

Cohort 2 Assignment (2011)

Paper No. 1 – The Revolutionary Year, 1917

The Russian Revolutions of February and October 1917 have been widely researched by a wide range of scholars so we now have elaborate chronologies of what happened on a day-by-day basis. Through concerted efforts scholars have collected primary documents in the form of letters, petitions, diary entries, and the like.

In this first paper of the semester we will create a collective website highlighting the voices of those caught up in the revolution. Our goal will be to create a timeline that shows some of the events that happened and the many perspectives on them. By creating a sophisticated timeline with access to documents by the participants themselves, we will be able to help scholars and students globally to understand the complexity of different views and their interactions at different moments in time in this revolutionary year.

In class on February 10 you will each be given a card showing the date and name of one of the most important events of the period from February to October. You will also all be given a comprehensive list of secondary sources relating to this revolutionary period and a list of sources where you can find primary sources written by contemporaries of the events at the time.

Each of you will be responsible for finding four to five secondary articles (or books) that you think will relate to your topic. You will also search for three to five primary documents (letters, petitions, diaries) that come from that time period.

Analysis

In your paper you will provide analysis of the secondary and primary documents. Here are some questions to help you:

- Are there any leading controversies among scholars in the secondary documents about what happened, how it happened, its significance? (A classic example might be the debate among scholars over whether Lenin was working as a German spy and/or was financed by the Germans when he returned to Petrograd on April 3.)
- What do you know about the authors of the primary documents you have found and who they are addressing? How have they chosen their audience(s)? How does their choice of audience affect what they have to say? If the audience is an authority figure, what does the document tell you about their understanding of the nature of authority at this time?
- What are the authors' points of view on the topics they are addressing? Are they mostly for or against the war or land reform, for example? Do they think munitions workers, to take another example, should go on strike or continue to produce for the war effort? Pay close attention. Some points of view may be subtle.

- What kind of language are your primary subjects using? Think about both phrasing and tone. Are they deferential or defiant? How do they refer to third parties? If they speak of the Bolsheviks, for example, do they view them as “blood-suckers” or “saviors”? Is their language formal or informal? Do they seem to show a high level of education or one that is probably not so high?
- What is the significance of these primary documents? Do they seem to be addressing each other? In other words, are they aware of others who are making similar arguments? How do they address counter-arguments, i.e., the views of those who would disagree with them?

Once you have assembled the information for your project, you will write up a **7-10 page** (double-spaced) paper discussing why your event in this revolutionary year is important, what scholars have debated, what they still don’t know for sure, what contemporaries were saying (from your primary documents), and what contemporaries were most arguing about at the time.

Creating the website

After you have completed your essay, you must also write a title and an executive summary of your event. An example of a title might be “Soldiers Threaten Mutiny over Galician Offensive” if that is your topic. Your executive summary would be one-paragraph long so that a viewer clicking on, say, June 25, would pull up your description of what was going on for soldiers in that time frame.

I would particularly like you to write your paper with hyperlinks to both the scholarly articles and any primary documents that are on line. One part of your assignment is to scan the documents you have used or create links to them, so that future users will be able to access them. If you can scan any primary sources that are not available on line, that would also be ideal. One hope I have is that visitors to our timeline will be able to read both “across” the documents and follow a particular line of development (e.g., the mutiny of the soldiers, the uprisings of the peasants, and so on) and also “down” a particular date, so they can see the responses of different groups to events happening in the capital.

You must provide accurate and detailed bibliographical information for all sources that you use. *Any attempts at plagiarism will be ruthlessly tracked down. This is going to be a public website and we will all be publicly humiliated if there is any plagiarism. Someone attempting to plagiarize will receive a failing grade on this assignment and a warning in their file at MIT.*

I strongly recommend that you consider visiting the Writing Center (12-132) for help at any stage with your writing. They offer free, one-on-one, professional advice from lecturers who are published writers about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing and about all aspects of oral presentations. If you begin by going to <http://writing.mit.edu/wcc>, you can click on "Appointments" to find a time and a person to work with.

I will also be delighted to meet with each of you individually at any stage of your research and writing.

Chronologies of the Russian Revolution

<http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/sac.1917.1920.htm> - *Students Annotated Chronology for the Russian Revolution*

<http://www.barnsdle.demon.co.uk/russ/datesr.html>

<http://europeanhistory.about.com/od/russiaandukraine/a/rrevstimeline1.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Revolution_\(1917\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Revolution_(1917))

http://www.indopedia.org/Russian_Revolution_of_1917.html#Brief_Chronology_leading_to_Revolution_of_1917

<http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/events/timeline/1917.htm>

<http://web.archive.org/web/19991103122911/www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/chrono3.html>

Websites with primary documents from this period

“The Russian Revolution” - <http://www.barnsdle.demon.co.uk/russ/rusrev.html>

http://www.historyguide.org/europe/rusrev_links.html

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook39.html>

Lenin’s works: <http://marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/index.htm>

specifically those for 1917: <http://marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/date/1917.htm>

also Lenin in the Lenin Museum:

http://www.stel.ru/museum/february_russian_revolution.htm

Trotsky’s works: <http://marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/index.htm>

Stalin’s works: <http://marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/decades-index.htm>

Kerensky, “The Prelude to Bolshevism: The Kornilov Rising” (1919) -

<http://www.archive.org/details/preludetobolshev008537mbp>

Nicholas II’s 1917 diaries and letters, as well as those of other members of the royal family; Nicholas II’s abdication; the order for his arrest; interrogation of some members of the royal court in 1917: <http://www.alexanderpalace.org/palace/>

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets: <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/events/a/arcs.htm>

World War I documents relating to Russia:

<http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php?title=Special%3ASearch&search=russia&go=Go>
including the abdication of Nicholas II:

http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Abdication_of_Nicholas_II

“Face of Russia” (PBS timeline) <http://www.pbs.org/weta/faceofrussia/timeline-index.html>

“Seventeen Moments in Soviet History” <http://www.soviethistory.org/> [You have to register to use this site, but it is free and has many useful primary documents, including some film clips and art as well as political manifestoes and the like.]

Primary sources in print form (on reserve in Hayden)

Edward Acton and Tom Stableford, eds., *The Soviet Union: A Documentary History* (2005)
[Hayden Library - Stacks | DK246.S685 2005](#)

Robert P. Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky, *The Russian Provisional Government, 1917: Documents* (Stanford University Press, 1961) [partially available on line]
http://books.google.com/books?id=LzWsAAAIAAJ&dq=browder+kerensky+russian+provisional+government&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=DSY1VAMI6G&sig=90rIUDyQLauLs-vwtRXDCYMB0k&hl=en&ei=IZdDS_7UEdPN8QaD0_CDBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBoQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=&f=false
[Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.19.B877](#)

V. P. Butt, ed., *The Russian Civil War: Documents from the Soviet Archives* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.A5372 1996](#)

Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov, *Russia in War and Revolution, 1914-1922* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2009), esp. pp. 35-130, 210-222

Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War* (Princeton University Press, 2000)

Eric Homberger with John Biggart, eds., *John Reed and the Russian Revolution: uncollected articles, letters, and speeches on Russia, 1917-1920* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992)
[Library Storage Annex - Off Campus Collection | HX84.R4.A25 1992](#)

Martin McCauley, ed., *The Russian Revolution & the Soviet State, 1917-1921: Documents* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.A538 1975](#)

Morgan Philips Price (1885-1973), *Dispatches from the Revolution: Russia, 1916-18* (London: Pluto Press, 1997) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.A5276 1997](#)

Mark D. Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution, 1917* (New Haven, CT : Yale University Press, 2001) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.A544 2001](#)

Mark D. Steinberg and Vladimir M. Khrustal'ev, eds., *The Fall of the Romanovs: Political dreams and personal struggles in a time of Revolution* (New Haven, CT : Yale University Press, 1995) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK258.S74 1995](#)

Ronald Grigor Suny, ed., *The Structure of Soviet History. Essays and Documents* (Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. pp. 32-47; [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK266.A3.S78 2003](#)

Bibliography of Secondary Sources in Book Form

Edward Acton et al., eds., *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921* (1997)

Paul Avrich, *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* (1973) [Library Storage Annex - Off Campus Collection | HX914.A9635](#)

James H. Bater, *Studies in Russian Historical Geography*

Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution* (3 vols.) (1950-1978)

William Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* (2 vols.) (1935)

Marc Ferro, *October 1917: A Social History of the Russian Revolution* (1980) [Dewey Library - Stacks | DK265.F39513](#)

Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy, The Russian Revolution 1891 – 1924* (Pimlico, 1996)

Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution, 1917-1921* (Oxford University Press, 1989) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.8.V56.F53 1989](#)

----- and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (Yale University Press, 1999) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.F468 1999](#)

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1982, 2008) [Hayden Library - Stacks | DK265.F48 2008](#)

Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (1993)

Graeme Gill, *Peasants and Government in the Russian Revolution* (1979) [Dewey Library - Stacks | DK265.G422 1979](#)

Daniel H. Kaiser, ed., *The Workers' Revolution in Russia, 1917: The View from Below* (Cambridge University Press, 1987)

J.L.H. Keep, *The Russian Revolution*

David Mandel, *The Petrograd Workers and the Soviet Seizure of Power: From the July Days, 1917 to July 1918* (Studies in Soviet History and Society)

Martin A. Miller, *The Russian Revolution: The Essential Readings*

Vladimir Nabokov (father of the famous novelist, 1869-1922), *V. D. Nabokov and the Russian Provisional Government, 1917*, ed. Virgil D. Medlin and Steven L. Parsons (Yale University Press, 1976) [Library Storage Annex - Off Campus Collection | DK265.7.N26 1976](#)

Bernard Pares, *The Fall of the Russian Monarchy* (1939)

Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (1991)

-----, *Three Whys of the Russian Revolution* (1995)

Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (NY: Norton, 1976) [Dewey Library - Stacks | DK265.8.L4.R27 1976](#)

-----, *Prelude to Revolution. The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1968) [Dewey Library - Stacks | DK265.8.L4.R116](#)

M. Rendle, *Defenders of the Motherland: The Tsarist Elite in Revolutionary Russia* (2009)

William G. Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution: The Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917-1921* (1974)

Harold Shukman, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution* (1988)

Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929* (1973)

Adam B. Ulam, *The Bolsheviks* (1965)

Dmitri Volkogonov, *Lenin: a New Biography* (1994)

Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, 2000)

Alan Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army* (Princeton University Press, 1980)

Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution: A Biographical History* (1948, 1964)

Alan Wood, *The Origins of the Russian Revolution* (Routledge, 2003)