

Spring 2005
TR 2:30-4 p.m.

Elizabeth A. Wood

21H 467J/ 17.601J

Soviet Politics and Society, 1917-1991

At its greatest extent the former Soviet Union encompassed a geographical area that covered one-sixth of the Earth's land mass. It spanned 11 time zones and contained over 100 distinct nationalities, 22 of which numbered over one million in population. In the 74 years from the October Revolution in 1917 to the fall of Communism in 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, its leaders and its people, had to face a number of difficult challenges: the overthrow the Tsarist autocracy, the establishment of a new state, four years of civil war, a famine, transition to a mixed economy, political strife after Lenin's death, industrialization, collectivization, a second famine, political show trials, World War II, post-war reconstruction and repression, the "Thaw" after Stalin's death, Khrushchev's experimentation, and Brezhnev's decline. Each of these challenges engendered new solutions and modifications in what can be loosely called the evolving "Soviet system."

Students will be asked to write three papers over the course of the semester (due **Feb. 24, March 15, April 21**), totalling twenty pages in length. Grading in the course will be determined as follows: 20% for attendance, participation and performance on small papers; 60% for the three papers (20% each); and 20% for the final examination.

Texts Recommended for Purchase

Gennady Andreev-Khomiakov, Bitter Waters: Life and Work in Stalin's Russia (Westview Press, 1998)

Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution (Oxford University Press, 1994)

David Hoffmann, Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity (1917[1941]) (Cornell University Press, 2003)

Richard Sakwa, The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union, 1917-1991 (Routledge, 1999)

William Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era (Norton, 2003)

* indicates materials available in a sourcepak on reserve in the Humanities Library

Feb. 1- Introduction to the Course

Feb. 3- **The Setting: Tsarism** (49 pp.)

Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 15-23, 31-39

*"Father Gapon's Petition"

*Durnovo, "Memorandum to Nicholas II"

*Richard Pipes, Formation of the Soviet Union, pp. 1-8

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 18, 30-44

Feb. 8- **The Revolutionary Tradition** (43 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, Russian Revolution, 23-31

*Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, 13-33

Sakwa, pp. 2-4, 5-8, 11-12, 16, 23-25 (docs 1.1-1.3, 1.4-1.5, 1.7, 1.11, 1.17-1.19)

Feb. 10- **The Revolutions of 1917** (55 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, Russian Revolution, 40-67

Sakwa, pp. 32-37, 45, 47-48, 51-63, 65-69 (docs 2.1-2.3, 2.9, 2.11-2.12, 2.14-2.23, 2.26-29) *These are especially important documents; read them very carefully.*

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 45-48

Feb. 15 - **The Civil War** (65 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 68-92

*Orlando Figes, Peasant Russia, Civil War, pp. 1-6, 246-49, 271-73

Sakwa: pp. 74-78, 81-85, 89-91, 102-4 (docs. 3.1-3.5, 3.8-3.10, 3.13, 3.19-3.20)

*Trotsky, "The Train," in My Life, pp. 411-22

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 48-52

Feb. 17- **The Crisis of War Communism & the Shift to NEP** (65 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 93-106

*Avrich, "Crisis of War Communism," Kronstadt 1921, pp. 7-34

Sakwa, pp. 107-14, 118-22, 127-135 (docs. 3.22-3.24, 3.27-28, 4.1-4.5)

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 52-57

Feb. 22- No Class-President's Day

Feb. 24-- First paper due in class

March 1- **Defining Bolshevism** (92 pp.)

Sakwa, pp. 137-40, 149-53 (docs. 4.7-4.8, 4.14-4.15)

David Hoffmann, Stalinist Values, pp. 15-97: ch. 1

"Acculturating the Masses"; 2, "A Code of Behavior for Communists"; ch. 3 "Stalinist Family Values"

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 58-61

March 3 - The Politics and Economics of NEP (45 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 106-119

Sakwa, pp. 143-49; 153-69 (docs. 4.11-4.13, 4.16-4.25)

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 61-71

March 8- The Great Break: Collectivization & Industrialization (61 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, 120-41

Sakwa: 170-175, 179-84, 186-91 (docs 4.26-4.29, 5.3-5.5, 5.7-5.9)

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 72-97

*Stalin's Letters to Molotov, pp. 168-69, 175

March 10- The New Economy (65 pp.)

Gennady Andreev-Khomiakov, Bitter Waters, 185-188, 4-13, 22-25, 39-55, 69-85, 105-122

March 15- Second paper due in class

March 17- Purge and Terror (49 pp.)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 163-170

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 97-108; 114-125

Sakwa, pp. 191-97, 199-203, 211-19, 231-33 (docs. 5.10-5.14, 5.17-5.19, 5.23-5.26, 5.32)

optional:

*Wood, Performing Justice, ch. 10

March 22 & 24--Spring Break--No Classes

March 29- World War II (56 pp.)

*Maps from Gilbert, Atlas of Russian History

*John Barber, The Soviet Home Front, pp. 19-44, 59-67

Sakwa, pp. 235-236, 238-39, 240-245, 247-48, 252-55, 257-61, 269, 275-277, 287-288 (docs 6.1, 6.3-6.4, 6.6-6.7, 6.9, 6.13-6.17, 6.19-6.21, 6.28, 6.31-6.32, 6.39)

optional:

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 133-42, 147-52, 162-64

Andreev-Khomiakov, pp. 146-151, 163-171

March 31 - Stalin's Last Years, the Origins of the Cold War, and Khrushchev's Rise (56 pp.)

Sakwa, pp. 277-284, 300-4, 309-10 (docs. 6.33-6.36, 7.8-7.10, 7.13)

*The Novikov Telegram, pp. 3, 8, 12-16

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 325-32, 211-26, 230-35, 236-57, 263-66

April 5 -- The Khrushchev Years: Thaw and Social Change (82 pp.)

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 270-324, 364-71
Sakwa, pp. 313-22, 324-28, 329-333, 341-43 (docs 8.1-8.4, 8.7-8.8, 8.10-8.12, 8.15)

April 7 - Khrushchev and the World (79 pp.)

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 335-36 (bottom), 339 (top)-40 (bottom), 342-45 (top), 347-48 (bottom), 359 (top)-60, 396-403, 406-9 (top); 415 {"Eisenhower puzzled"}-416, 442-48 (bottom); 455-60; 475 (top)-79; 482-86, 492 ("Four days later")-93, 529-37, 557-77, 605-6
Sakwa, pp. 344-47 (docs. 8.16-8.18)

April 12- Soviet Agriculture, Science & Engineering (63 pp.)

Sakwa, 299-300 (doc. 7.7)
Roy and Zhores Medvedev, Khrushchev, pp. 94-101
Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 130-32, 226-30, 261-63, 371-81, 480-82, 490-92, 507-28, 582-86, 606-9, 616-17

April 14- Khrushchev's Fall and the Brezhnev Era: Politics and Economics (57 pp.)

Taubman, Khrushchev, pp. 578-81, 586-90, 602-6, 614-17, 3-17
Sakwa, pp. 363-66, 379-80 (docs. 9.10-9.11, 9.18)
*Timothy Colton, "Brezhnev's Ambiguous Legacy," in The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union, pp. 6-31

April 19-- No Class- Patriot's Day

April 21-- Third Paper due in Class

April 26-- The Brezhnev Era: Social Change (67 pp.)

*Colton, "What Ails the Soviet System?" Dilemma, pp. 32-67
*Boris Yeltsin, Against the Grain, pp. 43-56, 61-82
Sakwa, pp. 421-22 (doc. 9.35)

April 28- Gorbachev's Political Revolution (61 pp.)

*Michael McFaul, "Gorbachev's Design for Reforming..., The End of the Soviet Union", Russia's Unfinished Revolution; Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin, pp. 33-86
Sakwa, pp. 425, 440-46, 459-61 (docs. 10.3, 10.10, 10.16-10.17)

May 3- Nationalism (53 pp.)

*Geoffrey Hosking, "The flawed melting pot," The Awakening of the Soviet Union, pp. 82-88
*Victor Zaslavsky, "The evolution of separatism in Soviet society under Gorbachev," pp. 71-79

*Stephen Brook, "Civil War or Ice-Cream," *Claws of the Crab*, pp. 6, 8, 17, 21-33

*Roman Szporluk, "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism," pp. 441-462

Sakwa, pp. 466-69 (doc. 10.20-10.22)

May 5- Collapse of the Soviet Union (44 pp.)

*McFaul, pp.86-117 (The End of the Soviet Union)

*Caroline Humphrey, "'Icebergs,' barter, and the mafia in provincial Russia," pp. 8-13

Sakwa, pp. 474-75, 483-487, 494-496 (docs. 10.26, 10.29-10.32, 10.37)

May 10- Life in the New Russia, 1991-2001 (45 pp.)

* David Remnick, "The October Revolution," pp. 37-41, 45-57, 60, 61-63, 68-69, 71-73, 77-83

*Stephen Holmes, "What Russia Teaches Us Now: How Weak States Threaten Freedom," in Ronald Suny, Structure of Soviet History, 564-73

*Peter Maass, "The Triumph of the Quiet Tycoon," New York Times Magazine, Aug. 1, 2004

May 12- Putin and the Drive to Centralize Russia

Articles to be handed out in class

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

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