without much skill by another student. Harper achieved better results at the School of Oriental Languages in Paris, where he studied with Paul Jean Marie Boyer, a known specialist in Russian language training. Soon he was asked to prepare an English edition of Boyer's *Russian Reader* with explanatory grammatical notes, which was based on Tolstoy's readers for peasant children. This was the first American textbook of the Russian language.

Manuscript letter from Harper to his father, January 9, 1905  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Identification Pass for the Duma, 1906  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

*Fighters for Freedom*, undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Harper had come into contact with exiled revolutionaries in Paris, and when he continued his studies in Moscow in the fall of 1904 his fellow students introduced him to radical circles. He attended some of their meetings, and while sitting in Vasily Klyuchevsky's course on Russian history at Moscow University, saw notes circulating about student protests. Such activity led to the suspension of classes until the following September. On January 9, 1905 he was in Petersburg, where his hotel window, as he writes his father, gave him a clear view of the events of Bloody Sunday. Attending a tea at the American Embassy later that day, he reported on the events; this was perhaps the beginning of his career as a government advisor.

It was also characteristic of the two branches of his career—one as a collector of intelligence, and the other as an analyst. Harper's photo identification for the first session of the First Duma on April 27, 1906 indicates his interest in this historic event and in following the official side of Russian political life: Nicholas agreed to the creation of this elected parliamentary body as a concession to the opposition. But Harper prided himself in knowing what went on outside the offices of government, from which many political interests were still excluded. The more radical political parties boycotted the Duma elections, but now had greater freedom to circulate their message in print, as evidenced by this rare poster commemorating revolutionaries and political assassins.

Over the years between the revolutions Harper traveled extensively in Russia, fulfilling his commitment to Charles Crane that he would teach six months at the University of Chicago, and spend the next six in Russia. His archive includes a copious record of his travels and research, often in collaboration with Bernard Pares, with whom he devised an inventive method for recording interviews: one asked questions, while the other committed the conversation to memory.

Postcard of Provisional Government, undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Clipping from *The Daily Maroon*, undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Clipping from *Morning Free Press*, undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Clipping from *Chicago Evening Post*, undated  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

At a 1917 gathering in Mandel Hall celebrating the February Revolution, Harper reminded the audience of the university's connection to Russia's new foreign minister, Pavel Miliukov, calling him the "political genius of democratic Russia." His prognostication that a liberal Russia would prevail was in high demand—both in the newspapers, and in the highest channels of the State Department. Charles Crane and his son Richard, who was personal secretary to Secretary of State

Robert Lansing, joined him in circulating the view that the new government was stable and would prevail against the more radical elements. Harper wrote the French ambassador, "You will recall that I refused to be worried with regard to the radical minority, advocating extreme measures. Also, I knew that the socialists, who were clearly under German influence, would be discredited immediately on their arrival in Russia. I am very glad they let Lenin proceed to Petrograd."

Telegram from Richard Crane to Harper, March 15, 1917  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Letter from Harper to Richard Crane, March 18, 1907  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Letter from John R. Mott to Harper, March 27, 1917  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Telegram from Richard Gottheil to Harper, April 16, 1917  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Typescript letter from Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips to Harper, December 19, 1917  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

In July, when Bolshevik-supported rebellions were quelled, Harper's evaluation still held water. As an unofficial assistant to the Root Commission, which had been sent to assess the situation in Russia, he found himself in a familiar role: "During these critical July Days Huntington and I, as the two people at the Embassy knowing Russian, were often sent out to see what was happening in the streets." Though in July it may have appeared that his hopes for a liberal democratic outcome were still viable, history had other designs. By the end of the year he was being asked to analyze a turn of events with which he had far less sympathy.

Eighth Party Congress tallies for election to Central Committee and Revision Commission  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Photostats of Sisson documents seeking verification of Trotsky's signature  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Harper notes evaluating Sisson documents  
Samuel N. Harper Papers

Perhaps because of these sympathies, in 1918 Harper was asked to evaluate a set of documents that had been acquired by Edward Sisson, suggesting that Lenin, Trotsky and other party leaders had been in the pay of the German government. Sisson was the Petrograd representative of the

Committee on Public Information, an organization devoted to promoting support for U.S. intervention in World War I. His files include photostats of the originals (in the set displayed here he is asked to compare versions of Trotsky's signature) as well as notes on his analysis and many background materials. The CPI printed the Sisson documents with an appendix by Harper and L. Franklin Jameson suggesting their likely authenticity. Doubt as to this conclusion continues to this day, however, and Harper later recalled the episode with dismay, regretting that he had bowed to political pressure.

Despite such misgivings, Harper began working for the State Department in the newly formed Russian Bureau, and was their leading specialist on the Soviet Union from 1919-1921. In this capacity he received numerous documents of historical interest, such as a tally of votes for election to the Central Committee from the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1919. He could not, however, maintain his former practice of acquiring his expertise on the ground as his political allegiances made him a *persona non grata* in Soviet Russia for a number of years.

DK266.H32 c.4

Samuel N. Harper (1882-1943)

*Making Bolsheviks*

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931

University of Chicago Press Imprint Collection

HC335.H3 c.5

Samuel N. Harper (1882-1943)

*The Soviet Union and World Problems*

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931

University of Chicago Press Imprint Collection

Finally acquiring a visa in 1926, he visited Moscow and adopted a more sympathetic view of the USSR in his 1929 *Civic Training in Russia*, which was well-received by the Soviets. His 1931 *Making Bolsheviks* showed him back in familiar territory: it was comprised of six lectures given at the University, based on an extended visit to the Soviet Union in 1930. Harper later wrote that watching his father create new traditions at the University of Chicago helped him understand what the Bolsheviks faced in the years after the Revolution.

### **Revolutionary Soviet Cinema at the University of Chicago**

Having disrupted the previously existing Russian film industry, the Revolution empowered a new generation to remake the look and feel of films. The dire lack of resources and the need to address to mass audiences pushed such filmmakers as Lev Kuleshov, Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Aleksandr Dovzhenko, and Diga Vertov to develop distinctive and forceful individual styles that transformed cinema aesthetics and politicized the film experience of viewers. Soviet cinema became a means of appealing to the masses didactically and emotionally. Along with producing revolutionary films, filmmakers articulated their theories of film in theoretical texts, which competed to define the style and social goals of Soviet cinema.

As valuable sources of knowledge about the political and social transformations in the Soviet Union, Soviet cinema almost immediately drew attention in the West from the perspectives of history, art, and political discourse. From early on the University of Chicago has been a center for the projection and study of Soviet film, especially via the Documentary Film Group (Doc Films). In 1944 a selection of Soviet films was screened by Marie Seton, one of the early experts on the work of the avant-garde Soviet filmmakers. William D. Rott's exhaustive screening notes for Eisenstein's *The General Line (Staroe i novoe, 1929)* demonstrate the deep interest of cinephiles and film scholars and in the form and content of Soviet revolutionary cinema.

### **UChicago Responds**

Samuel Harper taught some of this country's first Russian Studies courses, but it was the Cold War that gave rise to the broad research in Slavic Studies that we know today. Chauncy D. Harris, a pioneering geographer of the Soviet Union, applied to the Ford Foundation to support a Ph.D. program in Slavic at the University of Chicago in 1948, but it took the launching of Sputnik to galvanize support for such research in the United States. A Committee in Slavic Studies was formed in 1959, and a Ph.D. program was initiated in 1961. By 1964 the Committee on Slavic Area Studies included scholars in Linguistics, Political Science, Anthropology, History, Geography, Economics, Literature, Geology, and Russian Civilization.

The Russian Revolution became a contentious topic of study at the University of Chicago. Lyford Edwards' *The Natural History of Revolutions* is representative of the Chicago School in sociology. Edwards, who was once dismissed from Rice Institute in Houston because of his liberal views about the Russian Revolution, argues that the American, French, and Russian revolutions were the results, rather than the causes, of social change. Following his exile from Romania, Mircea Eliade was Chair in the History of Religions at the University of Chicago Divinity School from 1958 to 1986. Eliade took confrontational positions on many fronts, and in "How Revolutions Begin" argues that ideas are turned into "the clubs and bricks of political strife" by revolution, which eventually makes them sterile.