

History 38  
Angels of Death: Life Under Lenin and Stalin  
Spring 2021

Zoom ID for Class:

<https://swarthmore.zoom.us/j/84056443695>

Professor Bob Weinberg  
rweinbel

Office Hours: M/T/W/TR 3-4 and By Appointment. If you find yourself in the Waiting Room, please be patient since it means I'm talking with another student.

Zoom ID for Office Hours: <https://swarthmore.zoom.us/j/87831429945>

This course examines the efforts to build the world's first socialist society in Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Topics include the collapse of the Romanov dynasty, the Bolshevik seizure of power, the fate of the communist revolution, the rise of Stalin, the establishment of the Stalinist system, and the legacy of Stalin. We pay particular attention to the interaction between social and economic forces and political policies and explore how the regime's ideological imperatives and the nature of society shaped the contours of Russia in the twentieth century. In addition, the course will hone your skills in the critical reading of primary sources and develop your understanding of history as a methodology.

Requirements:

Two papers (seven pages each)

Post comments, questions, responses, and reflections on Moodle Forum for each class

Engaged participation in class discussions

All students are expected to read the College's policy on academic honesty and integrity that appears in the Swarthmore College Bulletin. The work you submit must be your own, and suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be submitted to the College Judiciary Council for adjudication. When in doubt about citing sources, please check with me. In addition, please read the statement on academic integrity on Moodle.

I will not accept late papers and will assign a failing grade for the assignment unless you notify me and receive permission from me to submit the paper after the due date. Finally, students are required to attend all classes and submit all assignments in order to pass the course.

**Student Learning Goals:** The History Department affirms the following student learning goals specific to the study of history.

\*\*You will recognize and appreciate the differentness of the past and the diversity of other cultures and peoples, and gain an understanding of the processes and causes of change over time.

\*\*You will acquire foundational knowledge of, and learn the issues, debates, and interpretations of historians for the history of Russia in the twentieth century.

\*\*You will develop the ability to evaluate critically the arguments and analytical methods of historians, and learn to assess critically the evidence of the past through first-hand exposure to primary sources and historical research.

\*\*You will develop the skills of clear and coherent historical writing as well as confident oral presentations.

Here is a list of websites you may find interesting. They're also useful for locating primary sources.

#### The Life of Sara Mebel

Told by Laurie Bernstein, Emerita Professor of History at Rutgers University, this podcast narrates the life of Sara Mebel (a cousin of Bob Weinberg) who lived in Moscow for most of the twentieth century.

<https://sarascentury.blogs.rutgers.edu/>

#### Russian History Blog

<http://www.russianhistoryblog.org>

Prominent historians discuss various aspects of Russian and Soviet history.

#### Seventeen Moments in Soviet History

<http://soviethistory.msu.edu/>

Multimedia website of primary sources devoted to key moments in Soviet history.

#### The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia

<http://www.orlandofiges.com/>

Based on letters, diaries, memoirs, and photographs collected by the historian Orlando Figes, this site explores private life and the Soviet Union in the Stalin period.

#### Communal Living in Russia <http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/>

Site devoted to apartment living in the late Soviet period

#### Revelations from the Soviet Archives: Documents in English Translation.

<http://loc.gov/exhibits/archives/>

Collection of documents and photographs from the archives of the Soviet Union from an exhibit at the Library of Congress

#### Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives <http://gulaghistory.org/>

Site devoted to the history of the gulag

#### Soviet Poster Collection in the Peace Collection, McCabe Library

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/Sovietposters/soviethistintro.htm>

Posters devoted to maternity care, industrialization, collectivization, and antireligious campaigns from the 1920s and early 1930s.

Soviet Music

<http://english.sovmusic.ru/>

A website devoted to music written under communism. It is a collection of songs about war, the military, patriotism, and leaders and also contains speeches and posters.

Soviet Poster Collection

<http://hoohila.stanford.edu/posters/>

The Hoover Institution at Stanford University owns over three thousand posters produced in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Poster Collection

<http://www.russianposter.ru>

Another excellent collection of posters. However, the site is in Russian and German.

Kennan Institute-National Public Radio Russian History Audio Archive

[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1424&fuseaction=topics.media](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1424&fuseaction=topics.media)

On-line audio archive of speeches and voices of key political figures from the Soviet Union such as Lenin and Stalin.

All Readings Are Posted On Moodle Or Are Available As E-Books

In addition, the following books are available from the Bookstore:

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*

Mark Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution*

Eugeniia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*

#### **January 4: Russia on the Eve of Revolution**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, introduction and chapter 1

Leopold Haimson, "Dual Polarization in Urban Russia"

"Lenin's Theory of the Party"

#### **January 5: The Challenges of Historical Explanation and Interpretation**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, chapter 2

Leon Trotsky, "The Peculiarities of Russia's Development"

Ronald Suny, "Revising the Old Story"

Stephen Cohen, "Scholarly Missions"

#### **January 6: The Collapse of the Autocracy and the Rise of the Bolsheviks**

Mark Steinberg, ed., *Voices of Revolution* (Available through bookstore and on Moodle)

#### **January 7: The Meaning of Revolution**

Mark Steinberg, ed., *Voices of Revolution*

#### **January 11: Revolutionary Dreams and Visualizing Revolution**

Alexandra Kollontai, “Make Way for Winged Eros” and “Women and the Family in the Communist State”  
Nadezhda Krupskaya, “What a Communist Ought to be Like”  
Leon Trotsky, “‘Ty’ and ‘Vy’ in the Red Army” (Ty is informal “you”; Vy is formal “you”)

### **January 12: The Revolution Off-Track?**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, chapter 3  
Moshe Lewin, “Preface” and “A Dictatorship in the Void”  
“The Kronstadt Revolt: What We Are Fighting For”  
“On Party Unity”

### **January 13: The Dilemmas of NEP**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, chapter 4  
Leon Trotsky, “Trotsky on Industrialization”  
Nikolai Bukharin, “Enrich Yourselves!”

### **January 14: The Rise of Stalin**

Stephen Cohen, “Bolshevism and Stalinism”  
Leon Trotsky, “Permanent Revolution”  
Joseph Stalin, “Socialism in One Country Versus Permanent Revolution”  
Moshe Lewin, “Lenin’s Testament” and “If Lenin Had Lived...”  
“Bukharin on the Opposition”  
“Condemnation of the Trotskyist Opposition”  
Watch: PBS Documentary on Stalin (Part One) Streaming

### **January 18: No Class**

### **FIRST PAPER DUE ON JANUARY 18 BY NOON**

### **January 19: The Cults of Lenin and Stalin**

Watch *Bed and Sofa* (86 minutes) for class. Streaming

### **January 20: The Great Leap Forward—Collectivization and Industrialization**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, chapter 5  
“Bukharin on Peasant Policy,” “Bukharin on the Menace of Stalin,” “Stalin’s Revolution,” and “Stalin on the Liquidation of the Kulaks”  
Lynne Viola, “‘Bab’i Bunty’ and Peasant Women’s Protest during Collectivization”  
Lev Kopelev, “The Education of a True Believer”  
Alec Nove, “Was Stalin Really Necessary?”

### **January 21: Soviet Power and Nationality Policy**

Watch *Seekers of Happiness* (84 minutes). Streaming

### **January 22: What was Stalinism?**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism* (Available as E-Book and through bookstore)

**January 25: Explaining the Purges**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, chapter 6 M

Peter Holquist, “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism”

Amir Weiner, “Nature and Nurture in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism”

J. Arch Getty, “Afraid of Their Shadows: The Bolshevik Recourse to Terror, 1932-1938”

Watch PBS Documentary on Stalin (Part Two) for class. Streaming

Cannibal Island, <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.swarthmore.edu/watch/cannibal-island> (54 minutes)

**January 26: The Impact of War and Stalin’s Final Years**

Andrei Zhdanov, “Report to the Leningrad Branch of the Union of Soviet Writers”

“The Campaign against ‘Cosmopolitanism’”

“The Arrest of a Group of Doctor-Saboteurs” and “Spies and Murderers in the Guise of Physicians and Scientists”

Watch PBS Documentary on Stalin (Part Three) for class. Streaming

**January 27: The Legacy of Stalin**

Nikita Khrushchev, “Secret Speech at the Twentieth Party Congress”

**January 28: Surviving the Purges**

Evgeniia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind* (Available as E-Book and through bookstore)

Watch *Burnt by the Sun* (135 minutes) for class. Streaming

**SECOND PAPER DUE ON JANUARY 30 AT NOON**