

Introduction: The Global Impact of 1917

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In 2018, as we look back a hundred years after the Russian Revolution of 1917, a more complicated picture begins to emerge, different from the one that we have become accustomed to seeing. As we enter the post-Soviet Cold War, some of the political passions that have affected our earlier interpretations of 1917 have begun to fade, while others have risen to the surface. This has allowed scholars to think more deeply about what a revolution is, how long revolutions usually last, and why some revolutions, like the English, the American, the French, the Russian, the Chinese, or the Iranian, represent major ruptures in modern world history. In this introduction to our two edited books on the wider arc of revolution, we will first present a historiographical overview of some of the most significant scholarship on 1917. Following that, we will evaluate why our collection of original essays represents a departure from and a considerable expansion of the interpretative frames that have been used to make sense of the Russian Revolution.

For the last 150 years Russia has been studied through the explicit lens of Eurocentricism, an approach that uses selective developments in Western Europe, such as the rise of capitalism and liberalism, as the primary and the normative yardsticks for taking the measure of modern history. Departing from this binary approach anchored in an imaginary East/West divide, the essays in our volumes reveal two major findings: the Russian Empire's domination of the Eurasian landmass coupled with the Western European colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia had created an interconnected world by the early 20th century. During this period, labor movements were brewing not just in Europe, but in the former European empires in the Americas as well as in the colonies of Africa and Asia, where Western European ideas of liberty and free trade had been distorted beyond recognition by powerful colonial administrations and colonial economies. Labor politics and antio-

My sincere thanks and deep gratitude to Steve Marks and Mary Neuberger, who generously read several drafts of this introduction, and whose comments and additions proved to be invaluable in shaping the arguments.

The Global Impacts of Russia's Great War and Revolution, Book 2: The Wider Arc of Revolution, Part 1. Choi Chatterjee, Steven G. Marks, Mary Neuberger, and Steven Sabol, eds. Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2019, 1–22.

lonial movements had started to coalesce in different parts of the world long before the Russian Revolution of 1917, but Lenin was enormously prescient in providing a philosophical framework that yoked these two powerful currents together.¹ The year 1917 represented the fulcrum where two of the most significant ideological developments of the 20th century, anticapitalism and anti-imperialism, merged and began to receive substantial material backing from Moscow.

The Russian Empire inadvertently became an incubator of revolutionary and nationalist movements worldwide. Even as the tsarist regime exiled generations of revolutionaries to Siberia, their ideas percolated through global consciousness. While Russia remains at the center of the 1917 story, a deeper examination of the worldwide web of revolutionary relationships allows us to shed new light on the global history of the left. Members of the working-class, collectivist, socialist, and anticolonial movements worldwide were greatly influenced by generations of Russian revolutionaries.² Vera Zasulich, Vera Figner, Petr Kropotkin, Mikhail Bakunin, Sergei Nechaev, Lev Tolstoi, and a host of others had created a powerful model of individuality, fearlessness, and self-sacrifice for the sake of the larger community. Their theories of both violent and nonviolent resistance to state power proved to be extremely influential.

But one could also point to significant figures outside of Russia, like the Bulgarian Dimitŭr Blagoev, who formed the first Marxist organization in Russia in 1883, or the fact that much of socialist theory was generated in European countries, and enriched by contributions from intellectuals in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Indeed, foreign Communists and sympathizers were critical to the success of the Russian Revolution from its earliest days, as they amplified the hyper-local events in a remote Petrograd in 1917 into the prototype of a global revolution for economic justice and social equality. As the chapters by Jie-Hyun Lim, Erik van Ree, and Hari Vasudevan show, an international cadre of leftists played a foundational role in the formation of the Comintern—the Communist International, or “Third International”—which tracked, coordinated, and debated revolution from its headquarters in Moscow. Labor movements interpreted and appropriated the Russian Revolution in disparate ways, circulating such views at home and abroad, spreading, or even changing the meaning of revolution beyond Russia’s borders in Eastern and Western Europe—as Ben Curtis, Paul Dukes, William Kenefick, Mary Neu-

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” in his *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), 1: 667–766; Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, ed. W. Stark (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951).

² Steven G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

burger, and Michael Silvestri demonstrate. Chapters by Lisa Kirschenbaum, Kristen Mulready-Stone, Afshin Matin-asgari, Stuart Macintyre, Rianne Subijanto, Jeffrey Wasserstrom, and Yidi Wu illustrate that revolutionary nationalist movements in China, the United States, Iran, Australia, and Indonesia adopted selectively from the Soviet model. Sabine Hake and James Gregor's scholarship establishes the influence that the Russian Revolution exercised on fascist culture in Germany and Italy. David McDonald and Robert Weinberg argue that exiles fleeing Russia carried fears of revolutionary contagion to the Americas. And Jürgen Buchenau, Steven G. Marks, and Steven Sabol explain how frightened governments used the Bolshevik threat to counter progressive moments as far afield as Mexico, South Africa, and the United States.

The work of Ali İğmen, Masha Kirasirova, and Daniel Kowalsky shows that the Soviet Union not only proliferated, but also destroyed transnational left-wing movements in the 20th century with its centralizing tendencies, theories of state-centric modernization, and blatantly imperial policies. The revolutions of 1917 brought not just the Bolshevik Party to power, but also made communism, a profoundly oppositional ideology, into an arm of the state. The merging of "State and Revolution," a dialectical impossibility, resulted in the hybrid political structure that was the Soviet Union, where the interests of the state, i.e., the consolidation of power, modernization, welfare, as well as the defense of geographical borders, collided with a universal ideology that claimed to represent all of humanity. As the Soviet state grew in size and Soviet political influence spread across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, the Comintern slowly subsumed many independent left-wing organizations. And yet, as Choi Chatterjee, Sandra Deutsch, Julia Mickenberg, Sandra Pujals, Ludmila Stern, and Erik Ching and Alfredo Ramirez demonstrate, the independent leftist impulses of feminist, pacifist, anarchist, libertarian, environmental, populist, religious, and socialist thought; revolutionary consciousness and behavior; and the emotional networks of sympathizers, donors, and fellow travelers that sustained the ecology of the left in the 19th and early 20th centuries never really died but went underground, emerging in different locales in different guises.

While the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from 1989–91 cast a shadow of "failure" not just over the Soviet experiment but also on the relevance of the global left, we now have an unprecedented opportunity to rediscover a history that was suppressed by our exclusive preoccupation with political models of liberalism and state socialism. The forgotten history of a global non-Soviet left provides an important perspective from which to reassess the 20th century.

Our volumes on the wider arc of revolution build upon a vast scholarship on 1917 and the Soviet experiment. While it is by no means the first explora-

tion of 1917 from a global perspective, its scope is unparalleled thanks to the scholarly expertise of numerous contributors from outside the field of Soviet studies.³ We think it important, however, to put this new body of work into the larger context of the extensive scholarship on 1917, which for the most part can be accommodated within four major interpretative arcs that include the political, the social, the cultural, and the imperial. It must be acknowledged at the very outset that these categories are heuristic devices, created to facilitate a deeper familiarity with an extensive body of scholarship on 1917. As such they are not impermeable, and some of the historical works analyzed below can easily fit into more than one category. Our review is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but should demonstrate to our readers how our collective knowledge of the Russian Revolution has evolved over the course of a century.

The Political Arc

The political framing of 1917 contains three distinct formulations. The first refers to claims that the October Revolution was an illegitimate political coup that was orchestrated by an authoritarian Bolshevik Party in a country imploding into anarchy.⁴ While Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn believed that Bolshevism was a monstrous importation from the West, Richard Pipes regarded patrimonial authoritarianism to be an authentically Russian phenomenon, fatally organic, fatally endemic. In an interesting variation, Martin Malia argued that Russia was not an oriental despotism per se, but Europe's illiberal

³ See Mary Neuburger's introduction to the "Special Section: Russian Revolution-Global Impact," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, 4 (2017): 807–15; Paul Dukes, *October and the World: Perspectives on the Russian Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's, 1979); Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov, eds., *The Russian Revolution and Its Global Impact: A Short History with Documents* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017); and Glennys Young, ed., *The Communist Experience in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Scribner's, 1989); Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribner's, 1974); Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 2 vols. (London: Harvill, 1990, 1994); Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's historical novels in the *Red Wheel* series: *August 1914*, *November 1916*, and *March 1917*, trans. H. T. Willetts (1971, 1985, 1989; New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2014–17); Jonathan Daly, "The Pleiade: Five Scholars Who Founded Russian Historical Studies in the United States," *Kritika* 18, 4 (2017): 785–826. Mention also should be made of the pioneering work of the British historian E. H. Carr and his multivolume scholarship on the Soviet system: *A History of Soviet Russia: The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1950–53); and William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1921*, 2 vols. (1935; New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965).

other, where extreme European ideas were un-tempered by pragmatism and implemented without consideration for material circumstances. A regime that was founded on an illegal, unlawful, and primarily ideological act led, in the opinions of these scholars, to Stalinist totalitarianism and the rampant use of terror and coercion throughout the history of the Soviet Union.

The characterization of the Bolsheviks as a violent and power-hungry group enjoyed great currency in the West for the two decades leading into the Cold War and was amplified globally in the post-Second World War era when many of the newly decolonized nations in Asia and Africa were inspired by the Soviet model of modernization. Moreover, this historical assessment received extensive support from the elite, conservative, and influential members of the Russian diaspora. Alexander Rabinowitch's book *How the Bolsheviks Came to Power*, based on the careful accumulation and analysis of an extensive body of evidence, presented an unexpected challenge to this received wisdom. He claimed that the Bolsheviks, far from orchestrating the political coup d'état of the 20th century, rode the waves of popular outrage to power by carefully aligning their own slogans with the manifest aspirations of the people.⁵ Rabinowitch's demonstration that the Bolshevik slogans of "Land, Bread, and Peace" were indeed the popular demands on the streets of Petrograd prior to November 1917 was unwelcome political news during the Cold War. But his central argument that the Bolsheviks enjoyed great popularity and representation in the urban soviets during 1917 because of their immense ability to read the mood on the streets set a new standard in the interpretation of the Russian Revolution. Rabinowitch's scholarship also had the unintended consequence of subverting the Cold War belief that Soviet history was the sole product of state-sponsored terror and oppression from above. His work prepared the way for the next generation of revisionist historians, notably Sheila Fitzpatrick, among others, who unearthed the social bases of Soviet rule.⁶

In the last two decades, the debate about the political nature of 1917 has been substantially broadened by the work of historians who have recast our understanding of what actually constitutes politics.⁷ Turning away from an

⁵ Alexander Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July 1917 Uprising* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968); Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976); and Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

⁶ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

⁷ Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Peter Gattrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,

exclusive preoccupation with personalities such as Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, the varieties of Marxist ideologies, and machinations within the highest ranks of the Party, these scholars understand politics primarily as a set of state practices and are concerned with Russia's long period of crisis from 1914 to 1921. This has also broadened our comprehension of Soviet modernity significantly beyond the debates of modernization theory popular in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸

Peter Holquist has argued that during the 20th century, modern states used institutionalized violence on civilian populations to an unprecedented degree. Instead of being outliers in their use of violence, the Bolsheviks were closely aligned with Western European counterparts in their attitudes toward state formation and state power. Intellectuals and politicians in both Eastern and Western Europe subscribed to the norms of European modernity and modernization that were themselves derived from a common Enlightenment project. Thus, in their use of mass surveillance, institutionalized terror, and state-sponsored violence to achieve modernity, the Bolsheviks, rather than creating new institutional prototypes derived from the principles of socialism, were using lessons learned from the shared experiences of mass mobilization during World War I. The cultural history approach to the First World War pioneered by Karen Petrone and Melissa Stockdale has also led to the inclusion of Russia into the wider European history of the First World War.⁹

The political coding of 1917 has also been greatly expanded by published works on political parties other than the Bolsheviks, such as the Constitutional Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists, Mensheviks, and

1999); David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis, eds., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2000); Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Lars Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003); and Jonathan Smele, *The 'Russian' Civil Wars, 1916–1926: Ten Years that Shook the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁸ Cyril E. Black, ed., *The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change since 1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962); and W. W. Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

⁹ Melissa Stockdale, *Mobilizing the Russian Nation: Patriotism and Citizenship in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

members of the Workers' Opposition.¹⁰ Socialist Revolutionaries, for example, enjoyed massive support among the peasantry, who constituted the vast majority of the Russian population. The political defeat of the Socialist Revolutionaries in 1917 is particularly worthy of our consideration as it relates to the larger story of the exploitation of peasant populations for the purposes of industrialization by modernizing states worldwide, rather than a chapter in the internecine left-wing struggles during the Russian Civil War. Similarly, Barbara Allen's meticulous research on the Workers' Opposition challenges the notion that Bolsheviks had a monopoly on Marxist ideology within the Soviet Union. Even more importantly, by using a biographical approach to document political opposition, Allen argues that there was considerable resistance to the normative model of Soviet subjectivity that became paramount in the 1930s. The existence of social-democratic, anarchist, syndicalist, peasant-communist, and feminist ideologies well after 1917 shows that the Bolsheviks had to struggle hard in order to put their imprint on leftist thought first internally, and then worldwide.

The existence and the persistence of a significant body of intellectual and political opposition from a left and progressive perspective rather than a right or even a liberal one was an extremely important historical phenomenon within the Soviet Union and had repercussions throughout the world. But unfortunately, this political tradition has been accorded little scholarly attention. The intellectual genealogy of a nonstate and non-Soviet global left contains important ideas about selfhood, the reorganization of the state, economy, and society, our relationship to the environment, and the writing of history. Paul Avrich's work on documenting the repressed history of anarchism, a project

¹⁰ Barbara Allen, *Alexander Shlyapnikov, 1885–1937: Life of an Old Bolshevik* (Boston: Haymarket Books, 2015); Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); B. I. Kolonitskii, *Simvol' vlasti i bor'ba za vlast': K izucheniiu politicheskoi kul'tury rossiiskoi revoliutsii* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2001); V. N. Brovkin, *The Mensheviks after October: Socialist Opposition and the Rise of a Bolshevik Dictatorship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Eduard Burdzhakov, *Russia's Second Revolution: The February 1917 Uprising in Petrograd*, trans. Donald Raleigh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Ziva Galili y Garcia, *The Menshevik Leaders in the Russian Revolution: Social Realities and Political Strategies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Kolonitskii, "Tragicheskaiia erotika": *Obrazy imperatorskoi sem'i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (St. Petersburg: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010); William Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution: The Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917–1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Oliver Radkey, *Sickle Under the Hammer: The Russian Socialist Revolutionaries in the Early Months of Soviet Rule* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); and Scott Smith, *Captives of Revolution: The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Bolshevik Dictatorship, 1918–1921* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

that he started many decades ago, is in urgent need of resuscitation. As some of the articles in our volumes demonstrate, the leftist critique of a coercive, state- and party-based Soviet socialism had great resonance within global progressive thought.¹¹

The potential of a liberal and constitutional democracy in Russia, a powerful idea raised by various parties and thinkers at that time and echoed by Woodrow Wilson in 1917, is also worthy of our consideration in its potential application to contemporary Russia. Boris Kolonitskii's nuanced analysis of the revolutionary symbols of 1917 reminds us that authoritarian regimes grow stronger when citizens and scholars forget or are inattentive to the political alternatives present in their own histories. Special mention should be made of Rochelle Ruthchild and Irina Yukina's research on the struggle for women's rights in revolutionary Russia, as it complements that of Orlando Figes, Kolonitskii, and William Rosenberg. By placing Russian liberal feminism within the context of both transnational feminism and Russian history, Ruthchild and Yukina have greatly strengthened our interpretation of the liberal and democratic potential of 1917.¹²

Finally, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the ROSSPEN publishing house of Moscow has published exhaustive documentation of the activities of White generals and influential émigrés, as the support of a conservative diaspora has been critical for the success of Vladimir Putin's regime.¹³ This has been supplemented by the more critical scholarship produced on the officers of the White Army as well as the Russian nobility.¹⁴ The expansion of our knowledge of the political actors of various persuasions, their ideologies,

¹¹ Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); and *Kronstadt, 1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970). On Russian anarchism and environmentalism, see also Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World*, chap. 2.

¹² I. I. Iukina, *Russkii feminizm kak vyzov sovremennosti* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2007); and Rochelle Ruthchild, *Equality and Revolution: Women's Rights in the Russian Revolution, 1905–1917* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010). See also Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

¹³ Stephen A. Smith, "The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On," *Kritika* 16, 4 (2015): 733–49.

¹⁴ Matthew Rendle, *Defenders of the Motherland: The Tsarist Elite in Revolutionary Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Paul Robinson, *White Russian Army in Exile, 1920–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Douglas Smith, *Former People: The Last Days of the Russian Aristocracy* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Willard Sunderland, *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

and their activities in 1917, has led to a more rounded picture of the revolutionary year.

The Social Arc

The social history approach to the Russian Revolution has been inspired by Leopold Haimson's theses on social polarization in late imperial Russia.¹⁵ Scholars have researched the revolutionary activities of soldiers, workers, and peasants in the metropolitan areas and in the provinces of the empire.¹⁶ By demonstrating that the Russian Revolution, rather than being caused solely by a handful of well-known political actors at the top, also happened from below, this scholarship has created an alternative basis for a global historiography on social and political movements.¹⁷ Far from following the templates provided by the two capitals of Moscow and Petrograd, Donald Raleigh has shown that during the immense devolution of power that occurred during 1917 and the Civil War, erstwhile imperial provinces were forced to rely on their own ingenuity and resources in solving problems of food distribution, growing lawlessness and violence, and the unexpected political mobilization of ordinary people.

¹⁵ Leopold Haimson, "The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905–1917," pt. 1, *Slavic Review* 23, 4 (1964): 619–42, and pt. 2, *Slavic Review* 24, 1 (1965): 1–22.

¹⁶ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *The February Revolution, Petrograd, 1917* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 1981); Diane P. Koenker, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); John H. L. Keep, *The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Diane P. Koenker and W. G. Rosenberg, *Strikes and Revolution in Russia, 1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); David Mandel, *Petrograd Workers and the Fall of the Old Regime* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983); Steven Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Old Army and the Soldiers' Revolt (March–April 1917)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).

¹⁷ Sarah Badcock, *Politics and the People in Revolutionary Russia: A Provincial History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Raleigh, *Revolution on the Volga: 1917 in Saratov* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); I. V. Narskii, *Zhizn' v katastrofe: Budni naseleniia Urala v 1917–1922 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001); and Aaron B. Retish, *Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War: Citizenship, Identity, and the Creation of the Soviet State, 1914–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See also Aaron B. Retish, Sarah Badcock, and Liudmila Novikova, eds., *Russia's Home Front in War and Revolution, 1914–1922*, bk. 1: *Russia's Revolution in Regional Perspective* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2015).

The elaboration of the social dimension of the revolution is indebted to the scholarship of Orlando Figes, Boris Kolonitskii, Igor Narskii, and Mark Steinberg. They have pioneered a rich methodology of intertwined cultural, social, and political analysis in order to look at the ways in which the revolutionary year was experienced by large sections of the populations in their everyday lives. Steinberg persuasively demonstrates that the lived experience of revolution can best be understood through approaches derived from the history of emotions and that of literary analysis.¹⁸ Social history has also immeasurably expanded our notion of what truly constitutes the political realm.

The Cultural Arc

Bessie Beatty, Louise Bryant, John Reed, Albert Rhys Williams, and a host of other eyewitnesses to the Russian Revolution created the cultural frame of analysis for the Russian Revolution as demonstrated in the chapter by Erik van Ree.¹⁹ The ability of ordinary Russians to manifest revolutionary fervor, whether in interminable conversations or in songs, parades, theaters, operas, ballet performances, and poetry readings, has created a particular cultural mythology associated with the Russian Revolution. The widespread hunger for art, philosophy, community, and utopia that persisted through the revolution and the Civil War, despite physical hunger, disease, and the breakdown of government services has added a new dimension to our sense of what constitutes a revolution in the modern world. More importantly, the extraordinarily rich imagery and texts associated with the events of 1917 have provided a template of what should constitute a revolution in the modern world. The Russian Revolution, like Tatlin's Tower, was in many ways about transcending

¹⁸ Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution*; Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1996); Kolonitskii, *Simvol' vlasti*; Narskii, *Zhizn' v katastrofe*; Mark D. Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution, 1905–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁹ Bessie Beatty, *The Red Heart of Russia* (New York: Century, 1918); Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (1918; Portland, OR: Powell's Press, 2002); Huntly Carter, *The New Cinema and Theater of Soviet Russia* (London: Chapman and Dodd, 1924); John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (1919; New York: St. Martin's, 1997); René Füllöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism: An Examination of the Cultural Life of Soviet Russia* (1927; New York: Harper and Row, 1965); Murray Frame, Boris Kolonitskii, Steven G. Marks, and Melissa K. Stockdale, eds., *Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914–22*, 2 vols. (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2014); Lynn Mally, "Hallie Flanagan and the Soviet Union: New Heaven, New Earth, New Theater," in *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present*, ed. Choi Chatterjee and Beth Holmgren (New York: Routledge, 2012), 31–49; and Albert Rhys-Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921).

the prosaic, the ordinary, the bounded, and the inevitable, if only in the realm of the imagination. The year 1917 also represented the magic chronotope of the carnival, suffused with excessive democracy, originality, and creativity. This was the carnival of Vladimir Maiakovskii and Sergei Esenin, of Esfir Shub and Sergei Eisenstein, of Liubov' Popova and Aleksandr Rodchenko, of Vsevolod Meierkhol'd and Varvara Stepanova and of many, many, others. The inexhaustible and dazzling repertoire of artistic, intellectual, and cultural forms spawned by the Russian Revolution has ensured fascination with 1917 long after the political demands raised by the revolution have been inexorably de-emphasized over the course of the century.

1917 was in many ways the progenitor of original forms of modern art, architecture, literature, literary theory, poetry, music, film, street festivals, and propaganda theater, and they continue to command attention in various fields of Slavic studies and as well as in the disciplines of cinema, art, literature, and material culture. While social scientists have explained modern revolutions primarily as the breakdown of political, economic, social, and diplomatic systems, the methodology of cultural history that was derived from works of French history revitalized the concept of 1917 as a cultural event of a world-historical magnitude.²⁰

In 1989, when Richard Stites published his monograph on the subject of "revolutionary dreams," the cultural and symbolic dimensions of the October Revolution became once again a genuine subject of scholarly inquiry among historians.²¹ Stites was deeply interested in the ways in which peasants, intellectuals, workers, students, and artists understood the transhistorical ideas of radical equality and justice in the decades leading up to 1917, and beyond. He argued against the separation of art and politics into different categories and analyzed the dreams about truth, brotherhood, humanism, and universality that manifested themselves in sites as disparate as the violent peasant appropriation of private property, urban experiments in communal living, and Soviet experiments in architecture, music, and cinema. Other scholars have created a rich corpus of knowledge on the cultural influence of October on

²⁰ Maurice Aguilhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789–1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

²¹ Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

art, literature, architecture, cinema, and theater.²² Cultural history, like social history, has systematically changed the definition of the political as being incomparably greater than the point of view of select leaders, court ideologues, political parties, and state administrations.²³

The Imperial Arc

Russia's vast imperial possessions played an important role in precipitating the events of 1917.²⁴ Earlier, it was commonly believed that the revolt of the national minorities in the Russian Empire was precipitated by the collapse

²² John Bowlt, ed., *Russian Art of the Avant-garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902–1934* (New York: Viking Press, 1976); Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Eliot Borenstein, *Men Without Women: Masculinity and Revolution in Russian Fiction, 1917–1932* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Grigory Shudakov, Olga Suslova, and Lilya Ukhtomskaya, eds., *Pioneers of Soviet Photography* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1983); Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites, eds., *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Camilla Gray and Marian Burleigh-Motley, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863–1922* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986); Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); James von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals: 1917–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Nina Gourianova, *The Aesthetics of Anarchy: Art and Ideology in the Early Russian Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society from the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (New York: St. Martin's, 2001); Kolonitskii, *Simvol'yi vlasti*; Steven Lee, *The Ethnic Avant-Garde: Minority Cultures and World Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia, 1917–1932* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Vladimir Papernyi, *Kul'tura Dva* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982); Vladimir Tolstoi, I. M. Bibikova, and Catherine Cooke, eds., *Street Art of the Russian Revolution, 1917–1932* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990); Richard Taylor, *The Politics of Soviet Cinema, 1917–1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Stephen White, *The Bolshevik Poster* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and Frame, Kolonitskii, Marks, and Stockdale, *Russian Culture in War and Revolution*.

²³ Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics," *Russian Review* 53, 2 (1994): 165–82.

²⁴ Jane Burbank and Mark Von Hagen, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov, eds., *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Alfred J. Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

of the Imperial Army, which proved unequal to the task of both fighting the war with the Central Powers and keeping peace in the empire. Moreover, the collapse of the Romanov dynasty in 1917 underscored the “backwardness” of the Russian Empire in comparison to the more “advanced” French, British, and Dutch empires. But a generation of research has challenged the so-called backwardness of Russian imperialism.²⁵ Scholars have demonstrated that the Romanov Empire was astonishingly successful in its Eurasian land grab and that this trajectory of imperial success continued under the Soviet Union and persists into the present, unlike the collapsed Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, German, and Dutch empires, all of which have lost their territorial holdings overseas.

Joshua Sanborn has raised the provocative notion that decolonization, instead of being an unintended consequence of the revolution of 1917, was one of the primary reasons for the outbreak of the October Revolution.²⁶ The ineptitude of Russian military control in the provinces on its western front, especially in Ukraine and Poland, led to widespread popular anger that it was unable to control. And uprisings in Central Asia took place in response to a demand for general conscription as early as 1916.²⁷ It is important to recognize

Press, 2014); and Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, eds., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁵ Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely, and Melissa Stockdale, eds., *Space, Place and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011); Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov, and Mark Von Hagen, eds., *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2014); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Kimitaka Matsuzato, ed., *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007); Marina Mogilner, *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); David Moon, *The Plough that Broke the Steppes: Agriculture and Environment on Russia's Grasslands, 1700–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); and John Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

²⁶ Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁷ Marco Buttino, “Central Asia (1916–20): A Kaleidoscope of Local Revolutions and the Building of the Bolshevik Order,” in *The Empire and Nationalism at War*, ed. Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov, and Mark von Hagen (Bloomington: Slavica,

that the military success of the British and French empires in the First World War, in comparison to Russia's failure, was underwritten by a worldwide network of compliant colonies and ex-colonies such as India, as well as support from the United States, which provided enormous amounts of vital materials as well as financial and eventually also human resources.

Others have pioneered a new approach to the Russian Empire by examining the attitudes of the Muslim intelligentsia in Central Asia toward modernity, and their pre- and postrevolutionary alignment with some of the more progressive goals of the Russian and Soviet empires.²⁸ This has had the effect of reversing the traditional ways of thinking of the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on Central Asia as an act of colonization alone and opened up new avenues of research on the colonies as historical subjects in their own right. The desire for modernization made for strange alliances across the globe, and the findings of these scholars challenge some of the notions derived from postcolonial scholarship about the "unbridgeable" gap between the colonizers and the colonized.²⁹ Finally, recent scholarship has also had the salutary effect of making us think about how imperialism was shaped by the activities and experiences of women, and in uncovering the roles that gender played in formulating the coordinates of imperial and colonial identities.³⁰

2014), 109–36; Edward Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954).

²⁸ Adrienne Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Ali Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2012); Adeeb Khalid, *The Making of Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Steven Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazakh National Consciousness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Jeffrey Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

²⁹ Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006).

³⁰ Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Muslim Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Paula Michael, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh

The Wider Arc

For many centuries, Russia, despite its many entanglements with its neighbors in Western Europe, has been traditionally studied as a geographical space in need of military containment. This arose from a long-standing rivalry between the Russian and British empires across Asia in the 19th century. This tendency accelerated sharply in the aftermath of 1917, when the Bolsheviks mounted a full-throated and frontal attack on capitalism, liberalism, and imperialism worldwide. The transformation of an imperial and colonizing Russia into a vociferous champion of anticolonialism under Soviet rule was surely one of the greatest ironies of the 20th century. With the onset of the Cold War, the containment of the Soviet Union was fully elaborated as a set of policies that operated on multiple fronts and at various levels of American and European societies. This geopolitical framework has had a profound impact on scholars of the Soviet Union and Russia.

A world history approach marks a significant departure from the two powerful historiographical traditions that see Russia as an authoritarian and backward example within the larger narratives of progressive European history, and that considers Russia to be an aspirational world power locked in an inescapable struggle with the West. The two books within the *Wider Arc* set a new transnational and transimperial research agenda for Slavic and Eurasian studies in the 21st century. They also challenge a strangely ahistorical understanding of Western European history as a normative point of comparison.

The global approach to Russia has been made possible by the immense body of work that has been generated by Russia's conflicted relations with the West for the last three centuries, a literature that is better summarized by the title "Russia under Western Eyes," to borrow from the title of Martin Malia's well-known book on the subject.³¹ Despite Russia's great-power status for the

Press, 2003); and Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

³¹ Martin Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999). See also David Caute, *The Fellow-Travelers: Intellectual Friends of Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Chatterjee and Holmgren, *The Russian Experience*; Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921–1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928–1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals*

last four centuries, or probably because of it, Western representations of Russia have been shaped by convictions about Russian backwardness and authoritarianism. As David Foglesong has shown, an immense moralizing about the “Evil Empire” permeates much of the Western scholarly literature about Russia.³² This has been supplemented by totalitarian comparisons between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union that were popular during the Cold War, an approach that has been revitalized by the more recent work on modernity and state-sponsored violence.³³

Michael David-Fox, in an article in the journal *Kritika*, refers to the structural and comparative analysis of revolutions pioneered by Crane Brinton, Barrington Moore, Theda Skocpol, Jack Goldstone, and others as possible models to emulate.³⁴ While it would be foolish to dismiss the insights produced by this venerable body of literature, the ideological presumptions of this structural approach should also be underscored. Born out of a Cold War mentality of anticommunism, many of the scholars in this tradition started with the basic belief that only the British and American revolutions were truly successful in history; the French one was of marginal utility because of its degeneration into terror, and the Russian one was a complete failure. Not surprisingly, much of the scholarship produced within this tradition tends to uphold the primacy of an imagined Western European history that provides the base model for most historical research.

The near consensus in our field that Western European history is nothing more than the beneficent evolution of the democracy, capitalism, and liberalism that is neatly captured within the national histories of select Western nations ignores the immense amount of research that has been produced in the fields of British, Belgian, Dutch, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese imperial histories in the last few decades. These empires only became nations as recently as the 1960s and 1970s, when the last of the overseas colonies were

and the Soviet Union, 1920–40: From Red Square to the Left Bank (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2007); and Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

³² David Foglesong, *The American Mission and the Evil Empire: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³³ Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander Martin, eds., *Fascination and Enmity: Russia and Germany as Entangled Histories, 1914–1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hoffman, *Cultivating the Masses*; and Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

³⁴ Michael David-Fox, “Towards a Life-Cycle Analysis of the Russian Revolution,” *Kritika* 18, 4 (2017): 741–83.

freed after much bloodshed, extensive civil wars, the rampant destruction of environment and infrastructure, and catastrophic population displacements of a global magnitude comparable in scope to the depredations of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. In the Algerian war of independence from France (1958–62), more than a million Algerians were killed in horrific circumstances. More than a million people died during India's transition to independence in 1947, and thousands perished between 1946 and 1949 when Indonesia painfully gained its independence from the Netherlands. When we add together the millions of lives lost in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, the global death toll from the European wars of decolonization in the 20th century presents a truly sobering figure. Western European empires, like their Nazi and Soviet counterparts, were equally bloody but since their "Bloodlands" were located in overseas colonies, we rarely use their colonial experience as points of comparison with totalitarianism, despite Hannah Arendt's penetrating observations on the subject many decades ago.³⁵ The total number of casualties of Western European colonialism in the 20th century alone has never been tallied, nor the extensive material damages that were inflicted.

France and Britain were nation-based empires; therefore, any comparison between Western Europe and Russia has to include the comparative history of empires.³⁶ Western Europe was composed of progressive and liberal nation-states that were also powerful nation-based overseas empires which held much of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in conditions of brutal "Occidental despotism." Like the Russian Empire, Western European empires caused the genocide of indigenous peoples and profited immensely from slavery, indentured servitude, plantation economies, settler colonialism, and rampant environmental exploitation—to name only a few of their overseas achievements. But the well-documented history of European imperialism has unaccountably and strangely failed to penetrate the field of Slavic studies that continues to compare nation-based Western liberalism to Russian imperial authoritarianism.³⁷

Recently, we have seen the publication of non-Eurocentric approaches to Russian history, and in the next section we discuss a few of the more outstanding examples. Within this field that we call "Russia in World History,"

³⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1951).

³⁶ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: The People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007).

³⁷ Choi Chatterjee, "Imperial Incarcerations: Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and the Original Sins of Modernity," *Slavic Review* 74, 4 (2015): 850–72.

one can distinguish three distinct approaches. Steven G. Marks, a coeditor of the *Wider Arc of Revolution*, pioneered the first one. In *How Russia Shaped the Modern World*, Marks looks at the diffusion of Russian ideologies from nihilism, antisemitism, and Marxism to the impact of Russian art, literature, and even fashion design from the Russian center to different parts of the globe in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.³⁸ Marks's work is particularly noteworthy as this is not simply a book about Russian discourses, of which we have many, but an analysis of the important ways in which these Russian ideas were interpreted and used in different areas of the world. Marks has created an alternative history of the 20th century as a transnational historical space with Russia, instead of the West, at the center. By providing a parallel view of the world as Russocentric, Marks implicitly challenges the hegemonic concept of Anglo-American globalization that many have promoted since 1991.³⁹ Many of the articles in this volume use the alternative intellectual frame of a Russocentric world, and the results are both exciting as well as deeply unsettling.

Kate Brown's book *Plutopia*, which looks at the parallel development of the nuclear arms industry in both the Soviet Union and the United States, is also worthy of consideration as a structural model for comparative history.⁴⁰ Brown finds that in both cases that the governments were willing to sacrifice the health of populations and devastate the environment with nuclear waste and radiation for the sake of achieving military dominance. More shocking is Brown's core finding that workers and management in the nuclear industry in the United States and the Soviet Union were also willing to make the same Faustian bargain in their desire for modern suburban lives and highly paid jobs. In Brown's nuanced reading of modernity and our own human aspirations for material wealth, the national differences between the United States and the Soviet Union begin to blur in an uncomfortable way, especially in their blatant disregard for nature and the environment.

The Soviet Union itself pioneered a methodology of global history by creating an extensive historical record of the Comintern and by encouraging communist parties within nation-states to author their history of relations with Moscow. Since 1991, with the partial opening of the Comintern archives, we have seen a flood of publications about communist parties both from the

³⁸ Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World*.

³⁹ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons of Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁴⁰ Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Right and the Left. Harvey Klehr and John Haynes have been vocal in their attacks on American leftists who accepted money from Moscow, while left-leaning Indian academics have been more diplomatic and reticent about the activities of the Indian Communist Party and its relationship with Moscow.⁴¹ New works have added to the debate about the global influence of the Comintern. On the one hand, we have the scholarship of Robert Service, who sees international communism as both a failure and a catastrophe, while on the other, the approaches pioneered by Silvio Pons and Steve Smith in their histories of communism offer alternative readings of the Comintern and the historical experience of its members.⁴² Steve Smith's work on Russian and Chinese peasant migrants in St. Petersburg and Shanghai before the revolutions is also relevant. His findings that the changing identities of proletarian-peasants resulted in revolutionary crises in both metropolitan centers offers a model of comparative structural analysis which can be used fruitfully to understand modernization and class formation in various parts of the globe.⁴³

Finally, Lisa Kirschenbaum has initiated a new approach to the history of the Comintern.⁴⁴ She analyzes the travels of activists and members in the transnational world of communism in order to map the local, national, and transnational dimensions of the lived experiences of those on the global left. Kirschenbaum juxtaposes the emotional and the everyday to the world of high politics and ideology, and many of the chapters in *Wider Arc* use the prism of the local and the global to map the cultural, political, and social networks that created the world of communism.

⁴¹ Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes, *The Soviet World of American Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Purabi Raya, Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, and Hari Vasudevan, eds., *Indo-Russian Relations, 1917–1947*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1999).

⁴² Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997); Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution: The History of International Communism, 1917–1991*, trans. Allan Cameron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Silvio Pons and Stephen Smith, eds., *World Revolution and Socialism in One Country, 1917–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Robert Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Steven Smith, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Aleksandr Vatlin, *Komintern: Ideii, reshenie, sud'by* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007).

⁴³ Stephen Smith, *Revolution and the People in Russia and China: A Comparative History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ Lisa Kirschenbaum, *International Communism and the Spanish Civil War: Solidarity and Suspicion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Brigitte Studer, *The Transnational World of Cominternians*, trans. Daffyd Rees Roberts (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

“Russia in World History” Perspective

A hundred years after the revolution of 1917, with notable exceptions, we still have very little information about non-Western travelers to the Soviet Union and even less about those who came from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. We have a few modern histories of Russia’s relations with countries in Asia,⁴⁵ and to a very attenuated degree with the Middle East,⁴⁶ Africa,⁴⁷ and Latin America.⁴⁸ Our two edited books on the wider arc of the Russian Revolution are intended to fill this huge gap in the historiography by fleshing out Russian and Soviet relations with Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This new scholarship will also open up new vistas in reinterpreting Russian relations with the West.

We have grouped the essays into five major themes. These include the events of and myths about 1917, the anticommunist movements that gathered strength worldwide in response to the visceral threat posed by state-sponsored subversion, and the creation of transnational revolutionary societies

⁴⁵ Sobhan Lal Datta Gupta, *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India: Dialectics of Real and Possible History* (Calcutta: Seribaan, 2006); David C. Engerman, *The Price of Aid: Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Elizabeth McGuire, *Red at Heart: How Chinese Communists Fell in Love with the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Austin Jersild, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance: An International History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Timothy Nunan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, ed., *The Cold War in Asia, 1945–1991* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011).

⁴⁶ Stephanie Cronin, ed., *Iranian-Russian Encounters: Empires and Revolutions since 1800* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Masha Kirasirova, “The Eastern International: The ‘Domestic East’ and the ‘Foreign East’ in Soviet-Arab Relations, 1917–68” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2014); Evgenii Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs: Behind the Scenes in the Middle East from the Cold War to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); and Nizameddin Talal, *Putin’s New Order in the Middle East* (London: Hurst & Company, 2013).

⁴⁷ Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2013); and Maxim Matusevich, *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Daniela Spenser, *Stumbling Its Way through Mexico: The Early Years of the Communist International*, trans. Peter Gellert (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011); Spenser, *The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Tobias Rupperecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

and transnational revolutionary identities. The final theme is the question of how Soviet modernity and socialism offered a possible path to freedom from European imperialism—an exit strategy that was deeply complicated by Soviet imperialism.

In the first section, contributors consider the actual event of 1917 and its impact on populations within the empire and beyond, and end with considerations of the mythology of the event in world memory: Mary Neuburger studies the women's riots in Bulgaria in 1917 that were potentially as revolutionary as those that precipitated the February Revolution in Russia in 1917. David McDonald and Robert Weinberg analyze the actual impact of 1917 on internal populations such as Dukhobors and Jews, and trace their stories as many of them went into exile. Erik van Ree considers the mythology and psychological impact of 1917, which has been particularly influential in politics and historiography over the last century.

Opponents were quick to understand the catastrophic nature of the threat that the Russian Revolution posed to capitalism and imperialism. In the United States, Steven Sabol argues that the antagonism directed at German-Americans during the First World War was quickly redirected at Russians and radicals after 1917. As Jürgen Buchenau and Steven G. Marks demonstrate, in both Mexico and South Africa, ruling parties were galvanized by the threat of a global labor movement. Marks, furthermore, shows that the politics of race was used from above and below to destroy the immense potential of trans-racial labor politics in South Africa. Sabine Hake and James Gregor consider the dangerous and potentially lethal intermingling of fascist and communist identities and practices. And Ludmila Stern demonstrates that Soviet Communists were forced to become representatives of the Soviet Union as national concerns increasingly diluted the global commitment of Soviet socialism.

In the next section on the making and unmaking of identities, scholars explore the experiences of revolutionaries and intellectuals from Turkey, Iran, Egypt, and the United States in the Soviet Union. With national identities temporarily at bay, many like Jaime Nevaes, a liminal character in Sandra Pujals's essay, or Charlotte Rosenthal, in Masha Kirasirova's essay, tried to escape the ascribed identities of nation, ethnicity, and class. Julia Mickenberg and Choi Chatterjee's essays show how American women tried to assume the persona and freedom of an imagined Russian revolutionary operating in a transnational world. But as Ali İğmen and Lisa Kirschenbaum's works prove, it was the Soviet Union itself that destroyed the transnational and transcendental dream of Russian revolutionaries and their counterparts around the world. And it was the Soviet Union that forced socialism into the restrictive boxes of national identity and great-power politics.

In the fourth section, Daniel Kowalsky and Stuart Macintyre consider the creation of communist movements in Spain and Australia respectively. Sandra Deutsch looks at communist-inspired women's movements in interwar Argentina, while Erik Ching and José Alfredo Ramírez analyze the strength and nature of the communist movement in El Salvador. The researchers find that even while the Soviet influence was marginal, the influence of various strands of leftist ideology was immensely important to these movements. Ben Curtis, William Kenefick, and Paul Dukes consider labor resistance in the very heart of the British Empire, in Wales and Scotland. Their research demonstrates that while the Russian Revolution of 1917 quickened existing labor movements throughout the globe, few attempted to replicate the Leninist model of hypercentralization, modernization, and terror. Many continued to draw on the pre-Bolshevik ideas of community organizing, gender equality, and organized resistance. This was not surprising, as Kowalsky shows that Soviet interventions, as in the Spanish Civil War, were rarely for the sake of the workers' movement, and were almost always intended to advance the imperial interests of the Soviet Union.

In the last section, chapters explore the complicated situations that were caused by the intersection of colonial oppression and the visions of both socialist and market-based modernization that saturated the globe in the 20th century. As Jie-Hyun Lim explains, many intellectuals in Asia were drawn to authoritarian modernization as a way to combat Western and Japanese imperialism. Afshin Matin-asgari depicts Iran's long romance with Soviet modernity, even as the country suffered from Soviet incursions along its northern border. Rianne Subijanto shows that instead of replicating the Leninist model of the vanguard of the proletariat, the Indonesian Communist Party created an unprecedented revolutionary ferment across the archipelago by mobilizing democratic assemblies that were both anticolonial and anticapitalist. Kristin Mulready-Stone explores the strange fascination that authoritarian modernization exercised on colonial intellectuals and nationalists in China. Hari Vasudevan and Michael Silvestri analyze the ways in which Indian and Irish nationalists used Bolshevik support to strengthen their fight against the British Empire. In a fitting coda to the *Wider Arc of Revolution*, Jeff Wasserstrom and Yidi Wu conclude the second book with their essay on the rise and fall of the Russian Revolution as a viable model in the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party, an emerging imperial power in the 21st century.