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# From Greenwich Village to the Bolshevik Revolution: Madeline Z. Doty's Foray Behind the Battle Line, 1917–1918

Julia L. Mickenberg

“It is a noteworthy fact that a large number of those who have written of the present situation in Russia are women,” the writer Margaret Ashmun notes in a 1919 review essay entitled “Russia Through Women’s Eyes”:

The modern woman does not shrink from physical hardships, and her imagination overleaps hunger and danger when she sees an issue at stake. Moreover, this is preeminently the age of woman in revolt: and whoever has the courage to rebel against oppression, in actuality or only in spirit, is an object of intense interest to women in general. Any attempt, however bungling, to right a social wrong wins from them a throb of sympathy, even when their better judgment disapproved both method and result.... This strongly developed social sense in the best type of modern woman explains why they have responded to the appeal of Russia in Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

*Behind the Battle Line: Around the World in 1918* by Madeleine Z. Doty (1918) is among the books that Ashmun discusses, as half of that book is devoted to a discussion of the revolution unfolding in Russia. And Doty herself was in many ways the prototypical “modern woman.” Today, both Doty and her account of the Russian Revolution are largely forgotten. However, Doty’s own story and her reporting on the revolution, the latter drawn from *Behind the Battle Line* and reprinted here for the first time as a stand-alone volume, offer much that is of interest to contemporary readers.

Doty arrived in St. Petersburg (then called Petrograd) just days after Lenin and the Bolsheviks launched their coup against the Provisional Government, in November 1917.<sup>2</sup> The tsar had abdicated that March, and from that moment until

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ashmun, “Russia Through Women’s Eyes,” *The Bookman* 48, 6 (1919): 755-57.

<sup>2</sup> The Bolshevik coup began on November 7, 1917, on the Gregorian calendar. Although Doty, near the end of her life, claimed (while seeking a publisher for her autobiography) to have arrived in Petrograd just “three days after the Bolshevik Revolution,” other evidence suggests that it was more like ten days after the revolution began. There is mention while

the Bolshevik coup, the Provisional Government struggled to maintain control, as Alexander Kerensky, a Socialist Revolutionary, presided over a fragile coalition of liberals and socialists, attempting to run a divided government, maintain order, and win a war while struggling to maintain the morale of a hungry and war-weary population.<sup>3</sup>

Doty's reporting on the Bolshevik Revolution, registering the "Alice-in-Wonder-land" quality of a world suddenly turned upside down, offers a unique perspective.<sup>4</sup> Her descriptions are vivid, often humorous, and cover both the quotidian details of adjusting to life under the new regime as well as the machinations of an ongoing political struggle. Discussing female journalists from the West who covered the Russian Revolution, Choi Chatterjee has noted, "Women writers rarely kept a safe distance from the people they were observing; instead, they insisted on inserting themselves into the historical narrative and recording their personal experiences of the revolution."<sup>5</sup> As such, many women's accounts, written in first person, are not just records of the social and political transformations wrought by the revolution but also, implicitly or explicitly, narratives of personal transformation. In Doty's case, this is subtle, as she, like other visitors, grapples with discomforts, dangers, bureaucracy, and a range of inconveniences, large and small, along with fear, hope, excitement, and—after the relief of leaving Russia—finding that she can't get the place out of her mind.<sup>6</sup>

Doty had gone to Russia as part of an assignment for the women's magazine *Good Housekeeping*, to travel "around the world" and document the World War from the perspective of women: "What are they thinking about—the women in Russia, England, France, all the countries that have been bearing the heat and burden and sorrow of the battle these long tragic years? We have sent Miss Madeleine Doty to talk with them and find out," a promotional story in the magazine noted just as Doty was making her way toward St. Petersburg. "When you read this,

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she is still on the train to Petrograd of Kerensky attempting to quell the uprising, which happened November 7-11. (Kerensky, following his flight from St. Petersburg, rallied troops from Pskov and made some inroads before being defeated, forcing Kerensky into exile.) Madeleine Z. Doty, *Behind the Battle Line: Around the World in 1918* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 35. For Doty's claim to have arrived three days after the revolution, see solicitation letter, Madeleine Z. Doty Papers, box 4, folder 35, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA (hereafter referred to as Doty Papers). In a letter to her parents dated November 27, 1917, she mentions that she sent a cable "last week as soon as I arrived here" (Doty Papers, box 2, folder 7).

<sup>3</sup> The Socialist Revolutionaries grew out of populist movements in Russia and were among the "terrorist" groups that called for violence against oppressive figures in the tsarist regime. Even so, they were considered more moderate than the Social Democrats—which split into the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks—with whom they vied for power and authority.

<sup>4</sup> In *Behind the Battle Line*, Doty twice mentions feeling like Alice in Wonderland in Russia. It is a metaphor that was used repeatedly in accounts of the Bolshevik Revolution. Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 47, 68.

<sup>5</sup> Choi Chatterjee, "'Odds and Ends of the Russian Revolution,' 1917–1920: Gender and American Travel Narratives," *Journal of Women's History* 20, 4 (2008): 10–33.

<sup>6</sup> Comparisons to Russia occur throughout other chapters of *Behind the Battle Line*.

Miss Doty will have passed through Yokohama and Vladivostok and will be nearing the scenes of the great civil conflict in Russia,” editors explain.<sup>7</sup> Doty sought, she tells *Good Housekeeping* readers, “to discover the dreams and plans of the women of the future, what the folks at home strove for, where the spiritual drama led.”<sup>8</sup> The *Good Housekeeping* assignment followed on the heels of Doty’s book *Short Rations: An American Woman in Germany, 1915–1916* (1917), which pulled together Doty’s accounts of her earlier travels in wartime Europe. It was likewise billed as a record of “what happens at home when men go to war.”<sup>9</sup> Touching on Doty’s stops in The Hague, London, Paris, and Scandinavia, *Short Rations* focuses upon two visits to Germany, in 1915 and 1916: hence its subtitle.

In contrast, the title of *Behind the Battle Line: Around the World in 1918* is doubly misleading because half of the trip actually took place in 1917 and Russia, despite taking up half the book, is not in its title. While there are chapters on Japan, China, Russia, Sweden, Norway, France, and England, it is clear that on this trip, Russia was “at the heart of things” for Doty, just as Germany was in *Short Rations*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, most reviews of the book either concentrate on the Russia chapters or make clear that these are the most interesting part of the book.<sup>11</sup>

Not long after Doty landed in Petrograd, she decided to extend the brief visit she’d originally planned. As she wrote to her parents, “It would be a shame not to be present at the making of history.”<sup>12</sup> Doty stayed in Russia for nearly three months, mostly in St. Petersburg, but she also visited Moscow. Although Doty’s first-person narrative of the revolution is also an account of her discomfort—and fear, and excitement, and skepticism, and many other emotional responses—she does not, in fact, foreground the “daily domestic battles” that Chatterjee says women tended to prioritize in their narratives over discussion of political events.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, in the Russia chapters—in contrast to other parts of the book—women are not necessarily at the center of Doty’s story. Still, as Ashmun’s review would suggest, Doty’s feminism made her particularly interested in the Russian Revolution, and her account offers a woman’s perspective not only on some of the quotidian details of what adjustment to this “Alice-in-Wonderland” world entailed but also on “the drama of high Bolshevik politics.”<sup>14</sup>

Although Doty had never intended to publish her account of the Russian Revolution as a stand-alone book, the fact that it was—until now—buried amidst

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<sup>7</sup> Clipping in box 1, folder 3, Doty Papers, (mis)dated in pencil January 1917. Doty did not leave on her journey until the fall of 1917, and she arrived in St. Petersburg in November (on the New Style calendar; the Russians at that time were still using the Julian calendar, so it was October there).

<sup>8</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, viii.

<sup>9</sup> Madeleine Z. Doty, *Short Rations: An American Woman in Germany, 1915–1916* (London: Methuen, 1917), xi.

<sup>10</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, viii.

<sup>11</sup> See “Eyewitnesses,” *The Nation* (London), March 22, 1919, 756, 758; Margaret Ashmun, “Russia Through Women’s Eyes,” 755–57.

<sup>12</sup> Madeleine Doty letter to parents, November 27, 1917, box 2, folder 7, Doty Papers.

<sup>13</sup> Chatterjee, ““Odds and Ends of the Russian Revolution,”” 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

her discussion of traveling through seven other countries diminished its impact. Notably, when Doty wrote her autobiography, she included nearly all of the Russia chapters from *Behind the Battle Line* with only minor revisions. This trip clearly represented a pivotal moment in Doty's life, for she knew she was witnessing history unfolding. Moreover, the significance of her perspective on the day-to-day experience of living in a society in upheaval is more self-evident today than it may have been before women's history became a valid field of study.<sup>15</sup> The Russian chapters from *Behind the Battle Line* offer a notable perspective on the Bolshevik Revolution because of Doty's background and outlook, her timing, the context in which she made her travels, and the particular events and figures she covered. Read alongside the accounts of other female journalists, such as Louise Bryant and Bessie Beatty (both of whom Doty knew and spent time with in Russia), it predicted some of the ways in which the larger number of American women who visited and worked in the Soviet Union in the decades following the revolution would respond to that experience.<sup>16</sup>

### **Madeleine Doty and the Greenwich Village Feminist Milieu**

Born in New Jersey in 1877 to well-off parents, Samuel and Charlotte (Zabriskie) Doty, Madeleine Zabriskie Doty came of age at a moment in which women were increasingly gaining access to higher education and the professions, and she took full advantage of the new opportunities available to those of some means. She played an active role in the battle for women's suffrage and was a leader in the peace movement, which absorbed the attention of feminists well after women won the vote. She spent her 20s and 30s living amidst the Bohemian milieu of socialists, anarchists, reformers, artists, and freethinkers in Greenwich Village, ground zero for all that was "modern" in the United States. She was a lawyer and a leader in progressive-era battles to reform prisons and the juvenile justice system, in addition to having a career as a journalist (and, much later, as a teacher). Doty's love life—most famously, her unconventional marriage to civil libertarian Roger Baldwin—put her at the forefront of new women's efforts to recast romantic relationships on a more egalitarian basis. Her interest in revolutionary Russia can be understood in relation to all these aspects of her own history.

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<sup>15</sup> An editor who rejected the manuscript of Doty's autobiography in the early 1960s called her perspective on the revolution "peripheral, not on the level of meaningful transaction." However, an archivist at Smith College, Margaret Grierson, who was eager to obtain the unpublished autobiography for Smith's archives (which are among the strongest in the world in women's history), challenged this editor's view. After quoting the editor's comments, she notes in a letter to Doty's executor, "I should suppose that the observations of the intelligent concerned woman correspondent would be of great serious value in bringing life and color and meaningful interpretation to the more official records of history." Margaret Grierson letter to Mr. Philip H. Ball, Jr., November 11, 1963, box 1, folder 1, Doty Papers.

<sup>16</sup> For discussion of this broader phenomenon, see Julia L. Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet Dream* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Doty attended the exclusive Brearley School for girls in New York City and was raised in comfort: she grew up moving back and forth between New York City and the Zabriskie homestead in New Jersey, with a governess, riding lessons, and summers often spent in the exclusive upstate New York resort town of Saratoga Springs. Her family regularly traveled to Europe, and one summer Doty was promised a pony if she would learn French.<sup>17</sup> Although the family's fortunes had ups and downs, and Madeleine's mother suffered from mental illness, she had a relatively happy and protected childhood and youth. Doty graduated from Smith College in 1900—at a time in which less than 4 percent of all eighteen–twenty-one-year-old women attended college—and was among the even smaller minority of women who decided to pursue an independent career.<sup>18</sup> As Doty suggests in a 1910 article on women's colleges in the popular women's magazine *The Delineator*, the “vague longings and aspirations” that college may awaken for women usually serve little purpose in the end: “We are women and are not taught to look forward to a career. We are to be simply women. Our fulfillment lies in doing for others. So these awakened longings, these aspirations, have no result, unless perhaps they make us attend a few more prayer meetings, or fill us with resolutions of working in a college settlement when we graduate, or determinations to be a good wife and mother.”<sup>19</sup>

Doty herself obviously had higher aspirations, attending New York University's law school after unsuccessfully attempting to take classes at Harvard, disguised as a man. “Dressed in a very simple tailored suit, with a soft felt hat pulled down over her hair, she would slip quietly into the back row, the students themselves being perfectly willing to help her conceal her identity.” She managed to attend four lectures before the professor discovered her, and she was forbidden to continue attending; hence on to New York.<sup>20</sup> At NYU, Doty was hardworking, serious, and apparently fairly innocent; she initially struggled socially, experiencing awkward and possibly romantic relationships with men as well as women, including a woman working at Smith College, which she visited to get a break from New York and law school. She would write, somewhat obliquely, in her autobiography, “I had learned much as a law student, many things besides the law. Among others is the relation between men and women, the meaning of sex. I had

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<sup>17</sup> Madeleine Z. Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference: The Life of Madeleine Zabriskie Doty*, ed. Alice Duffy Rinehart (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2001), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 297. Cott is citing Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 64.

<sup>19</sup> Madeleine Z. Doty, “What a Woman's College Means to a Girl: In Most Instances It Is a Four Years' Course in Amusements, With a Little Social Training on the Side,” *The Delineator*, March 1910, 209.

<sup>20</sup> Mary B. Mullett, “Who's Who Among Progressive Women: Miss Madeleine Doty and Her Unique Experience as an Experimental Convict,” *The Washington Herald*, December 22, 1913, 7.

learned about the misuse of sex and the impure relation that can exist between women. I was appalled and upset.”<sup>21</sup>

Law school ultimately set Doty on a trajectory to achieve both professional and social success, despite failure to support herself as an attorney. She became close to several women, including fellow students Crystal Eastman, Jessie Ashley, and Ida Rauh, all of whom were outspoken feminists and activists: Eastman would become New York’s first female commissioner and had an important impact on New York labor law, and eventually became well-known also as a suffrage advocate and socialist. A leader in several feminist organizations and a birth control advocate, Ashley used her inherited wealth to support radical causes like amnesty for political prisoners.<sup>22</sup> Rauh, from a secular Jewish family, would marry Crystal’s brother, Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses*, in 1905. As a founder of the Provincetown Players theater troupe, which features prominently in the Warren Beatty film *Reds* (1981), Rauh earned notoriety both for her acting and her outspoken feminism (she never actually practiced law).

Following law school and a short stint teaching in Boston, Doty returned to New York and moved into a tenement on the Lower East Side with Rauh. She, Ashley, and another friend started a law office uptown: “We hoped that a swell office uptown on Fifth Avenue would attract society women. But of course it didn’t. In fact, we soon discovered that women are less ready than men to employ a woman lawyer.” The costs of maintaining the office amounted to more than the women’s combined income, so Doty began tutoring girls from her old school, and subsequently took up journalism.<sup>23</sup>

Doty had some successes as a lawyer (she became one of the first women to be made a receiver in bankruptcy cases), but in some ways it was just as well that she could not make ends meet in that professional capacity: in the few years she practiced she began to see “many injustices in the law” and was troubled by the contrast between the wealthy world of uptown and Park Avenue where her law office was located, and the poverty of the Lower East Side, where she lived.<sup>24</sup>

Doty and Rauh lived close to the University Settlement, a haven for wealthy male reformers and socialists, among them J. G. Phelps, the “millionaire socialist” who married the young Jewish radical Rose Pastor; William English Walling, another wealthy White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) who likewise married an immigrant Jew, Anna Strunsky; and Ernest Poole. Most men in the settlement were intensely interested in Russia; several would travel to St. Petersburg in 1905 to start a “Revolutionary News Bureau” to report on the first Russian Revolution for American readers. It was at the University Settlement that Doty “first heard about Karl Marx and socialism”; there she also could have met “the Little Grandmother of the Russian Revolution,” Catherine Breshkovsky (or Breshkovskaya in Russian). Breshkovsky earned many admirers, especially among the Settlement

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<sup>21</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 49.

<sup>22</sup> See Editors’ Notes, “Ashley, Jessie, 1861–1919,” <http://editorsnotes.org/projects/emma/topics/90/>.

<sup>23</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 58.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

House crowd, when she toured the United States in 1904–05 to build support for the Socialist Revolutionaries, a populist group that would later vie for authority with the Bolsheviks. (Doty's 1918 article in *Good Housekeeping* on the "Women of Russia" features a photograph of Breshkovsky, but the article's only discussion of her is a mention of the fact that Breshkovsky had apparently gone into hiding after the Bolsheviks took power.)

In the spring of 1906, after Rauh became ill with pneumonia and was taken off to Europe by her parents, Doty received an invitation to join the cooperative house on 3 Fifth Avenue known simply as "A Club." (The name arose after a reporter asked the housing collective's president what the group's name was, and he "casually replied, 'Oh, just call it a club.'") A-Club, which was bankrolled by Chicago settlement worker and factory inspector Helen Todd, housed many of the leading literary figures of the day, all of whom were "more or less radical."<sup>25</sup> Journalist Mary Heaton Vorse suggests that A-Club essentially functioned as "the American press bureau of the Russian 1905–1907 revolution": William English Walling and his wife, Anna Strunsky, Anna's sister Rose, Ernest Poole, Arthur Bullard, and Leroy Scott had all been to Russia to report on that first, unsuccessful revolution, and other A-Club residents, including Vorse herself, Scott's wife-to-be Miriam Finn, and Doty, would travel to Russia in the wake of the 1917 Revolution. Vorse notes, "All sorts of people from Russia came to A Club—refugees, returned travelers."

Members of A-Club were among the chief American supporters of Maxim Gorky's ill-fated visit to the United States; the scandal that erupted during his visit reveals volumes about the Victorian mores that still held sway in the 1900s, their relationship to popular conceptions of revolutionary Russia, and the extent to which Doty's radical milieu was out of step with most other Americans when it came to sexual morality. Along with Breshkovsky, Gorky was among a number of exiles and revolutionaries who traveled to the United States in the early 1900s to solicit support for their cause: as Doty notes of Gorky in her autobiography, "He came with his tragic story of the Czar's dictatorship and the abuse of the peasants. He told of the pogroms and the beatings and the people sent to Siberia. He came to appeal to America for aid."<sup>26</sup>

Gorky was probably the most famous of the revolutionary visitors to the United States. Despite his open support for the radical Bolshevik faction of the Social Democrats, who sponsored his trip to the United States, Gorky was scheduled to be feted by many of the literary and cultural luminaries of the day, including Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, and Jane Addams. However, a scandal erupted when a newspaper revealed that Gorky's traveling companion, the acclaimed actress Madame Andreeva, was not his legal wife. Suddenly nearly all of the dinners and celebrations in Gorky's honor were cancelled, and Gorky

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<sup>25</sup> Howard Brubaker and Charlotte Teller, quoted in Gerald W. McFarland, *Inside Greenwich Village: A New York City Neighborhood, 1898–1918* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 120–21. On Todd and Breshkovsky, see Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 54.

<sup>26</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 59–60.



**Figure 1.** Maxim Gorky and Maria Fyodorovna Andreyevna, from Gorky's 1906 visit to the United States. Madeleine Z. Doty Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College (Northampton, MA).

and Andreeva were refused rooms in several hotels. But they were welcomed at A-Club, and later ferried off to stay at the Staten Island home of the Fabian socialist John Martin and his wife, friends of Doty; he also spent time at the Martins' Adirondack retreat, Summerbrook, a haven for urban intellectuals and activists.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The "news" about Gorky and Andreyevna's relationship, published in the *New York World*, was not even really news, at least among "the reading public of Europe" and "most American reporters," who were part of an "off-the-record agreement" to keep the story out of the news until editors of the *World*, learning that Gorky had given exclusive rights to Hearst's *New York American*, a rival newspaper, broke the story in retaliation. See Filia Holtzman, "A Mission That Failed: Gorky in America," *Slavic and East European Journal* 6, 3 (1962): 227-35; Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 59-60.

“During [Gorky and Andreevna’s] stay in Staten Island we spent many Sundays with them on the beach. I have vivid memories of Gorki in his long black cape and soft black hat,” Doty writes. “He spoke only Russian, but Marie was his interpreter.”<sup>28</sup>

Doty would later insist of the public shunning that “the barbarity of this treatment was unbelievable.” She’d met Gorky early in his visit to the US at a reception, and credits meetings such as this—she met H. G. Wells at the same gathering—with a loosening of her inhibitions: “These people impressed me greatly. My intolerance began to drop from me. I had long since learned to smoke cigarettes and look with amusement at my former attitude. I was living a far different life from the sheltered one of the Brearley School and Smith College.”<sup>29</sup>

It was around this time that Doty launched her journalism career: hearing that *The New York Times* was looking for a man to write book reviews, Doty “asked to be given a three-week trial without pay, saying [she] would take a man’s name and no one would know the difference. They reluctantly consented, and a weekly review about books and authors began to appear under the name of ‘Otis Notman,’ a name they accepted though it really meant ‘O ’tis not [a] man.’” Doty interviewed three or four authors a week, wrote several thousand words, and earned enough money to cover her living expenses; all of her earnings from practicing law went back into the law firm, which was still struggling.<sup>30</sup>

As Doty became increasingly enmeshed in the New York literary milieu, she became more involved with feminist, progressive, and socialist organizations. She was a member of the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, a group started by Harriot Stanton Blatch (daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton) that promoted equal pay and women’s suffrage. Blatch, who lived for two decades in England, had close ties with radical suffragettes from Britain, bringing an international focus to her organization.<sup>31</sup> Doty was also involved with the Intercollegiate Socialist Society and frequented the Liberal Club, “Greenwich Village’s first institution for free speech,” which “brought together older progressives and younger bohemians for debate and lectures.”<sup>32</sup>

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On Summerbrook, see Richard Plunz, “City: Culture: Nature—The New York Wilderness and the Urban Sublime,” in *The Urban Lifeworld: Formation, Perception, Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 68.

<sup>28</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 60.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 60-61.

<sup>31</sup> See David Dismore, “July 10, 1908: Police Intervene As Suffragists Invade Financial District,” *Feminist Majority Foundation Blog*, July 10, 2014, <https://feminist.org/blog/>; Cott, *Grounding for Modern Feminism*, 24-25; “Equality League of Self-Supporting Women to Governor of New York,” June 8, 1907, Alice Duer Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897–1911, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/>.

<sup>32</sup> Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 78; Peggy Lamson, *Roger Baldwin, Founder of the American Civil Liberties Union: A Portrait* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), quoted in Duffy, “Introduction to Chapters 11-12,” in Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 211.

In addition, Doty was probably a member of Heterodoxy, a luncheon club for “unorthodox women” that met on alternate Saturday afternoons “for over twenty years to discuss women, literature, and politics.” Heterodoxy was founded in 1912 by Marie Jenney Howe, an ordained minister and suffragist who was friendly with many of the unconventional women who lived near her in Greenwich Village, including Crystal Eastman, free love advocate Henrietta Rodman, sex educator Mary Ware Dennett, playwright Susan Glaspell, and progressive educator Elisabeth Irwin, along with other women who would become prominent figures in the suffrage movement like Inez Milholland, Rheta Childe Dorr, and Doris Stevens.<sup>33</sup> Heterodoxy would eventually come to include dozens of the most prominent women of the era, among them Emma Goldman’s niece Stella Ballantine (Goldman herself addressed the group at least once); journalist Bessie Beatty (fellow journalist Louise Bryant went to at least one meeting of the group);<sup>34</sup> dancer Agnes de Mille; the sexologist Havelock Ellis’s wife, Edith Ellis, who openly engaged in same-sex relationships; writers Fannie Hurst, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Vida Scudder, Rose Pastor Stokes, Mary Heaton Vorse, and Rose Strunsky; anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons; patron of the arts Mabel Dodge Luhan; and psychologists Leta Stetter Hollingworth and Beatrice Hinkle. Although radicals were overrepresented, the group included women of diverse political views, a number of open lesbians, and even one African American woman, Grace Nail Johnson, a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) activist who was married to the writer James Weldon Johnson (this at a time when nearly all aspects of American life were marked by de facto if not legal segregation).<sup>35</sup>

Despite involvement in these circles, Doty’s maturation as a feminist and activist—and as a woman increasingly in touch with her own sexual appetites—actually matured as she, in her words, “forsook my feminine world,” spending most of her time with men. She entered into a relationship with the novelist, journalist, and muckraker David Graham Phillips after interviewing him in her Otis Notman guise. Of their relationship Doty writes, “I was to learn through suffering and anguish the meaning of love between man and woman.” Phillips was drawn to Doty’s independence, intelligence, and ambition, and was attracted to her physically, but he had no interest in marrying her. “And he didn’t realize how immature I was, how little I knew of love and sex. He thought a woman lawyer and writer must be sophisticated. His letters troubled me.” In her autobiography Doty quotes Phillips’ letters, in which he professes his desire for her, suggesting that she would

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<sup>33</sup> Quote from Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Crystal Eastman on Women and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 13; Judith Schwarz, *Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy: Greenwich Village, 1912–1940* (Lebanon, NH: New Victoria, 1982), 9–10. Cook mentions Doty among a list of women who were members of Heterodoxy, citing Inez Haynes Irwin’s papers at the Schlesinger Library; most other references I have found that mention Doty’s membership cite Cook.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Dearborn, *Queen of Bohemia: The Life of Louise Bryant* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 44. Dearborn mentions that Bryant’s friend Sara Bard Field brought her to a Heterodoxy meeting, and that “through Heterodoxy she made friends, among them Madeleine Doty, another journalist” (*ibid.*, 45).

<sup>35</sup> Schwarz, *Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy*, 86–94.

be betraying herself if she took the conventional route of marriage simply so that she might be able to experience the delights of physical love. As he wrote to her in January 1907:

Certainly “it” shall be as you say. You don’t suppose I would want it otherwise, do you? That garden is not a prison into which one is thrust or dragged. And I don’t wonder that you are not sure you want to go there. I am disposed to think you don’t. I am also disposed to think that you are deceiving yourself about your state of mind in many ways. But that’s the way it is with all of us. Now, wouldn’t it be quaint if what you really wanted was to stop work and all the anxieties incident to a career and secure some man, nurse your children, and superintend servants?<sup>36</sup>

Doty would eventually give herself completely—in the physical sense—to Phillips, but his wish to have ongoing intimate relations without marriage was intolerable to her, in part because she seems to have gotten pregnant with Phillips’ child.<sup>37</sup> Early on in their relationship, Doty developed gastrointestinal problems that would plague her for the rest of her life, and though she recognized that her physical discomforts came from struggles to control her own “passionate nature,” this knowledge did not make the problem any easier to bear. “He wanted me to agree that a secret relation without marriage was right. This I was never able to do.”<sup>38</sup> Their tormented relationship lasted on and off for a number of years until Phillips was shot and killed by a mentally ill man. Phillips would be one of the two great loves in Doty’s life.

Bolshevik attitudes about sex (that it was a private matter; that abortion, though discouraged, should be legal and free; and that no child could be considered “illegitimate”) were appealing to significant numbers of modern women from the United States. Doty never commented in her writings on the topic, even when reporting on her interview with Alexandra Kollontai, chief spokesperson for some of the Bolsheviks’ most radical challenges to morality. At the time of Doty’s writings about Russia, her own attitudes concerning sex were likely still unresolved.

At the time of Phillips’ death, Doty had been working for nearly a year on a child-welfare exhibit for the City of New York, focusing on the courts and delin-

<sup>36</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 60. Quotations from 62, 64.

<sup>37</sup> A letter in her files from one of Doty’s Boston doctors, dated October 9 (with no year, but 1911 is penciled on the letter in Doty’s files), notes “your daughter was operated on” and “survived” (quoted in Duffy, “Addendum,” in Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 258). As Duffy notes, “A lady did not admit to an illegitimate birth in those days. And Doty was a lady; by not telling she protected the man’s reputation and her own.” No further information is available about when the child was born or what happened to her.

<sup>38</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 73.

quent children.<sup>39</sup> As part of this work, Doty traveled throughout the United States to gather material; in St. Louis she met Roger Baldwin, who at the time was chief probation officer: “As I talked with him I little thought that this very attractive young man would one day become my husband.”<sup>40</sup> Because of Doty’s work on the child welfare exhibit the Russell Sage Foundation hired her as executive secretary of a new Juvenile Court Committee “to reform conditions in New York.” Doty’s growing notoriety as a social investigator and reformer brought a new urgency to her career as a journalist, as she gave up her law practice completely: “My dream of being a great woman lawyer, a Portia, seemed a silly dream. I was afraid. Afraid I would never be able to earn my living,” she recalled later.<sup>41</sup>

Through her work on the juvenile court system, Doty became a major force in prison reform more generally. She came to conclude that harsh treatment of juvenile delinquents had the effect of increasing (rather than decreasing) recidivism. Doty played an active role in the creation of a separate juvenile court system in New York City, began writing exposés for the popular press, and was appointed a New York State Prison commissioner, “without a salary but with full liberty to investigate all prisons and reformatories.”<sup>42</sup> Doty and a friend spent two weeks under cover, living in the State Prison for Women in Auburn, posing as Maggie Martin and Lizzie Watson, check forgers. The exposés Doty published in magazines and newspapers caused a sensation. These articles, along with a discussion of the relationship between the juvenile justice system and adult criminality—based on extensive interviews—formed the basis of her first book, *Society’s Misfits*, a stunning critique of the prison system, based on inside experience, that led to important reforms. As Doty reflected later:

The whole prison system seemed based on stupidity and ignorance. With a little common sense the physical if not the spiritual aspect could be transformed in a day. As it is, hundreds of working people are given into the state’s care and are taught nothing, produce nothing, are ill-housed and ill-fed. Their time and that of the guards or keepers is wasted. The result is an organization which manufactures criminals, and is maintained at great cost to the state.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In this sense, Doty was like “progressive maternalists” who gained public authority through child-related reform work in the early twentieth century. See Molly Ladd Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 75. Baldwin himself says that they met at a national conference of social work in 1912, after he’d just left a job in the St. Louis juvenile court; his account seems to imply that they met in New York City. Roger N. Baldwin, “A Memo on Madeleine Zabriskie Doty for the files at Smith College,” October 1978, box 1, folder 4, Doty Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 74–75.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 105; Madeleine Z. Doty, *Society’s Misfits* (New York: Century, 1916), 52.

*Society's Misfits* was published in 1916, but by then Doty was already well known. She had gotten to know prominent men (not just Gorky and Phillips, but also Theodore Dreiser, Theodore Roosevelt, John Galsworthy, Judge Ben Lindsey, and others) and her writings were widely read. A sketch of her published in *The Washington Herald* in December of that year offers a striking portrait:

Miss Doty is young and attractive. The look out of her clear blue eyes is fearless. She is tremendously in earnest, but with it all she has a keen sense of humor. In fact, she seems to have a keen sense of everything. That is the dominant impression she makes on you—that she is intensely alive, absorbed in the vital things of today.

For so young a woman she has had a remarkable experience and she means to use it in bettering social and industrial conditions, especially as they affect women and children. But she isn't likely to find many ways of doing this as picturesque as her convict experience was.<sup>44</sup>

Doty's undercover journalism fit squarely into a tradition of "girl stunt reporters" that stretched back to the late 1880s, when Nellie Bly feigned insanity to go undercover as a mental patient in the insane asylum on Blackwell's Island, hitting upon "a strategy that transformed her own white, middle-class body into a vehicle of publicity that anchored her pursuit of 'the real' in corporeal experience."<sup>45</sup> Unlike Bly and others of her ilk, Doty's goal was not sensationalism but social change, and in this she had significant successes, both in helping individuals she came to know through her research and in instituting systemic changes in the New York penal system.

Doty's realization that she could better support herself as a journalist than as a lawyer or bureaucrat coincided with the onset of World War I, which dramatically shifted her attention to the cause of peace. That cause would preoccupy her for the rest of her life.

### Peace Activism

Even as Doty became increasingly involved in the movement for women's suffrage (see figure 2), she connected this work with efforts to achieve peace, joining the American Union Against Militarism as well as the Women's Peace Party (WPP), both of which were founded by friend Crystal Eastman. In *Peace as a Women's Issue*, Harriet Hyman Alonso suggests that the historic link between peace and women's rights activism comes from a connection that women have made between violence against women and institutionalized violence. Essentialist ideas about women as naturally more nurturing and caring "and more committed to producing a humanistic and compassionate world than men as a whole"

<sup>44</sup> Mullett, "Who's Who Among Progressive Women."

<sup>45</sup> Jean Marie Lutes, *Front Page Girls: Women Journalists in American Culture and Fiction, 1880–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 15.



**Figure 2.** Doty in suffrage parade (standing beside woman carrying “lawyers” sign), undated. Madeleine Z. Doty Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College (Northampton, MA).

were also widely accepted in Doty’s time. The notion that all women were natural mothers or metaphorical mothers to the world also suggested a feminine responsibility to counter men’s violent tendencies; in the vision of a new world that “women’s rights peace activists” imagined, women would “play a key role...no longer the abused, exploited, and angry outsiders, but rather the creative, productive, and nurturing insiders.”<sup>46</sup> Doty joined other women in speaking against the prominent English suffragist, Christabel Pankhurst, when she came to the United States urging women to support the allied war effort.<sup>47</sup> After seeing Alla Nazimova’s moving performance in *War Brides* (a play about newlywed women having to send their husbands off to war), Doty decided to gather other peace activists to stand outside the theater “after each performance and pass out to each red-eyed woman literature calculated to crystalize her emotion into action which will make such scenes she has just seen enacted impossible.”<sup>48</sup> Beyond distributing material for the WPP, Doty joined about seventy-five other members of the group, among them Settlement House pioneer Jane Addams, doctor Alice Hamilton, child welfare advocate Grace Abbott, and economist and sociologist Emily Balch, for the

<sup>46</sup> Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace As a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 11.

<sup>47</sup> “American and English Suffragists and Antis Denounce Miss Christabel Pankhurst’s Recruiting Campaign in America,” *New-York Tribune*, January 15, 1915, 9.

<sup>48</sup> “Some Women Sniffed, and the Peace Movement Received Sudden Impetus,” *New-York Tribune*, February 3, 1915, 7.

first Women's International Peace Convention at The Hague, where the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) would be founded.

After the United States entered the war, Doty made direct links between war and the need for women's suffrage. As she told a Senate committee in 1917, in a state of war woman needed the vote so "that she may conserve the prosperity of her country, keep freedom alive in the land and permit no deterioration of those ideals of social service which have been established." Indeed, she added, "If we are really sincere in our declaration that we are fighting for the freedom of the people then let us prove it by an act so democratic that even German autocracy cannot deny our sincerity. Let us grant the suffrage now and at once to all the women of America."<sup>49</sup>

### World Travel and Marriage

Doty had opened her book *Short Rations* with an account of her journey to The Hague, where Doty would be among the founders of WILPF. The news articles that she published about this trip—and her travels through Germany, France (where she served briefly as a nurse), and England—brought her renown as a credible source for news of the war's effects on the home front, and she subsequently returned to Germany, bringing supplies for war orphans as her cover. *Short Rations* describes all of these travels. However, Doty's open peace advocacy brought an avalanche of criticism once the United States entered the war. Luckily for Doty, it was before this shower of criticism really commenced that *Good Housekeeping* sent her on the trip "round the world" that would fortuitously drop her into the midst of the Bolshevik Revolution.

*Behind the Battle Line* would be Doty's last published book, although she continued publishing articles for a number of years, and after she moved to Geneva in 1925, where she lived out much of her life, she served as editor of *Pax International*, the journal of the WILPF, from 1925 to 1931. She also served as the league's international secretary. Prior to that time, and inseparable from her travels to and return from revolutionary Russia (where a new ideal of comradely love had been articulated by women like Kollontai), Doty fell in love with Roger Baldwin. The two married in 1919 in a small ceremony in the woods with vows that became legendary for the new ideal they embodied. "We deny without reservation the whole conception of property in marriage," they declared, rejecting "the whole Puritan philosophy of life" and framing their union as a contribution to the cause of "the great revolutionary struggle for human freedom, so intense, so full of promise today."<sup>50</sup> Doty kept her name after marriage and showed no interest in giving up her career, contrary to usual practice at that time.

Doty and Baldwin's "50-50" arrangement of sharing all household expenses and refusing to value one person's work or social commitments over another's, which echoed Soviet practice, was as idealistic as it was ultimately unsustainable:

<sup>49</sup> Madeleine Doty, "Voteless Women in Warring Europe," *The Suffragist*, May 5, 1917, 7. [A speech delivered before the Senate committee on April 26, 1917.]

<sup>50</sup> Madeleine Z. Doty and Roger Baldwin marriage vows, box 1, folder 4, Doty Papers.

Baldwin “paid” Doty when she took over housework after they had to let go of the maid, and although their arrangement made for good media fodder, eventually the independent lives each partner led proved divisive.<sup>51</sup> Although they’d met five years earlier, Doty and Baldwin formed a real connection when their paths crossed again in 1917 through peace activism after Baldwin replaced Crystal Eastman as director of the American Union Against Militarism. Years later, Baldwin recalled of meeting Doty that he was “attracted to Madeleine at once.” He described her as “the rare type of independent professional woman, feminist, socialist, but not radical in a revolutionary sense, a writer in the national magazines, and a lawyer who did not practice, or had only briefly. She was like me essentially a social reformer. I was attracted also by her gayety and humor, her clear blue eyes, her trim figure and her professional women’s style of dressing.”<sup>52</sup> Although it was peace activism that brought them together, Baldwin and Doty’s shared interest in Russia cemented their bond: “He was thrilled with the struggle of the Russian people for freedom,” Doty wrote later. “I was full of my experiences in Russia.”<sup>53</sup> Although within months after Doty’s return from Russia the two would decide to marry, the marriage was delayed by Baldwin’s imprisonment for refusing to be drafted into the military.

Once they were finally able to be together, their years of happiness turned out to be brief, as Baldwin and Doty wound up spending too much time on their own work (Baldwin was a founder of the American Civil Liberties Union) and not enough time nurturing their relationship. Doty had an abortion early on in their marriage (she was 40 by this time), and the two drifted apart emotionally and eventually physically. When Doty left for Geneva in 1925 their marriage was essentially over. They formally divorced in 1935, but stayed in touch until Doty’s death in 1963, and despite their “50-50” ideal, Doty relied on Baldwin for assistance financially.<sup>54</sup>

In Geneva, Doty worked with various peace organizations, started a Smith College year abroad in Geneva program, and obtained her PhD. She taught for several years at a girls’ school in Florida so she would qualify for social security benefits in the US, and then obtained another teaching position back in Geneva, where she remained until the last year of her life. She returned to the United States in the spring of 1963 and moved into a retirement home in the Berkshires, where she died six months later.

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<sup>51</sup> See, for instance, “Married Life on Fifty-fifty Basis Succeeds,” *Grand Forks Herald* (ND), September 20, 1920, 16.

<sup>52</sup> Roger Baldwin, “A Memo on Madeleine Zabriskie Doty for the files at Smith College.”

<sup>53</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 213.

<sup>54</sup> “Even on my small income I had been helping her out,” Baldwin writes. “She had never made demands on me but when it came to divorce she had wanted far more than I could give. So we settled on a joint sum of \$5000 to which I contributed half for her to draw on as needed. We had gone along 50-50 in our married years while she worked, as she did most of the time, and wanted to, but I helped when she was between jobs” (Baldwin, “A Memo on Madeleine Zabriskie Doty for the files at Smith College”).

### Women Writing the Russian Revolution

When Doty arrived in St. Petersburg in November 1918, a number of female journalists from the United States—just about all of them active in the suffrage movement—were already in Petrograd. As Chris Dubbs notes in his study of American journalists reporting on World War I, echoing Ashmun's review essay from a century prior:

Those journalists who championed social causes such as labor reform and women's suffrage, who fought against poverty, political corruption, and social privilege were inspired by the birth of democracy in Russia. Conspicuous among them was the largest group of female reporters ever assembled in the war. Most could not be labeled as war correspondents. They had cut their journalistic teeth by exposing corruption in government and the exploitation of women and workers. They felt in sympathy with the socialistic values of the revolution and its provisional government.<sup>55</sup>

A few of these women, like Florence Harper, had gone to Russia to report on the war and found themselves in the midst of revolution; this might be said of Doty as well, but she was less interested in reporting on the war itself than on the war's impact, and she was eager, at least at first, to watch the Russian Revolution unfold.

Rheta Childe Dorr, a prominent member of the National Woman's Party and editor of the *The Suffragist*, left Russia not long before Doty arrived; although Dorr had been eager to see a new, democratic Russia, she was even more critical of the Bolsheviks, and fearful of their violent tendencies.<sup>56</sup> Louise Bryant and Bessie Beatty's accounts of the Bolshevik Revolution are better remembered today than Doty's in large part because Doty's discussion is buried amid the other chapters of *Behind the Battle Line*, and the book's title makes no reference to Russia or the revolution. Beatty and Bryant also stayed in Russia for a longer period and were able to discuss the impact of both the February and October Revolutions: Beatty arrived in St. Petersburg early in the summer of 1917 and Bryant arrived in September; all three women left Russia together in February 1918. (Warren Beatty's *Reds*, which focuses on Bryant and her husband John Reed as chroniclers of the Russian Revolution, also contributed to Bryant's longevity as a public figure.)<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Chris Dubbs, *American Journalists in the Great War: Rewriting the Rules of Reporting* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 180.

<sup>56</sup> Rheta Childe Dorr, *Inside the Russian Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1917).

<sup>57</sup> Virginia Gardner, *"Friend and Lover": The Life of Louise Bryant* (New York: Horizon Press, 1982), 125. Several sources repeat reference to the three women traveling together. However, Doty's "Women of the Future" article in *Good Housekeeping* (which Gardner cites) and books by all three women imply that each woman traveled alone. Bryant's testimony before the Overman Committee does suggest she knew that Doty and

As historian Lynn Dumenil notes, “The chaotic conditions meant that intrepid male and female reporters had unusual opportunities to report the extraordinary events, such as the storming of the Winter Palace in Petrograd that unfolded as the Bolsheviks solidified their power.”<sup>58</sup> The intensity and proximity of events that women like Beatty, Bryant, and Doty reported are striking, though striking too are some of the subtle differences in the way they did so. Beatty and Bryant were both younger than Doty when they came to Russia: Beatty was thirty-one and Bryant was thirty-two, while Doty was nearly forty. This slight generational difference may have had some impact on their perspectives. All three women had some association with the feminist group Heterodoxy; all were active in the suffrage struggle; and all were relatively sympathetic to the revolution, though Bryant was more actively pro-Bolshevik than the other two.

In comparing the three women’s accounts of the revolution, Doty seems somewhat less intrepid, despite the fact she, like Beatty, traveled to Russia on her own (Bryant traveled with her husband, John Reed). Indeed, in multiple instances throughout Doty’s writings, it is clear that, her reputation and history as an independent woman and feminist notwithstanding, she relied heavily upon men to help her: in Harbin she was aided by a man “in European dress” who helped her find the British Consulate; on the train to Siberia, she was aghast at having been asked to share a sleeping compartment with a Cossack soldier and she was relieved when a group of English-speaking businessmen traveling for an American firm offered to give up one of their compartments so that Doty could have a berth to herself. One of these businessmen essentially adopted Doty after she became ill, continuing to care for her once they arrived in St. Petersburg; indeed, although she does not acknowledge this in the text of *Behind the Battle Line* itself, other versions of her account make it clear that it is from this man, Nick, that her initial account of the Bolshevik coup was taken.<sup>59</sup>

Doty’s distress at the violence unleashed by the revolution is also a striking aspect of her narrative. Like both Bryant and Beatty, she initially found many things to admire about what she discovered in revolutionary Russia. Even in the eerie silence of her landing in St. Petersburg, she was impressed by people’s eagerness to talk, to argue, to engage: “Everywhere there was movement and action, but no violence.” She writes:

People stopped to argue. Voices rose high and arms waved wildly. It was a people intensely alive and intensely intelligent.

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Beatty had, like her, agreed to serve as couriers for the Bolsheviks, which would give some indication that they traveled together. See “Bolshevik Propaganda: Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Sixty-fifth Congress, third session and thereafter, pursuant to S. Res. 439 and 469, February 11, 1919 to March 10, 1919,” <https://archive.org>.

<sup>58</sup> Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 142.

<sup>59</sup> Madeleine G. [sic] Doty, “Among the Bolsheviks II—Petrograd,” *The Nation* (London), April 20, 1918, 60-62.

Every one had an opinion. It was my first glimpse of Russia. My heart leaped up. These people had not been contaminated by proximity to German militarism. They were not cogs in a machine. In spite of suppression they were not servile. They were alive and free. Continually that first impression was verified. Every Russian I met could talk. Those who couldn't read or write could talk.<sup>60</sup>

Besides this, simply being there was exciting: "There was one great joy about life in Russia. It was thrillingly interesting. You could not be bored." In her article in *The Atlantic*, Doty describes the particular relish with which she experienced at least one of the new Bolshevik decrees: "Every day the Bolsheviks issued some new decree. One day all titles were abolished; the next, judges and lawyers were eliminated. They and their knowledge were deemed to be useless. I confess to a wicked delight on that occasion. I am a lawyer and know how little justice there often is in the law."<sup>61</sup> She was critical of the Bolsheviks' violent methods, but recognized their sincerity and their appeal and frequently notes finding their lack of airs and general informality refreshing. As to their appeal, she describes the way in which she herself was involuntarily swept up by Lenin's presence and words when she first heard him speak:

He started in like a college professor reading a lecture. He didn't pound or rant. But in a few minutes the crowd was still. His words burnt in. Each one came liquid clear. It was like a stream that started small and grew to a deep swift running river. The man was sincere, a fanatic, but an idealist. I found myself swept along, throbbing and beating with every emotion of the great rough peasants. My reason was against what was being done. I didn't believe in winning by force. I believed in democracy. I believed everyone should have a voice. The bourgeoisie were not all bad, nor the proletariat all good... Not a class conscious but a world conscious decision of right was what was needed. Yet in spite of my belief I found myself shouting and clamoring with the left. It was infectious.<sup>62</sup>

Doty had ambivalent feelings about both the Bolsheviks and the Russian bourgeoisie. Although Beatty acknowledged that she'd have preferred the moderates who supported Kerensky, she nonetheless ends her account of the revolution, *The Red Heart of Russia* (1918), by insisting, "To have failed to see the hope in the Russian Revolution is to be as a blind man looking at a sunrise."<sup>63</sup> In contrast, although Doty would say that Russians deserved Americans' support, she none-

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<sup>60</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 40.

<sup>61</sup> Madeleine Z. Doty, "Revolutionary Justice," *The Atlantic*, July 1918, 129-39.

<sup>62</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 92.

<sup>63</sup> Bessie Beatty, *The Red Heart of Russia* (New York: Century, 1919), 480.

theless expressed hope that more moderate forces would ultimately replace them. As she notes in a piece she wrote for *The Nation* (London), much of which is included in *Behind the Battle Line*, “When I went to Russia I was keen on revolution; but, having seen one, I didn’t want any more—at least not bloody ones conducted by brute force.”<sup>64</sup> Or, as she puts it in the book, “The working class fought for power and became dictators. They rule not by the vote, but by force. They pulled existence down to the conditions of the poorest workingman. They failed to live up to their ideals of beauty, brotherhood, fair play and freedom.”<sup>65</sup>

On a train to Moscow, Doty sat with a Russian woman who was wearing a Red Cross uniform. Early in their journey, in a striking scene of female solidarity, Doty, her interpreter, and the Russian woman blocked the door of their cabin to keep a Russian merchant from taking the unoccupied berth in their compartment, after which the women all got to talking. The Russian woman admitted she was a member of the former aristocracy, in disguise to protect herself. All her family’s land and belongings had been seized. Her husband, formerly an officer in the army, was now a common soldier. And once the cash she had on hand ran out she would probably have to work as a domestic. “Again I had a bewildered sense of a turned upside down world,” Doty remarks. “I felt I ought to hurry back to New York and get the Charity Organization Society to do work among the nobility.”<sup>66</sup> However, not all of the former nobility seemed to Doty to be worthy of such sympathy or charity. At a trial for a monarchist and reactionary, Vladimir Parishkevich, Doty was appalled by a group of very obviously wealthy women who entered the courtroom four hours after her and expected Doty to move to the back of the room so that they, relatives of the defendant, could have her spot. The woman “reddened with anger” when Doty refused:

Her insolence was intolerable. She seemed to have forgotten that there had been a revolution. She planted herself half on me and half on the bench. She was very beautiful, but her body was as hard and rigid as her face. I found my temper mounting. I understood the rage of the Bolsheviki at the insolence of the autocracy. I drove my elbow with a vicious dig into the young woman. She grew furious, but she no longer had the power to order me to a dungeon.<sup>67</sup>

Doty adds that she wound up sitting between these “duchesses” and a couple of cooks who had come straight from a kitchen, their arms covered in grease. Still, “of the two, the cooks had better manners.”<sup>68</sup>

That Doty could be critical of Bolshevik methods but still empathize with their rage at the aristocracy helps bring balance to her discussion; so, too, the perspec-

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<sup>64</sup> Doty, “Among the Bolsheviks II,” 62.

<sup>65</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 49.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

tive she had on Germany—having recently spent significant time there—made her chapter on peace negotiations with Germany one of the richest in the book. Most notable here is her attention to certain particulars of the negotiations—especially the visit of a German delegation to Petrograd—that receive little attention in books by writers who were in Russia longer than Doty and thus probably had too many other things to report on. Striking in this chapter is her account of gaining entry to a meeting in the Alexandrinsky Theater in Petrograd. Using a combination of incomprehension and patience that finally frustrated the soldier on guard, Doty was taken through a back door and then actually led across the stage in front of Trotsky, Spiridonova, Kollontai, and other Bolshevik leaders before finding her seat with members of the press: “Each moment I expected to hear jeers from the gallery,” she writes. “But the Russian is used to eccentricities and informalities. No one paid the slightest heed to us.”<sup>69</sup>

Doty’s ambivalent feelings about the Bolsheviks, her strongly negative view of German militarism, and her hidebound commitment to peace all came into conflict in Doty’s discussion of the German peace negotiations. In Germany, Doty had made strong connections with Social Democrats like Clara Zetkin and Karl Liebknecht, who had ties to the Bolsheviks in Russia. And as a pacifist, she could certainly appreciate the Bolsheviks’ desire for peace. But she blamed the Bolsheviks for having signed “undemocratic peace terms,” suggesting that “had the Russians had the faith to refuse” to sign these terms, “the war might have been over today.”<sup>70</sup> Beatty, in contrast, blamed the Allies for refusing to support the Bolsheviks in their negotiations, despite her stated belief that Russia ought to have stayed in the war: “What the Russian did not know was that his brothers in Germany are themselves enslaved to the military ideal, and that the only way to win freedom is to defeat them and the power that keeps them in bondage. He did not realize that the only way to give constructive Germany back to the world is to destroy destructive Germany.”<sup>71</sup> As Beatty notes in a chapter entitled “The Great Betrayal”: “The Russians were blind to the true character of the men who came to Brest-Litovsk to negotiate a Kaiser’s peace; but the blindness of those Russian dreamers was lucid vision as compared with the blindness of the enlightened democratic world as to the real significance of the various forces at work upon the Russian tragedy.” Beatty adds, “We will pay for that blindness—we must pay—for democracy is not safe in the world while Russia is enslaved. No settlement of the international situation will be lasting that does not leave the peoples of Russia free to work out their own democratic salvation.” The Germans, Beatty says, had successfully driven a wedge between the Russians and their real allies, and this was the greatest betrayal.<sup>72</sup>

Doty did not blame the Allies, and although she was critical of the peace terms that the Bolsheviks signed, she makes clear that they did not make peace with Germany out of any pro-German feeling, but out of necessity. Doty con-

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>71</sup> Beatty, *Red Heart of Russia*, 89.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 473.

cludes, “It is not Germany that will conquer Russia, it is Russia that will revolutionize Germany.”<sup>73</sup> Lenin had erroneously made this very argument, expecting a German revolution would quickly follow on the heels of Russia’s making a peace treaty between the two countries no longer necessary. Negotiations to get Russia out of the war were stalled further by Trotsky’s insistence that if the Bolsheviks simply refused to keep fighting without signing a treaty they could have peace on their own terms. Trotsky’s “no war no peace” strategy, a failed attempt to pull Russia out of the war while refusing to make peace on German terms, ended up forcing the Bolsheviks to sign a treaty even less desirable than they’d originally been offered after a predicted revolution in Germany failed to materialize and German troops approaching Petrograd called Trotsky’s bluff.<sup>74</sup> Although Doty echoed the Bolshevik position on Germany’s revolutionary potential, she criticized Bolshevik hypocrisy in dealing with their own people, noting that “the idealist must preach with clean hands,” and condemning “suppression of the press, the arrest of moderate socialists,” and other acts of intolerance that the Bolsheviks displayed.<sup>75</sup>

Despite Doty’s outspoken opposition to “German autocracy” (and her criticism of the Bolsheviks’ treatment of those who challenged their authority), she was not immune from prejudices that would make Germany the world’s leader in promulgating racist hatreds. Doty’s vision of herself as a “Portia” cannot be separated from the anti-Semitic connotations of this character in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*: Disguised as a man, Portia plays the role of a lawyer’s apprentice who uses her impressive knowledge of the law to outwit her unjust father, a character often referred to in the play as simply “the Jew.” In her autobiography, Doty mentions the unpleasant smell emitted by the “Russian German Jews” from the Lower East Side in her law school class, and in some versions of her reporting on Russia she identifies a rude Russian man on the train to St. Petersburg as a “little Jew.”<sup>76</sup>

Such prejudices were not unusual for women in Doty’s milieu. In *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, Lucy Delap makes clear that anti-Semitism “was a theme widely expressed and discussed within the feminist intellectual community” in both Britain and the United States in the early twentieth century. But Delap points to the “complexity of such a discourse, which could be both progressive and conservative, and sometimes quite friendly to Jewish ‘emancipation.’”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, a significant number of American feminists were active in campaigns for “Russian freedom” that exploded following the Kishinev Massacre in 1903, one of a series of anti-Jewish pogroms. In Kishinev, a Russian city in the Pale of Settlement (to which Jews were restricted under the tsar), hundreds of Jews were killed or

<sup>73</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 118.

<sup>74</sup> John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1938), 137, 207-39.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>76</sup> Doty, *One Woman Determined to Make a Difference*, 43.

<sup>77</sup> Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 277.

badly injured, over a thousand Jewish homes and over 500 Jewish businesses were destroyed.<sup>78</sup> Thus, although mistreatment of (Russian) Jews, along with that of African Americans, provided direct inspiration for feminist activism (the first women's movement grew directly out of abolitionist activism among women), Jews were also associated with qualities that feminists tended to reject. According to Delap, "The frequently feminized qualities of 'the Jew'—imitative, parasitic, and uncreative—corresponded to those of 'bondwomen,' and was therefore a rhetorical device to indicate dislike of capitalism and a critique of conventional femininity."<sup>79</sup>

### Revolutionary Women

Perhaps the most striking difference between Doty's accounts and those of Beatty and Bryant is that despite Doty's ostensible mission of studying the situation of women during the war, she gives Russian women surprisingly little attention. This can likely be best explained by the fact that, landing in the midst of a revolution, and with limited time, Doty apparently felt compelled to devote her attention to where it seemed the real action was. As she notes in an article in *The Nation*, "I had come to study Russian women, to find out their hopes and plans for the future. But in the turbulent struggle hopes and plans had temporarily disappeared. The women were down to rock bottom. They stood in line and struggled for food and clothes for the family. It was they who ran the cars and tended the switches. It was they who worked in the stores and cleaned the houses. Without them the world could not have gone on."<sup>80</sup> This is an important acknowledgment, but by saying little about women apart from the points she makes in her chapter on "The Women of Russia—The Woman Comrade," she implies that women were not, in fact, at the core of all the action.

Beatty, in some sense, suggests this too, starting her chapter on "Women in the Revolution" by stating outright, "there was no feminist movement in Russia," words almost identical to Doty's claim that there is "no feminist group" in Russia. Recent scholarship by Rochelle Ruthchild challenges this claim, suggesting that while activists on behalf of women's rights did not use the term "feminism," significant "women's rights victories" were achieved in conjunction with "Russia's twentieth century revolutions."<sup>81</sup> Notwithstanding, Beatty's account of the gender distribution at an important political meeting in St. Petersburg is striking, encompassing a critique of gender dynamics in the Western world as well:

Here, as elsewhere, governmental honors were largely to the male; but the mundane business of making the world of meat

<sup>78</sup> See Philip Ernest Schoenberg, "The American Reaction to the Kishinev Pogrom of 1903," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63, 3 (1974); Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 45.

<sup>79</sup> Delap, *Feminist Avant-Garde*, 278.

<sup>80</sup> Doty, "Among the Bolsheviks II," 62.

<sup>81</sup> Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild, *Equality & Revolution: Women's Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905–1917* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 10.

and drink was largely left to women. Women in Russia do what women of the Western world do. At the big democratic convention in the Alexandrinski Theater, I counted the number of seats occupied by women. There were sixteen hundred delegates and twenty-three of them were women. Many other women were in evidence, but they were behind the samovars, serving tea and caviar and sausage sandwiches. Some wore red armbands, ushered the men to their seats, took stenographic reports of proceedings, and counted ballots. It was so natural that it almost made me homesick.<sup>82</sup>

Doty claims that “the Russian woman is a man in petticoats” who “hasn’t given her life to personal service and social welfare, but to man’s fight for political freedom.”<sup>83</sup> However, Beatty’s further discussion suggests that Doty’s insistence that in Russia “woman was [nothing more than] man’s comrade and mate,” and her “womanhood had been cast from her for the sake of revolution,” says more about Doty’s own assumptions and biases than it does about Russian women.<sup>84</sup> Doty is correct to assert that “it is as revolutionists that Russian women are famous,” but Russian women’s striking visibility in revolutionary struggles, going back to the 1870s, had made them legendary in the United States, and had attracted many American women to the cause of Russian freedom. Doty says that “[the Russian woman] did not seek to express herself but instead adopted man’s methods in the fight for freedom.”<sup>85</sup> Beatty, instead of suggesting that Russian women are unwomanly, rationalizes the absence of a separatist feminism in Russia by pointing out that with nearly all of the people oppressed, Russian women, instead of fighting for women’s rights in particular, had historically fought alongside men for basic human rights: “In the days of the terrorists,” Beatty writes, “women claimed the right to throw bombs as well as men. It was granted them. With equal generosity, the government rewarded them with hard labor, exile in Siberia, and even hanging. They spent their strength and their blood as lavishly, as recklessly, as courageously, as any of their brother Nihilists.”<sup>86</sup>

Most notably, in contrast to Bryant and Beatty, Doty fails to comment on the elements of the Bolshevik program—already being implemented while she was there—that would attract hundreds of Western women to the Soviet Union in coming years. Like Beatty and Bryant, Doty interviewed Alexandra Kollontai and Maria Spiridonova—the two leading Bolshevik women—and she reported on the trial of the liberal Countess Panina, Kollontai’s predecessor as minister of welfare, who was imprisoned and tried under the Bolsheviks for refusing to turn over funds that she’d raised for *Noradnyi Dom*, a library and social hall created

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<sup>82</sup> Beatty, *Red Heart of Russia*, 358.

<sup>83</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 119-29.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>85</sup> For further discussion, see chapter 1 of Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*.

<sup>86</sup> Beatty, *Red Heart of Russia*, 357.

for the benefit of St. Petersburg workers. (Doty was more sympathetic to Panina than Bryant, who reported a young workingwoman's comment: "Panina really does like poor people—she thinks they are almost as good as other people.")<sup>87</sup> Doty missed the opportunity to speak to Catherine Breshkovsky, who had already gone into hiding by the time she arrived. And despite the fact that Doty spoke with both Kollontai and Spiridonova, her portraits of both of these women are very short and give the impression that she did not manage to establish a real rapport with either.

Unlike Beatty and Bryant, Doty also does not discuss the early interventions made by Kollontai to revolutionize women's position in Russia, beginning with paid maternity leave before and after women gave birth, time off from work for nursing infants, and a "Palace of Motherhood" designed to educate women about maternal health and hygiene. Within a few years after the revolution, according to the historian Wendy Goldman, Soviet marriage laws and family policies "constituted nothing less than the most progressive family legislation the world had ever seen," making women equal under the law, simplifying divorce, ending the category of illegitimate children, giving women property rights, legalizing divorce, and extending a guarantee of alimony to both men and women.<sup>88</sup> Although Bolshevik interventions on behalf of women had only just begun by the time Doty and the others left, they would gain attention from all over the world, especially from modern "new women" in the United States.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to a more extensive discussion of women and "women's issues," Bryant's book also includes a chapter on Russian children, who would be another significant draw for American women in coming years: Bryant describes Russian children's sweet temperament, their cooperative instincts, the Bolshevik efforts to institute "self-government" in schools, and Russian children's dire need for material aid. Significant numbers of American women would travel to Russia as relief workers to help Russian children, especially during the 1921 famine and its aftermath; others came as social workers, educators, and journalists, eager to witness Soviet attempts to create the "new person."<sup>90</sup>

Doty does acknowledge women's efforts to secure the vote in Russia immediately following the fall of the tsar, and notes women's visibility in all areas of Russian society. Early in her narrative, discussing the train ride across Siberia that took her to St. Petersburg, Doty notes that "the Siberian women, like the men, were strong, rough creatures. They wore rubber boots and short skirts and had shawls tied about their heads. The younger women had the beauty of health and strength. They worked in the fields with men, their labor was the equal of theirs."<sup>91</sup> She describes Russian women as men's "comrades and equals," and also

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<sup>87</sup> Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), 122.

<sup>88</sup> Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy & Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 51.

<sup>89</sup> Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*.

<sup>90</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 251–58.

<sup>91</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, 36.

remarks upon a Siberian woman traveling on the same train with her as representative of the women of her village “to demand that clothing be sent to her town in exchange for the foodstuff being sent to Petrograd.” This woman, through Doty’s telling, offered at once a haunting portrait of the dangers women faced as well as an inspiring tale of their strength, solidarity, and resilience: “She was full of tales of her village. Two deserting soldiers had just visited her town and raped a young girl. The women had risen up in wrath and beaten the men and thrust them out.” Doty concludes, “It was a crude, elemental world, full of hot passion, into which I was rushing.”<sup>92</sup>

Books by both Bryant and Beatty include a chapter on the Women’s Battalion of Death, organized by Maria Bochkareva, a veteran of Russian military service. With an intense desire to fight for her country, and in response to flagging morale and increasing desertions among Russian military men, Bochkareva had organized an all-woman regiment to shame the men into continuing their fight. Her battalion was called to defend the Provisional Government at the Winter Palace during the Bolshevik coup, but they were quickly overpowered. Doty apparently interviewed Bochkareva during a tour she took of the United States in 1918 but did not include the article she subsequently published, “Women Who Would A-Soldiering Go,” in her book. Doty clearly was deeply uncomfortable with the idea of women on the battlefield and because her interview with Bochkareva occurred in the United States, may have decided it did not fit the parameters of her book. Beatty, in contrast, suggested in her chapter on the battalion that women’s military service proved their strength and fitness for voting. Bryant spent much of her chapter on the battalion trying to prove that the women had been duped into supporting the Provisional Government, and were now mainly in support of the Bolsheviks.

### **Behind *Behind the Battle Line***

It is in some ways surprising to find only one chapter on Russian women in Doty’s book, given her ostensible focus on women. The chapters on countries other than Russia, which have not been included in this edition, do focus on women: Chapter 1, “Autocratic Japan,” was subtitled “The Woman Slave”; Chapter 2, “Awakening China,” was subtitled “The Bound Woman”; Chapter 10 was called “Swedish Women—The Genius” (although in the table of contents it is entitled “Materialistic Sweden”); Chapter 11, “Vital Norway,” was subtitled “The Woman Pioneer.” While the chapters on France and England—“Inspiring France” and “Warriors of the Spirit: Democratic England,” respectively—do not have women in their titles, their focus is upon women as well, and the “warriors of the spirit” in England are, in fact, women. Still, *Behind the Battle Line*, with seven chapters on Russia and only one chapter on each of the other countries Doty visited, contains as much material about women in Russia as it does about women elsewhere. This difference in focus is another reason the Russia discussion seems best read apart from the other chapters in *Behind the Battle Line*.

Beyond the challenges posed by the fact that the Russian chapters of *Behind the Battle Line* were not intended for publication on their own is the fact that

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Doty published similar accounts in multiple venues. All originally appeared, with slight variations, in periodicals and newspapers, including *Good Housekeeping*, the *New-York Tribune* (which syndicated some of her pieces), *The Atlantic*, and *The Nation*, a British weekly. Reading all of these accounts gives a fuller portrait of her experiences, but because they contain a great deal of the same material, including all of these pieces would be repetitive. For the sake of coherence this edition uses the text published in *Behind the Battle Line*, but when there are significant differences between the version published there and elsewhere, it is noted in the footnotes. This edition incorporates relevant parts of the introduction and conclusion to *Behind the Battle Line* and some material from Chapter 1 (here retitled “Crossing the Pacific” from the original “Autocratic Japan” to reflect that only material marking Doty’s travels has been included). Also included are selections from Chapters 10–14 (collectively titled “Heading Home” in this edition) in order to give a sense of Doty’s journey from and back to the United States, and specifically into and out of Russia amidst the challenges posed by wartime. Inclusion of Doty’s travel to and from Russia reflects conventions of other narratives.<sup>93</sup> In editing this text for publication, I have tried to maintain a balance between preserving Doty’s original language (e.g., keeping her use of “czar,” though “tsar” is more typically used today) and making changes to reflect proper or more contemporary spelling and usage and to maintain consistency through the text. Ellipses indicate where material has been cut from the original versions. I have taken some liberties with the illustrations, adding, for instance, an image of Doty and Florence Harding on the boat to Japan and Russia and an illustration from material Doty published in *Good Housekeeping*, and leaving out some images from the Russian part of *Behind the Battle Line* that felt less essential to Doty’s narrative (such as additional pictures of her permits to enter various buildings).

Doty’s experiences and observations about women in other countries remind us that the Russian Revolution cannot be considered apart from the World War in which it appeared or the feminist transformations that were affecting all parts of the world—despite the fact that Doty did not emphasize the latter in her discussion of Russia, with other circumstances too pressing to ignore. Indeed, *Behind the Battle Line* opens with a preface that gives little indication of Russia’s dominance in the book itself, framing the revolutionary events in the context of stages of world development:

In Japan, for instance, women are openly sold into industry and prostitution, and a God sent emperor sits upon the throne. In that land to be a member of the Y.W.C.A. was to be a rebel and a revolutionist. Japan socially is in the Middle Ages. When I reached Russia on the other hand I found that the working people had seized the government and that Maxim Gorky was in danger of imprisonment as a conservative. I had leaped forward into the Twenty-first Century.

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<sup>93</sup> Both Beatty and Bryant recount the circumstances of their travels to and from Russia.

Importantly, although Doty places Bolshevik Russia ahead of several other countries in terms of development, she is careful to condemn the violent methods by which they had arrived at this point. In that sense, though still nominally ruled by a king—and this only in the “twentieth” rather than the “twenty-first century”—Doty suggests that England has achieved an ideal balance of orderly, democratic development: “In England the people are slowly taking possession of their own,” she asserts. They were doing so “not as in Russia by the force of the bayonet, but through universal education and the intellectual intelligence of the masses.”<sup>94</sup>

Although left out of the text itself in this edition, Doty’s portrait of her friend Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence—to whom *Behind the Battle Line* was dedicated (the book’s front matter contains a full-page photograph of Pethick-Lawrence, and the dedication, “To Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence,” adds, “who has made my dream of great women a reality”)—is worth quoting at length, for it suggests the way in which Doty herself envisioned societies ideally evolving not simply to include more women, but in fact fundamentally remade along lines inspired by women’s activism. Doty met peace activist and suffragist Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence as part of her 1915 journey to The Hague with the Women’s Peace Party. The two women remained friends for life; Doty admired Pethick-Lawrence’s commitment to social justice as well as her companionate marriage to Frederick Lawrence (after the two married they shared the combined last name of Pethick-Lawrence). The wealthy couple’s homes in London and Surrey would become sites of refuge and comfort for Doty over the years. In her chapter of *Behind the Battle Line* on England, Doty notes:

The two names that will go down in history as the famous leaders of the militant movement are Emmeline Pankhurst and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. But Mrs. Pankhurst was the body, Mrs. Lawrence the spirit. When the militants took to smashing store windows and burning houses Mrs. Lawrence protested. She would give her life for the cause, but she would not hurt others. Her way of winning was through the spirit. It was the woman’s way. She left the organization. Today she continues true to those ideals. Her method of service in the great world struggle is through the spirit. She urges women to be warriors of the spirit. She goes back and forth through the land speaking. I heard her many times and wherever she went hearts were unlocked and leapt to meet hers, and there came a great determination to die if need be for the race to come. This is the gist of what she said:

“Along with the physical battle that engulfs the world, goes a gigantic spiritual struggle, and day by day that spiritual battle wins new victories. We see it in the enfranchisement of women, in the fight for Mothers’ Pensions, in President Wilson’s speeches, in the democratic peace terms, in the overthrowing

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<sup>94</sup> Doty, *Behind the Battle Line*, vii-viii.

of the Czar in Russia. These are victories that can never be lost. Whichever army advances on the field of battle the fight for freedom will be won. The spirit arises triumphant. Come, join this army of the spirit. Be a soldier of life." ...

Such is the battle the women wage. They seek to create a new and better world, a world in which each new life will be born unfettered.<sup>95</sup>

As is evident in the wider resonance of this portrait, Doty's own feminist activism and her ardent commitment to peace have to be seen as influencing the book as a whole, a book that is in a sense complicated by the fact that Doty happened to find herself in the midst of the Bolshevik Revolution. As she concluded at the end of her chapter on England:

In the years to come when the war is over, women of every land must meet together. In great international groups they must discuss the problems of mothers and babies, and when these women return to their homes they must live and fight for these plans and dreams, and then at the end of a year or two years return again to recount triumphs and failures. Until finally through the inspiration of organized motherhood—each baby that opens its eyes will open them to a world rid of war and to a life of freedom and love.

Doty did not find such a world in revolutionary Russia, but she appreciated the opportunity to witness efforts to remake a society, and undoubtedly the experience gave her hope that the wider world might one day be remade along more just and humane lines.

### About the Author

Julia Mickenberg, Professor of American Studies and an affiliate of the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies and the Center for Women and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, is the author, most recently, of *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet Dream* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), which was selected as a Financial Times best book of 2017. She is also author of the award-winning *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (Oxford, 2006), and co-editor of *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature* (2008) and *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature* (2011). She has published articles in edited volumes and journals including the *Journal of American History*, *American Quarterly*, and *American Literary History*. Her edition of Madeleine Z. Doty's writings on the Bolshevik Revolution, excerpted from *Behind the Battle Line: Around the World in 1918*, will be published this fall.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 186-87; 189-90.

# Sam Hill's Adventures in Russia, 1899-1916: In His Own Words

**Donald W. Whisenhunt  
and William Benton Whisenhunt**

Sam Hill wrote that St. Petersburg “is a city unlike any other in the world and in every way unique.” He went even further to claim that “the city of St. Petersburg, or the city of Moscow, offers more of interest to people than any city of the world.”<sup>1</sup> Hill wrote these effusive comments about Russia’s two major cities not long after his first visit to Russia in 1899. Travel accounts of Russia by foreigners at the turn of the century offer a wide range of views, and Hill’s depictions about his three trips to Russia in 1899, 1901, and 1916 follow that pattern. From the 1880s to the 1920s, there were many more travelers both directions and an explosion of travel writing, memoirs, letters and more, both published and unpublished.<sup>2</sup>

Sam Hill left behind three recollections of his trips through diaries, memoirs, letters, and articles. The bulk of this material has been housed in the Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts in Washington State and the authors of this article believe that few, if any, scholars have seen this material or studied Hill’s adventures in Russia. Hill, though, is not unique in that regard either. Many travelers left fragments or even whole narratives of their experiences. Sam Hill was a well-known figure in American history, especially in his work related to the railroad and mining industry in the upper Midwest. He also became a leader in the movement to build good roads for the expanding use of automobiles in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>3</sup>

When one crosses the Canadian border on Interstate 5 in Washington State, the traveler must pass the Peace Arch in Blaine, Washington. How many people stop to examine the arch in any detail? Not very many probably. The arch is a magnificent structure that celebrates 100 years of peace (1815-1915) between

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Hill’s material at the Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts did not have precise cataloging nor titles most of the time. The authors have assigned numbers to each fragment in order to organize them for these footnotes. Sam Hill, “Paper II, (1899),” Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867-1914* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 160-167; Margarita D. Marinova, *Transnational Russian-American Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> The authors of this article have searched for secondary confirmation of Hill’s accounts for many years and consulted with many scholars in the field. This search proved to be mostly fruitless. So, we have approached this article as one that will expose Hill’s writings to a new audience in the hope that more information will be available at some point to confirm his observations.

Canada and the United States. It is surrounded by beautiful gardens on both sides of the border.

The Peace Arch was built by Samuel Hill (1857-1931), a resident of Washington state, but this was not his only achievement. He built a replica of Stonehenge in England on the bank of the Columbia River in Washington State. He built a magnificent house—a “castle”—north of the Columbia on the east side of the Cascade Mountains. Today the “castle” is an eclectic museum dedicated partly to the natural environment and to the unusual collecting habits of Sam Hill. It cannot claim to have a theme, but it is a very interesting museum. Its collection reflects Hill’s eclectic interests throughout his life. He attempted, but failed, to build a model community called Maryhill in honor of his daughter. He was especially dedicated to building good roads in the early days of automobiles in the United States. In addition, he was heavily involved in various business ventures in Washington and Oregon.<sup>4</sup>

Sam Hill was born in Deep River, North Carolina, in 1857. As Quakers his family was deeply opposed to war. In addition, the Hills were anti-slavery and had a difficult time during the Civil War. In 1865, seeking a more comfortable life and to be out of the South, the family moved to Minneapolis where they flourished. Young Sam was admitted to Cornell University, but because of illness, he dropped out. Later he attended Haverford College, a Quaker college for men in Pennsylvania, where he earned a B.A. degree in 1878. In 1879, he spent another year at Harvard College where he received another B.A. degree. In 1880, he was admitted to the bar in Minnesota.<sup>5</sup>

Hill spent a fair amount of time in Europe throughout his life. While in school in Europe, he met Albert, the heir apparent to the throne of Belgium. He was also a friend of Marie, the Queen of Romania. Throughout his whole life, he would associate with many famous people note those associations often. He was employed by several banks and railroads in the early 1880s before he took a position in the legal department of James J. Hill’s (no relation) Great Northern Railroad in 1886. In 1888, he married James J. Hill’s oldest daughter, Mary. In 1889, his daughter, Mary Mendenhall Hill, was born and later their son, James Nathan B. Hill, was born in 1893. During this time Sam was involved in several businesses owned by his father-in-law. In 1895, Sam was made president of the Seattle Gas and Electric Company. This was the beginning of his life-long activities in the Pacific Northwest. In 1900, he resigned from his various railroad positions in Minnesota and announced his intention to live in Seattle permanently. He had already become the first president of the Washington Good Roads Association when in 1899, Sam took his first short trip to Russia, although this was not his first trip to Europe.<sup>6</sup> All of this semi-spontaneous movement illuminated Hill’s adventurous nature.

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<sup>4</sup> *Brief History of the Washington State Good Roads Association: Prepared Pursuant to a Resolution of the 1938 Convention at Seattle and Particularly Emphasizing the Work of Honorable Samuel Hill, The Founder* (Seattle, 1938), 2-8; John E. Tuhy, *Sam Hill: The Prince of Castle Nowhere* (Beaverton, OR: Timber Press, 1983), 21-46.

<sup>5</sup> *Brief History*, 6-9; Tuhy, *Sam Hill*, 30-51.

<sup>6</sup> *Brief History*, 7-10; Tuhy, *Sam Hill*, 44-54.

Over the next several years Hill was involved in many activities in the Northwest. Included in these were the gas business in Seattle and a phone company in Portland, Oregon. He also built a large house in Seattle. Mary, his wife, did not like Seattle or the Northwest. They never lived together very much in the Seattle house. He later constructed his mansion at Maryhill. His wife did not like the semi-arid climate where the house was located east of the Cascade Mountains. Once she moved back to Minneapolis, she never returned to the Pacific Northwest. Sam tried to interest his daughter, Mary, in the Pacific Northwest, but she never took to the region either. She suffered from mental health issues and favored her mother. Since Sam and his wife, Mary, were estranged, their daughter never stayed in the West. Hill was also not successful in the beginning convincing his son, James Nathan, to live in the West. James Nathan did poorly in prep school, but he eventually attended Harvard College. He fought in World War I and had little contact with his father after that.<sup>7</sup>

Hill spent much of his time running a large estate and farm in Washington state. He endowed chairs of road building and Russian language at the University of Washington, and remained very active in road building, including an experimental and demonstration road on his estate. However, Hill's personal life was very messy. He had several mistresses and some (unknown how many) illegitimate children. His most lasting relationship was with Mona Bell. She was from Minnesota and had a colorful background, including working for a time for "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West Show. She attended college for a year and later worked for a newspaper in North Dakota. When Sam Hill came through town promoting good roads, she interviewed him. From this first meeting, a relationship developed. She eventually moved to Washington state and she and Sam had a son, Sam B. Hill, in 1928. Sam built a twenty-two room house for Mona on the bank of the Columbia River near Bonneville. After Sam's death in 1931, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal took the house by condemnation for the building of Bonneville Dam. Mona eventually received a satisfactory settlement through the courts.<sup>8</sup>

Hill's first trip to Russia was in the spring of 1899. While working in Paris on one of his many trips to Europe, the opportunity arose to take a trip to Russia. This trip to Russia seemed to be a spur of the moment opportunity since he did not have a ticket for the train nor did he have a passport to enter Russia. Even without the passport, he boarded a train in Belgium after he sent a telegram to the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Charlemagne Tower. Once on the train he discovered that Grand Duke Leuchtenberg, the uncle of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, was on the same train. At the border of Russia, the Grand Duke and his entourage were greeted warmly. When Hill revealed that he did not have a passport, he presented his "carte visite" from Tower and it prompted a grand reception from the custom office officials. Hill recalled "as soon as he [custom officer] saw the card he arose, summoned five soldiers who marched over in goosestep style toward me. Unpleasant thoughts passed through my mind and it occurred to me that I could not

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<sup>7</sup> *Good Roads*, 7-11; Tuhy, *Sam Hill*, 45-62.

<sup>8</sup> Tuhy, *Sam Hill*, 47-60.

enter Russia. However, I lighted a cigar and I looked as composed as possible. As soon as the officer approached me he and the men all bowed low.”<sup>9</sup>

Hill’s experience entering the country was obviously eased by his friendship with Charlemagne Tower. Tower had been a leading mining businessman in northern Minnesota where the two men had invariably met. Interestingly, though, as Hill tried to get a hotel room, he could not get a room without a proper passport. So, the ordeal continued. He had to respond to an inquiry by the Chief of Police. He noted that

I was handed a slip of paper to which I was requested to sign my name, the place from whence I came, where I was going, and my age and religion. As soon as I had written my name, the Chief of Police looking at my first name said ‘You are a Jew.’ As that nationality were not popular in Russia I assured him that I did not have the honor to belong to that distinguished race, but he would not believe me. Opposite the religion I had written the word ‘Quaker.’ At this he took fresh offense and wanted to know what the Quakers believed. I gave him a short resume of the history of the Society of Friends, which added further to his wrath and indignation. As matters were getting pretty warm and I was wondering just what would happen to me, the cry was raised ‘Make way for the Ambassador, United States!’<sup>10</sup>

Once the Russian realized that Hill was associated with Tower, they did not cause him any more difficulty. Hill recognized that Jews were not popular in Russia, but of course, during this period many regions of Russia were experiencing pogroms. These attacks were much more severe than Russians’ simply not liking Jews; they often resulted in severe violence and death while being condoned by the Russian government. As Hill was traveling in Russia in 1899 and 1901, pogroms were occurring in Odessa, Warsaw, Kiev and Kishinev.<sup>11</sup>

This first trip to Russia was spontaneous and mostly impressionistic. Hill retold an interesting story about a woman who was traveling alone. He wrote

One fortunate lady on the train was bathed in tears and when I asked the cause I was told by one of my many travelling companions that the laws of Russia required that no one could enter the country without a passport and in the event of such person being a woman she must if married have written consent of her husband; if she were unmarried, the written consent of some male relative. It seems that this lady has been telegraphed that her husband was ill and going to join him at St. Petersburg, but,

<sup>9</sup> Hill, “Paper II (1899),” 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> John D. Klier, *Russians, Jews and the Pogroms of 1881-1882* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58-85.

of course, did not have his written consent. I was also told that it was necessary for a lady to have the written consent to go from one city in Russia to another city.<sup>12</sup>

This was a standard practice at this time. Hill took it further with a comment about how this might work well in America. He stated “that system struck me as having some advantages and I wondered whether it could be applied successfully in America. It certainly would tend to interfere with interurban travel between St. Paul and Minneapolis.” This clearly reflected Hill’s view of the independence of women in American society at the turn of the twentieth century, but it also reflected how he thought it would be impractical in a “twin city” situation like existed in Minnesota.

Hill concluded his thoughts on Russians on this first trip with a comparison of regional characteristics of Americans. He wrote “the Russians are to me a very religious people, a very quiet, deferential people. In their characteristics they seem to have all of the fire of a Southerner, all of the politeness of the South with all of the determination, ambition, cleverness and intelligence of the Americans in the northern portion of the United States.” Hill was born in North Carolina, but he had spent a good part of his life in Minnesota and Washington state. His comparisons, while somewhat contradictory, of Russians to Americans perpetuated regional stereotypes of Americans.<sup>13</sup>

Sam Hill found himself in Paris once again in the spring of 1901 on business. He met Robert Lebaudy, a famous French horse-racing magnate. The two speculated on the feasibility of a trip across Russia and around the world. Having little knowledge of how to cross Russia, the pair sought advice from train officials in Paris and London. All advice was the same—do not attempt it. Hill and Lebaudy had been enticed by an exhibit on the “Trans-Siberian Express” at the recent Paris Exposition. The exhibit advertised a trip that would be easy and luxurious.

Despite the warnings, Hill and Lebaudy left Paris on the Northern Express for St. Petersburg. They were hosted by the U.S. Ambassador, Tower. Hill was presented letters from the president of the Russo-Chinese Bank that helped him advance all the way to Asia. In Moscow, Hill was exposed to the best of the city—from cobble-stone streets to fancy hotels that rivaled Europe, and fabulous meals that were “washed down with the inevitable vodka.”<sup>14</sup> On the train leaving Moscow, Hill met an old acquaintance, James Dietrick, who owned a gold mine south of Irkutsk in Mongolia. Hill wrote

There are forty American miners with him. One of the party—his brother-in-law is Will Henley of North Carolina, a distant cousin of mine. He has telegraphed the Governor of Irkoutz [Irkutsk] to take us on the Government steamer and show us Lake Baikal. He confirms the story about seals being in plenty; says

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<sup>12</sup> Hill, “Paper II (1899),” 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Sam Hill, “Paper III (1901),” Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, 4.

they came down the river which is a tributary of the Lena. The boxers tried to scare him out but he told the head boxer 'to git'; that he was a North dog, and East dog, and a South dog, and a West dog, and if he did not leave they would cut him in bits and fish with the pieces. So the Chinese left. His wife was born in Minneapolis and he keeps his bank account in Seattle with my classmate Chapin. He wants me to go and see his friend the Grand Llama, but I am afraid we wont have time,—and I am not good at camel riding.<sup>15</sup>

Hill experienced some unusual coincidences on this journey by meeting his distant cousin from North Carolina and someone whom he knew from Seattle. He was clearly traveling in luxury with the ability to send letters and have a tour of Lake Baikal. His reference to boxers is most likely connected to the Boxer Rebellion in China spreading northward into Manchuria and Siberia. There had been recent attacks on Russian cities like Blagoveshchenk and they would continue until the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.<sup>16</sup>

As the train continued further east, Hill observed that general conditions of the land and people. He applauded the fertility of the soil and the “beautiful lilies of the valley and forget-me-nots and for sale for 5 kopecks per bunch, and bunches as big as an ordinary boy’s cap.”<sup>17</sup> His view of the peasants he passed along the way produced these observations: “The clothes of the peasants grows worse—many of them are barefoot, some wear shoes made of strips of bark-wicker ware, and strips of cloth in place of stockings.”<sup>18</sup>

By late May of 1901, Hill was crossing from Penza further east across the Volga and through Samara. They passed a load of convicts on their way east. Hill noted that they look “just like ordinary riff-raff. I gave my letter to the officer in charge and asked where they were going. He replied to Sagahlin [Sakhalin] Island, by way of the Black Sea and it would take 2 ½ months to get there.”<sup>19</sup> Hill did not expand further on this observation, but these convicts would be taken by the Black Sea by water and not by rail because the Trans-Siberian Railroad was not completed yet to the Pacific Ocean. He concluded this observation with an encounter “with a Russian Scientist who is going after a mammoth, the largest ever found. It is perfect with hair and tusks but it is in the ice 3,000 versts, say 2,000 miles, from Kolynisk. He will be gone 1 ½ years and come out by the sea. He takes 30 Cossaks [Cossacks] from Irkutz [Irkutsk].”<sup>20</sup> Hill’s experiences on the rails were many and eclectic as he saw a progression of people eastward.

<sup>15</sup> Sam Hill, “Letter to Mary Hill,” (May 18, 1901), Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> Robert A. Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann, eds., *The Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 66-88.

<sup>17</sup> Sam Hill, “Letter to Mary Hill,” (May 19, 1901), Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Sam Hill, “Letter to Mary Hill,” (May 20-27, 1901), Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

He continued to offer observations of the Russian landscape as it passed by on the train.

The country now looks like Montana, but the soil is better. Fields of wheat near at hand and several large straw-stacks indicating good crops...looking across, say four miles, I can see cliffs eroded Dakota bad-lands. I am sure the formation is similar and distinguish red and blue colors on the cliff.<sup>21</sup>

Hill found many similarities between Russia and the United States and continued to find comparisons between the Volga and Mississippi Rivers and some of the farmland near his home in Minnesota. Yet, he made a rather notable conclusion about Russia when he stated

To be appreciated this country must be seen. As I write I can see three villages, each numbering 1,000 people, all built with straw roofs and in each a great church with two spires and always painted that indescribable green. I came near saying Paris green. And yet at a Junction quite a few miles back was a restaurant better than I have seen in America since Fox and Johnson died.<sup>22</sup>

As his train stopped at a small station near Irkutsk, Hill made two interesting observations of Russian people. He recalled as the train stopped at the station "I never saw such patient people as these. There they stood and now that the train steps uncover their wares, expose bread and meat and set of bottles of milk. No shouting, no begging you to buy." He continued his observation back on the train by writing that

I have now found that it is necessary to put an Ikon in this right corner from the door of the entrance of every room in every house. There is a church in the station and an altar of rather elaborate size, and before the work train went out to repair the bridge the railway men went in a said their prayers.<sup>23</sup>

Once Hill reached Irkutsk, he switched trains to one owned by the Siberian Railway Company and found it to be much nicer. He retold an episode about drinking in a dining car with an eclectic group of travelers. He noted that

In the dining car of our new train was a piano and it had side lights of electricity and a Jewish girl played and sang very well

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>23</sup> Sam Hill, "Letter to Mary Hill," (May 24, 1901), Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts,

and the diamond breast-plate of her father, who turned the caves, lighted the rest of the car. The gathering was rather international, besides the race I mentioned were England (Clifton), France (Lebaudy), Americanski (Hill), Russians, Germans. Then there was a Pole who played the flute and who I was told had been banished to Kamchatka. I don't know why. I think it was because he played the flute. And I don't know why he did not get a life sentence... Then my friend doctor-professor Herz and I took Vodka: Then I did cry but the professor assured me it was the only pure drink in Siberia and that where he went north of Yakutz [Yakutsk] it was so cold that he could not take Vodka but took pure alcohol after having it tested in his laboratory. He regretted that he did not have some with him, but his baggage had not been packed in time by his wife, but would be on the next train. I was secretly glad he could not give me any but assured him I would take his word for it. If he ever visits me in Amerika I shall never give him some of that North Carolina 'moonshine' whiskey. I don't know but it will remind him of his alcohol and Tungesses [Tungus]. He assures me they are a fine people, not cannibal, at all and won't do you any harm if you take plenty of armed Cossacks with you. I am glad to know this. I told him I thought in this request they resembled the boxers, but he says not – they are entirely a different family related to the Buriats who in turn are related to the North Japanese and to our Siwash Indians. It occurs to me now that he and I had different points of resemblance in mind.<sup>24</sup>

Hill's recollections were riddled with stereotypes and misconceptions. Many travel accounts from this era follow similar patterns and are filled with tropes. It was common through all of his writing to note the ethnicity of the people he encountered. He tended to focus on the exotic reputations of many different Siberian groups that he knew little or nothing about and often confused them with other groups of people simply on the basis of appearance. The Tungus people are native people of central Siberia from as far north as Norilsk to the south along a broad swath of the Yenesei River, surrounded Lake Baikal and in parts of Northern Mongolia. Buriats are a Siberian group located primarily on the east side of Lake Baikal around the city of Ulan-Ude. By far, the group he mentioned the most in his letters and memoirs were Jews. He concluded this particular long letter recalling a Jew on the train

The Jew on the train was great fun and a very shrewd man. He agrees with me this country is very rich but he thinks it will take a hundred years to make 'good business men' of the people...

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<sup>24</sup> Sam Hill, "Letter to Mary Hill," (May 28, 1901), Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, 1-2.

He observed my name 'Samuel' and asked we belonged to the same race, and I told him: 'Yes, further back'.<sup>25</sup>

As the journey continued further East, Hill retold a story of meeting the Belgian consul to Japan, Mr. Bure. They traveled for a bit, but his young daughter fell ill and had to be taken to a local hospital noted by Hill as "the best in the world" to provide the young girl with a treatment. Within a few days, the young girl recovered to the relief of all on board the train.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout much of his trip, Hill offered comparisons to American and Canadian terrain. A recurring comparison began as he reached and went beyond Lake Baikal on their way to Chita. Hill was reminded of Montana and other western American locations as he crossed the far eastern edge of Siberia. He noted "the country is so much like Montana. I cannot help speaking of it. This morning as last night we were in the midst of yellow pine trees and we seem to go from one valley to another..."<sup>27</sup>

Over the next several years, Hill returned to his work in the Pacific Northwest and his efforts at developing good roads across the U.S. However, in 1916, he returned to Russia on a different sort of mission. While his first two visits were focused on tourism, this last trip will be to survey the rails in Siberia to test their ability to handle arms shipments from the Western allies during World War I. Early in 1916, the French government and bondholders asked James J. Hill to conduct the survey in Siberia, but he turned down the offer due to advanced age and poor health. He recommended his son-in-law, Sam Hill, to do the study in his place. The concern of France, Britain and others in the West was that if Russia's war effort failed, then the Germans and Austrians could turn all of their forces to face the West. They thought if they could help the Russians by sending in supplies and war material to the port at Vladivostok and use the rail system to transport it over five thousand miles to the front that Russia's front would be fortified.<sup>28</sup>

Sam Hill was in Liverpool, England at the time his father-in-law requested he return to undertake this mission. On his way back to the United States, he stopped in Belgium and London and concluded that the Germans could not hold out much longer and that the war would be nearing its end soon.<sup>29</sup> It was Hill's association with King Albert of Belgium and his work with Belgian refugees during the war that brought this invitation. He returned to New York and traveled across the United States in order to depart across the Pacific to Vladivostok so he could avoid the war zone in Europe. Upon his arrival in the United States, though, the *New York Times* noted that Hill's efforts to go to Russia were not at the request of

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>26</sup> Sam Hill, "Letter to Mary Hill," (May 31, 1901), Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1; For an interesting comparison of Montana and Kazakhstan, see Kate Brown, "Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana are Nearly the Same Place," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 1 (February 2001): 17-48.

<sup>28</sup> *Brief History*, 12; "Ocean Travelers," *New York Times*, May 16, 1916, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> "Hill's Trip Not Official," *New York Times*, May 16, 1916, p. 2; "End of War Near, Says Samuel Hill," *New York Times*, May 15, 1916, p. 1.

the U.S. government. Hill was travelling as a private U.S. citizen under the direction of the French since the U.S. was still officially neutral in the war. Despite this reality, Hill persisted and continued the journey.

Hill realized the journey would be very dangerous. His journey was interrupted by his father-in-law's death in late May of 1916. By early June, though, he was on his way to Vladivostok via Yokohama. Hill recorded that the American railroad engineer, John F. Stevens, accompanied him on this journey as his technical advisor. Stevens was famous for his earlier work on the Panama Canal. He also worked for James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad at different times. Even though Stevens' service as an occasional consultant on Russian railroads from 1917 to 1924 was better known, this earlier trip with Hill is primarily recorded only in Hill's writings.<sup>30</sup>

Once he arrived in Vladivostok, Hill entered the country in disguise and secured passage on the Imperial Limited to St. Petersburg. The story of what happens next is most intriguing but lacks any proof. It seems useful, though, to cite this story as printed in a history by the Good Roads Association of Washington state to tell the tale as Hill told it. However, nearly none of this can be confirmed in other sources in the Hoover Presidential Library, or any number of other archives. The story goes

It seemed to Mr. Hill that one of the passengers in a car at the rear end of the train, was hunting for somebody and appeared to be a detective of some sort. But Mr. Hill kept close to his compartment, having his meals served therein. When he arrived at Lake Baikal on the second day, at about five in the afternoon, the train was there broken up, placed on the transfer boats and then for five hours being ferried across to the west shore of the lake. While on the boat Mr. Hill left his compartment and walked around the deck, particularly so as to get some exercise, and standing in the lee of a stairway which went to the deck above, and somewhat in the dark, for it was night and the lights were on, a gentleman who evidently was a German, as he could see, and whom he had spotted once before, stopped in front of Mr. Hill, and in an agitated way said, 'Have you seen him? Have you seen him?' in faultless German. And immediately Mr. Hill answered, 'I do not know anything about him. I haven't found him.' And then the gentlemen said, 'Very well.' And then the German pulled out of his pocket a perfect picture of our good friend Samuel Hill, who was always close shaven, but because of his mustache and beard, the detective did not recognize that he was talking to the man he was looking for. And then the detective said, 'I take it you know that the price on his head, dead or alive, is two thousand pounds British gold, and I want

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<sup>30</sup> Anthony Heywood, *Modernizing Lenin's Russia: Economic Reconstruction, Foreign Trade and the Railways* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 40-44.

to know if you find him will you divide with me, and if I find him I'll divide with you?' The answer was in the affirmative.<sup>31</sup>

The story does not end here, though. Hill, knowing he is being hunted for 2,000 pounds (even though other sources note it was 40,000 pounds), he tried to bribe a railroad conductor to detach the last car of the train, where the German was, after they reached the other side of Lake Baikal. Initially, the official was offended, but at the last moment the Russian took Hill's money and left the car behind, helping Hill escape. This is the tale Hill retold many times as part of this harrowing adventure in Siberia.

Hill would reach Petrograd and then traveled on to Oslo before dodging German U-boats on his way to Paris to report his results to American officials. He found the rails in Siberia to be in generally good shape except the ties were laid out with thirty-inch centers while the standard in the United States was twenty-four-inch centers. He believed the rails could handle the weight and volume of the arms, equipment, food, and men proposed to be brought into the country through Vladivostok, but he recommended that additional ties be laid in order to be certain of the safety. Hill's plan was praised, but it was never used. Stevens' ongoing evaluation of rails from 1917 to 1924, though, were far more condemning. Eventually the United States will enter Russia at the end of the war through Vladivostok. This effort was not to aid the new Bolshevik government, but rather to aid, unofficially, the White movement in the Russian Civil War.<sup>32</sup>

Hill eventually returned to Seattle by late spring of 1917. He believed, though, that the United States was woefully underprepared for the war. He stated that "It's hard to tell which is the weaker nation, China or the United States. We wouldn't last five minutes with any other nation." He also confided to two friends in Seattle that "The Russian Nation is doomed. Anarchy will have control of everything therein within six months."<sup>33</sup>

In conclusion, Hill's writings offer the reader an insight into his thinking and views of Russia during this crucial time for Russia and in Russian-American relations. He illuminated many similarities between the large expanse of Russia and the American West. Hill characterized the many peoples of the Russian Empire in a similar fashion to other travel accounts of this era. In the end, Hill's writings are another small part of a giant mosaic of impressions of Russians and Americans about the other. Even though many of his claims are hard to confirm, his impressions offer much more to the connections between Russia and the United States.

### **About the Authors**

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<sup>31</sup> *Good Roads*, 16-17

<sup>32</sup> *Good Roads*, 13-19; Heywood, *Modernizing Lenin's Russia*, 42-48.

<sup>33</sup> Tuhy, *Sam Hill*, 185; *Good Roads*, 19.

trating on the era of Great Depression in the 1930s. He has held three J. William Fulbright grants: China in 1995, South Korea in 1999, and Belarus in 2004.

William Benton Whisenhunt is Professor of History at College of DuPage. He holds a Ph.D. in Russian history from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has published seven books on Russian history, especially on Russian-American relations. He was a J. William Fulbright Senior Scholar at Ryazan' State University in Russia in 2006. He is co-series editor of "Americans in Revolutionary Russia" published by Slavica Publishers. [https://slavica.indiana.edu/series/Americans\\_in\\_Revolutionary\\_Russia](https://slavica.indiana.edu/series/Americans_in_Revolutionary_Russia) He is also co-managing editor of *Journal of Russian American Studies* (JRAS). <https://journals.ku.edu/jras> He and his father have been trying to work on a joint historical project for more than two decades. It is his honor to have finally publish this article that combines their interests.

# The 1972 Soviet-American Youth Conference: The Illusion of Consensus

Andrew Jacobs

## Introduction

Hoping to capitalize on the spirit of détente, in June 1972 the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship (hereafter the NCASF, the official Soviet-American friendship group headquartered in Manhattan) and the Soviet Committee of Youth Organizations (hereafter the KMO, the umbrella organization administering the various Soviet youth groups) co-sponsored the first-ever Soviet-American Youth Conference held in Minsk. The conference proposed to feature around 100 young people from each side discussing issues relevant to youth the world over—“their hopes and problems and participation in the social struggle,” university life, future careers, war and peace, racism, imperialism, and national liberation.<sup>1</sup> The topics, particularly the attention devoted to peace and imperialism, revealed the pro-Soviet orientation of the NCASF and hinted the conference would feature much discussion of the Soviet Union’s pet causes. Still, the NCASF and the KMO promised to field diverse delegations and facilitate open dialogue.<sup>2</sup> The sponsors of the conference envisioned the event as an attempt to bridge the Cold War divide, make friends, and generate solidarity across borders. Frank discussion at the conference would build mutual understanding and serve as an example of future possible dialogue between two sides now eager and able to get to know one another.

This article examines the 1972 Soviet-American Conference as a transnational point of interaction between the Soviet Union and the United States, wherein youth from both sides exchanged experiences, ideas, and representations of them-

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<sup>1</sup> NCASF Press Release about the conference, June 17, 1972, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi sotsial’no-politicheskii arkhiv (RGASPI) f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 1-2. For the proposed discussion topics, see RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 3-5. See also the NCASF recruiting advertisement for the conference, National Archives, College Park, Maryland (NARA) RG 59, A1-5345, Box 19.

<sup>2</sup> NCASF Press Release, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 1-2; “US-USSR Young People’s Conference: A Preliminary Report,” *New World Review*, Summer 1972, 16.

selves. Things did not go as planned however. As we will see, the Soviet effort to control all aspects of the conference, including the composition of the American delegation, inadvertently led to stereotypes being confirmed rather than rejected. Because of the make-up of each delegation, the conference produced an ultimately distorted but seemingly clichéd image of both sides in which Soviet youth appeared as a monolithic bloc of devoted patriots and the Americans as alienated youth. Much of this divergence related to differing perspectives on the importance of national consensus. For the Komsomol members (the youth wing of the Communist Party) who made up the Soviet delegation and who acted as the official representatives of Soviet youth, national consensus remained an absolute virtue. By 1972, with the Vietnam War still raging and the memory of the turmoil of the 1960s still lingering, many of the American youth at the conference by contrast rejected any display of national consensus. This gap in life experience and perspective made solidarity, the ultimate goal of the conference, difficult to generate.

### **Détente, Cultural Exchange, and Youth**

The 1972 Youth Conference occurred during the high-point of détente and post-war American-Soviet cooperation. The Nixon-Brezhnev Summit occurred only a month prior in Moscow which included the signing of the SALT I agreement and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Détente (c. 1969-1977), a period of improved relations between the USSR and the US, developed generally on two tracks. One track featured high-level summits, such as the Nixon-Brezhnev meetings, along with official exchanges in the fields of science, technology, and culture. Another track featured American non-governmental organizations along with individuals seeking out contact with the Soviet Union and vice versa in the hope of improving relations and mutual understanding under the cover of détente. Such contact flourished during this period and would continue unabated even after this era in the Cold War passed.

To trust each other, they needed to get to know one another first believed many of these Americans. Because no “grassroots” groups existed in the Soviet Union, all the American groups and individuals desiring contact had to work through Soviet government organizations to establish contact with the Soviet public, including at the 1972 Youth Conference. The Soviet government and its various organizations, serving as gatekeepers for the Soviet public, thus held the upper-hand in this relationship and the USSR used this power differential to secure formats, conditions, and delegations more favorable to its position. This feature of American-Soviet engagement would have a major impact on how the 1972 Youth Conference unfolded.

In recent years, historians have begun to examine closely citizen-level exchange within and between the various blocs during the Cold War. Many of these new histories center their narratives on how average citizens sought to navigate and ultimately transcend the Cold War divide and seek out peaceful solutions to the pressing international problems of their day. As a result, these new histories by focusing on the transnational connections, networks and transfers of knowledge, ideas and cultural products across borders during the Cold War have problematized

concepts such as separate blocs and the “Iron Curtain.”<sup>3</sup> This chapter provides a microhistory of this kind of cultural exchange between the two systems which offered the opportunity for people from both sides to better understand each other.

The conference also occurred amid a worldwide youth rebellion. The conference allowed each side to showcase their youth and the opportunity to understand the other’s young people. On both sides of the Cold War divide, the rebellious status of youth and a yawning generation gap generated much interest and concern. Dissatisfied by the stasis of the day and dismayed by the war in Vietnam that alienated them from their government, some American youth in the 1960s rebelled at home, on their college campuses, and in the streets. Many participated in a global counterculture that tried to overturn the gender, racial, political, and sexual norms of the previous generation.<sup>4</sup> Dissent and rebellion had likewise taken root among some Soviet youth during the 1960s and 1970s. Soviet leaders worried about their inability to mobilize a seemingly apathetic or rebellious younger generation disappointed with the rigidity of the Party and its broken economic promises. Soviet authorities additionally fretted over what they considered the corrosive impact western popular culture, ideas, and ways of life pouring over Soviet borders had on their young people.<sup>5</sup> In a more extreme instance and in an example of growing

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<sup>3</sup> See for example, Sari Autio-Sarasma and Katalin Miklossy, eds., *Reassessing Cold War Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011); Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer, eds., *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchanged across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s-1960s* (College Station, TX: A&M University Press, 2014); Pia Koivunen and Simo Mikkonen, eds., *Beyond the Divide: Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe* (New York: Brehahn Books, 2015); Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild, eds., *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016); Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith and Joss Segal, eds., *Divided Dreamworlds?: The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012). For other works focusing on government-sponsored cultural exchange see, Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange, and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003); Walter Hixon, *Parting the Iron Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2007); Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition During the Early Cold War, 1945-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (New York: W.W. North & Co. 1996); Howard Brick and Christopher Phelps, *Radicals in America: The US Left Since the Second World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> On post-Stalin Soviet youth and rebellion, see and Aleksei G. Borzenkov, *Molodezh’ i politika: Vozmozhnosti i predely studencheskoi samodeiatel’nosti na vostoke Rossii (1961–1991 gg.)* (Novosibirsk, 2003); Robert Hornsby, *Protest, Reform, and Repression in Khrushchev’s Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 68-71, 81-7, 102-7; Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and roll in the Rocket City: the West, identity, and ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Allen Kassof, “Youth

nationalist dissent, less than two months before the conference Romas Kalanta, a 19-year old student from Lithuania, burned himself to death to protest Soviet rule in Lithuania. Following Kalanta's funeral, a mass demonstration occurred with crowds calling for "freedom for Lithuania," "freedom for youth" and "freedom for hippies."<sup>6</sup> None of these aspects of Soviet youth rebellion would appear among the Soviet delegation to conference, but features of the American youth rebellion would figure prominently among the American delegates.

What made this event unique in the history of Soviet-American cultural exchange is that it existed outside the formal network of government-sponsored Cold War exchange. The US government did not sponsor, fund, vet, or endorse the American delegation or the conference.<sup>7</sup> The American delegates in turn did not seek to act as representatives of their home country. Indeed, as we will see, many of the Americans in Minsk used this alternative form of cultural exchange to present a harsh and unforgiving picture of America with the conference showcasing the breakdown of the American Cold War consensus. On the other hand, the Soviet delegation was closely vetted by the state and presented the opposite: a glorious picture of the Soviet Union and a model of national consensus.

### The Conference

The five-day conference, which featured a series of speeches and discussion sessions in a hotel conference room in Minsk in the Belarussian Republic, offered a rare opportunity for American youth eager to see the Soviet Union for themselves. During their time in the Soviet Union, the Americans would also visit Leningrad and Moscow and partake in group excursions to key sites in Belarus, especially those related to World War II.<sup>8</sup> While a few thousand young Americans had visited the USSR since the country's re-opening in 1956, this conference promised what many Americans hoping to visit the Soviet Union were most eager

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vs. the Regime," *Problems of Communism*, 6 (May-June 1957), 15-21; Vlasislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); William Taubman, *The View from Lenin Hills: Russian Youth in Ferment* (New York: Coward McCann, 1967), 239-48.

<sup>6</sup> Amanda Jeanne Swain, "From the Big Screen to the Streets of Kaunas: Youth Cultural Practices and Communist Party Discourse in Soviet Lithuania," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 54:3/4 2013, 468.

<sup>7</sup> Although the US government played no role in the conference, it did monitor the proceedings and paid close attention to the backgrounds of the American delegates. Memo from Charles Stefan to Mr. Armitage on American-Soviet Young People's Conference—August 19 to September 5, 1973, August 10, 1973, National Archives, College Park, MD (NARA), RG 59, A1-5345 Box 32. This continued into the 1980s. See FBI file on the American-Soviet Youth Forum, FOIA request 1392030-0, in author's possession.

<sup>8</sup> Initial promises of sporting activities and other competitions did not seem to materialize however. Richard Morford (executive director of the NCASF) letter to Nesterov, April 20, 1972, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 435, ll. 112-5. Long sessions of Komsomol dancing and other musical performances apparently did occur, however. These cultural performances would become more important at later conferences during which the American side also performed. One participant at the 1974 conference in Baku remembered playing Fauré on her flute. Interview with Sally Pratt, February 20, 2018.

for: the chance to meet with Soviets of their generation on Soviet turf and to see if they truly were “just like us.”<sup>9</sup> From the many letters written by young Americans to Soviet officials, many found the Soviet Union fascinating and dreamed of the chance to visit the USSR to meet and live among Soviets their own age.<sup>10</sup> The American participants were therefore willing to sit through the conference’s lengthy plenary sessions featuring dry reports if such speeches would be followed by small group discussions.

The conference quickly proved challenging and things occasionally got weird. The two sides approached the conference differently. Even as the Soviet organizers gestured towards dialogue, the Soviet side approached the conference didactically. They would use the conference as an opportunity teach their ignorant American guests about their country, make them aware of Soviet achievements, and inform them about the devotion of their nation’s youth to the country’s future success. The conference offered a “huge potential possibility” for influencing American youth ideologically, noted one Soviet report.<sup>11</sup> Places visited by the American delegation supplemented what they were taught during the conference’s formal sessions. “They put us through a real learning process,” complained one American attendee. “First they told us what we would see, then they reinforced it by showing, and they reinforced it again by talking about it.”<sup>12</sup> For example, Soviet presentations not only extolled the peace proposals of the Soviet government, the hosts also shepherded their guests to sites related to World War II (the memorial at Khatyn which commemorated a Belarussian village decimated by the Nazis, for example). There the Americans learned not only of the great suffering endured by the Soviet population during World War II which served to confirm the USSR’s authentic present commitment to peace but also to illustrate the great strides the country made to recover from the devastation wrought by the Nazi invasion.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Some young Americans had attended previous international summits, conferences and festivals held in the USSR. A total of 150 “North Americans” (Americans + Canadians) attended the massive (33,000 total attendees) 1957 World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow. Smaller numbers had participated in various student and peace meetings in the USSR. Pia Koivunen, “Friends, ‘Potential Friends,’ and Enemies: Reimagining Soviet Relations to the First, Second and Third Worlds at the Moscow 1957 Youth Festival,” in *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*, ed. Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 225.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Letter from T. Dutton to “whoever reads this letter,” 1965, RGASPI, f. M-5, op. 1, d. 395, ll. 114-9.

<sup>11</sup> Report about the meeting of Soviet and American youth, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, l. 112. The Komsomol played an important role in working with foreign youth and the effort to win them over, see Robert Hornsby, “The post-Stalin Komsomol and the Soviet fight for Third World youth,” *Cold War History*, 16, no. 1, 2016, 83-100.

<sup>12</sup> “U.S. Maoist Youth Finds Soviet a Doctrinaire Place,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1972.

<sup>13</sup> The KMO most likely chose Belarus as the site of the conference because it had been the site of so much devastation during the war. The Americans also laid flowers at war memorials and cemeteries in Moscow and Leningrad at this conference.



Plenary Session at the 1974 Soviet-American Youth Conference in Baku, from Their Point of View: Young Americans in the USSR, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

Many of the Americans, by contrast, took the conference as an opportunity to explore a foreign country, to have fun, and socialize with a group of people they had only read or heard stories about. The Soviet side, made up of Party and Komsomol members, saw the conference as an extension of their Party work.<sup>14</sup> Their formal and carefully prepared presentations and the tightly organized structure of the conference came off poorly at times.<sup>15</sup> “Cold and dry, and definitely too long,” according to one American.<sup>16</sup> Spontaneity was never the name of the game at Soviet-hosted or sponsored conferences. The Komsomol ran a tight ship at such events with “boring, pro-forma speeches” dominating the agendas, even at events held beyond Soviet borders such as the 1968 World Youth Festival in Sofia. Objections, deviations, and protests were frowned upon and shut down.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In the comments of American participants collected by KMO, a few Americans said they wished the American side had taken the conference more seriously and had better prepared for the event and discussions. Other than the Young Workers Liberation League contingent, none of the Americans appeared to participate in any preparatory activities. See the comments from James Steele and Ed Rivera, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 57-64.

<sup>15</sup> While I found no information about the specific preparations for the 1972 conference other than a call for more preparation, for the 1973 conference in the US, the Soviet delegation underwent training and attended various preparatory events, see RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 16-18, 32-5.

<sup>16</sup> Comment from Earl Scott in “US-USSR Youth Conference, Minsk, 1972”, *New World Review*, Winter 1973, 41.

<sup>17</sup> See Nick Rutter, “Look Left, Drive Right: Internationalisms at the 1968 World Youth Festival,” in *The Socialist Sixties*, ed., Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 201-3. The Youth Festivals held in the neutral countries of Austria (1959) and Finland (1961) proved much more problematic. At these festivals, the CIA with the help of the American delegation launched covert propaganda campaigns

Some KMO reports found faults in the organization of the 1972 conference. The overly substantive and informational nature of the Soviet presentations, according to a Soviet participant, reduced their intended propagandistic impact on the Americans by boring them. According to participants at later conferences the presentations remained dull.<sup>18</sup> In Minsk and the subsequent conferences, the Americans at times felt like they were not listening to Soviet youth express their own personal thoughts but instead hearing reports by Soviet academic specialists on the youth problem. To keep the attention of the Americans, the presentations in the future should be reduced to simply busting bourgeoisie propaganda and destroying stereotypes, not dumping an “avalanche” of detailed information on them as happened at the 1972 conference. The Americans, a very lively and perhaps frivolous bunch per Soviet reports, expected more free-flowing, informal discussions and relished the chance to meet with Soviet youth on Soviet streets, not being lectured to by Soviet officials in conference rooms.<sup>19</sup> One American delegate remembered that the Soviet side loaded their presentations with statistics and were frequently irritated by the presentation style of the Americans, which he described as “ill-informed bull shitting.”<sup>20</sup> At future conferences, a report from one Soviet participant suggested the plenary sessions be curtailed in favor of more discussion, free time, and a cultural program. These meetings needed to have a less “official” and “tense” character in the future. Yet, the Soviet participants still needed more training and preparation according to the KMO.<sup>21</sup>

Overall, relations between the delegations developed in a friendly manner. In the comments collected by the KMO and in a subsequent book and articles published in *Soviet Life* about the conference, the Americans effusively praised the country and noted their appreciation for being allowed to see the Soviet Union’s remarkable achievements with their own eyes.<sup>22</sup> Even though the American delegation reportedly possessed a special talent for polemicizing, the Soviet side was spared having to answer provocative questions, according to KMO reports.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the Soviet side struggled with only a few topics. A “hot debate” occurred on the position of women. The American side argued gender inequality had to be

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meant to delegitimize the festivals and attack the USSR. The American delegations at these festivals had a stronger anti-communist bent and were better prepared. All future Youth Festivals would be held in Soviet-allied countries. Joni Krekola and Simo Mikkonen, “Backlash of the Free World: The US presence at the World Youth Festival in Helsinki, 1962,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36, 2 (2011), 230-255.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Sally Pratt, February 20, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> “Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth,” RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 112-124.

<sup>20</sup> Lars Lih, “Account of a Trip to the Soviet Union in the 1970s” (unpublished). I thank Lih for providing this to me.

<sup>21</sup> “Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth,” RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 112-124.

<sup>22</sup> The praise for the country was nearly universal. However, the conferences themselves are hardly discussed, see Maya Gordeyeva, *Their Point of View: Young Americans in the USSR*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977).

<sup>23</sup> “Report about discussion group Y,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 108-111; “Report on Working Group III,” RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 70-2.

attacked on economic, political, and social grounds including the rooting out of male chauvinism. The Soviet delegates, some of the Americans complained, as good Communists could only see the issue in terms of economics.<sup>24</sup> When a few of the American women edged the conversation towards more intimate matters, including sexual intercourse, the “Soviets couldn’t handle it; in their culture, they just aren’t ready to discuss these things publicly,” according to the American report of the conference.<sup>25</sup> The touchy subject of women’s liberation would remain a controversial topic for similar reasons at several of the later conferences.<sup>26</sup>

### The Soviet Delegation

The most obvious difference between the delegations was the age of the Soviet participants. As soon became apparent to the Americans, Soviet and American conceptions and definitions of youth clashed. The American side at this Youth Conference consisted mostly of college students and young people in their early 20s. The Soviet contingent, on the other hand, included many people in their thirties and even older. The Soviet Union defined youth in broader terms, anyone under 30. The Komsomol included individuals up to age 28. This generous definition of youth allowed KMO officials to include several professionals along with senior Komsomol members in the conference and therefore stack the conference with the kinds ultra-prepared and trustworthy young people who were the only types allowed to represent the Soviet Union at such events.<sup>27</sup> A KMO report noted several of the Americans criticized this age gap. “Why are the majority of the presenters at the plenary sessions people who are not youths, even though this is a youth conference?” asked one American. Next year, the KMO report suggested the conference include fewer “venerable scientists” and more students.<sup>28</sup> In the past, American tourist officials had complained that Soviet delegations to the US intended for students and other young people too often included participants much older than they should have been.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, some of the first Soviet youth

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<sup>24</sup> “Report about discussion group Y,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 108-111.

<sup>25</sup> “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 53.

<sup>26</sup> Sally Pratt and Sharon Carnicke, “USA-USSR Youth Meet, 1973,” *New World Review*, March-April 1974. Holman, the chief American organizer, noted that some Americans at the 1979 conference in Atlanta complained that the Soviet delegation included too few women. He wrote: “Many Americans both acquainted and unacquainted with the Soviet Union, are yet to be convinced of truly equal status for women there.” Sending more women would alleviate this misconception, wrote the American. Holman letter to Gennady Yanaev, December 10, 1979, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 9, d. 1245, ll. 17-21.

<sup>27</sup> For a list of Soviet participants at the meeting, see RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 8-15, 16-19. Two American attendees estimated the average of the Soviet delegation to be early 30s. “U.S Maoist Youth Finds Soviet a Doctrinaire Place,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1972.

<sup>28</sup> Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 112-124.

<sup>29</sup> Record of a conversation between KMO and the Council for Student Travel, RGASPI f. M-5, op. 1, d. 76, ll. 88-92.

admitted to the US as part of one the earliest youth exchanges in the post-Stalin period included individuals forty years of age and older.<sup>30</sup>

The KMO's tendency to load such conferences and delegations with trusted individuals (and for youth events this meant Komsomolites) became problematic again the following year at the second conference held in the United States. The American organizers of the conference complained of difficulty in securing visas for the Soviet delegation because the KMO attempted to fill all their slots with Komsomol and Communist Party members.<sup>31</sup> "Perhaps, some of these people should not be members of either [the] Communist Party or the Komsomol," kindly suggested John Holman, the American organizer of the conference and participant in the 1972 edition.<sup>32</sup> This request went unheeded; the KMO sent a near-full slate of Party and Komsomol members and would do so at the future Soviet-American Youth Conferences.

The peculiar nature of the Soviet delegations would be noted at the future Youth Conferences. An American newspaper covering the 1973 conference in the US described the visiting Soviets as "professional delegates in their mid-30s" with a "token Jew" thrown in to assuage concerns over Soviet anti-Semitism.<sup>33</sup> An American who worked as an interpreter at the 1973 and 1974 conferences remembered most of all the major "mismatch" between the American and Soviet delegations. The Soviet delegation appeared to consist of individuals already in "established careers," including engineers, published writers, and performing artists, which contrasted mightily with the American college students. Such a mismatch resulted in a lost opportunity. "I wonder how the experience would have been different if we had met kids [like us] or if they had met American professionals," recalled one participant.<sup>34</sup>

### The Appearance of Consensus

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union strived for the appearance of national consensus and unity. Throughout the Cold War, both sides

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<sup>30</sup> "Memorandum of Discussion at the 242<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council," Washington, March 24, 1955, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Volume XXIV.

<sup>31</sup> Party members needed a special waiver from the State Department to enter the US.

<sup>32</sup> Holman "personally [however] had no strong reservations about the composition of the delegation." John Holman letter to the KMO, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8. d. 691, ll. 12-3.

<sup>33</sup> Roster for the conference, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 22-5; Clipping from the American newspaper, *Jewish Journal*, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8. d. 691, l. 224. The profile of these delegates matched those of Soviet citizens allowed to travel abroad to the capitalist west. Those tourists were usually from elite professions who had to undergo a significant amount of vetting before departure. Anne Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: A History of Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (University of Oxford Press, 2011), 110-1.

<sup>34</sup> Author's correspondence with Sharon Carnicke, December 20, 2017. By 1975, the two sides were still debating the appropriate age of the conference's participants as well as the purpose of the event. John Holman letter to Pilipov, September 29, 1975, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 1263, ll. 37-8. The continuing age discrepancy was also recalled by another participant. Interview with Sally Pratt, February 20, 2018.

sought to establish a united front to stand tall in the face of a foreign danger threatening to topple their way of life—the Red Menace or alternatively Capitalist Encirclement—and to project strength to the outside world. The appearance of popular consensus and national unity additionally provided legitimacy for the state and its leadership and suggested a happy population satisfied by their country's economic and social model.

The presence of Party members and Komsomolites at the conference, above all, offered the prized appearance of consensus among Soviet youth. Societal harmony was an important aspect of Soviet identity and Soviet authorities sought to project this image to visitors. At Soviet-sponsored Youth Festivals, peace meetings, and other international events mounted with great regularity during the Cold War, the Soviet delegations strived to form a united front together with the other participating delegations from around the world in opposition to American imperialism. When prominent Americans paid a visit, the appearance of consensus among Soviet youth was often highlighted. Samantha Smith's visit to the USSR a decade later to verify the USSR's commitment to peace served as an opportunity for the Soviet Union to showcase a united front of patriotic Soviet youth. During her visit to the Young Pioneer Camp Artek and before a bank of international television cameras and journalists, happy Soviet youth stood in unison in favor of their government's peace campaign, sang patriotic songs, and smiled while serving as the welcoming hosts to an important government guest.

At this conference, the Soviet presentations came across as performances of patriotism with many of them seeking to sell to a foreign audience all the Soviet Union offered its young people. The young Soviet participants stressed their collective unity, championed the benefits of being Soviet, including good pay, job security along with the right to work, education, and relaxation, and declared their loyalty to their country and their pride in it. And they owed it all to the state.<sup>35</sup> Finally, they asked their American guests to join them in seeking peace and opposing imperialism. Their speeches emphasized their unity. The Soviet presenters confidently spoke not for themselves as individuals, but rather from the perspective of all Soviet youth—we, not I and our, not my are used throughout—with the delegation of 100 taking the shape of a monolithic bloc. "Soviet youth have no interests and aims that differ from the interests and aims of the Soviet people," declared one report furthering conjuring up the image a monolith that clashed with the diversity of the American delegation.<sup>36</sup>

What did the individual Soviet participants make of the conference and the presentations they delivered? Were they as patriotic and loyal to their country as they claimed? In the past when commentators attempted to understand the motivations of Soviet youth, especially those of the Komsomol, they chalked up their

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<sup>35</sup> "Soviet Youth: Its Role and Place in Society," presentation by Baglai and Danilenko, RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 45-55. See also the American description of the Soviet presentations in an NCASF published pamphlet of the conference in Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, TAM 134, Box 7, Folder 92.

<sup>36</sup> Presentation (author unlisted) "Youth in Soviet Society" in "US-USSR Youth Conference," 66-68.

support for the Soviet state and the Communist Party as either the result of forced indoctrination and coercion or a consequence of their attempt to get ahead in life and move up the Soviet social, economic or political ladders.

The archives contain little insight into how the individual Soviet participants viewed this conference.<sup>37</sup> Alexei Yurchak, however, has offered an alternative route to understanding the behavior of Soviet youth and the public at large. For Yurchak, Komsomolites of this time (what he calls “late socialism”) found pleasure in declaring their loyalty to their Party and their country because it offered them a shared sense of unity and solidarity with a dominant, official discourse guiding their actions.<sup>38</sup> Yet also by the 1970s due to the dominance of this official discourse many acts considered political, such as the speeches given at this conference, became ritualized, “hypernormalized” or performative to the point where participating in them became more important than what was said. Whether it was an editorial in *Pravda*, a speech from a Party official, or the Komsomol presentations here, official speech of all kinds became devoid of any real meaning. The “Soviet authoritative language” deployed by the Komsomol at this conference then only mimicked actual political debate because the language used by the Komsomolites here and elsewhere had long since been scripted and took on a static, ritualized form replicated everywhere.<sup>39</sup> Even, here in front of a foreign audience where one might think more creativity would be necessary, these Komsomolites apparently still produced the authoritative discourse. At future Soviet-American Youth Conferences, the Soviet delegations continued to sing a song of total harmony. At the 1981 conference, for example, the Soviet delegation shared with their American guests that “It can be said with absolute certainty that practically every Soviet person [and] all the young people of our country” support the peace policies of the Soviet leadership.<sup>40</sup>

National consensus and the image of an active, united youth were vital to Soviet propaganda. On the international stage, the Soviet Union proved expert at

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<sup>37</sup> The source base used to understand the perspectives of the Americans and Soviets differs. I have managed to interview and correspond with a few of the American participants. I have not been able to interview any Soviet participants. Moreover, the reports produced by each side differ. The American report is full of personal reflections—about the conference, the participants themselves, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The Soviet reports on the conference, by contrast, are much less personal and are written from the perspective of the KMO as an organization.

<sup>38</sup> Gleb Tsipursky has also stressed the “fun” offered to Soviet young people through participation in various state-sponsored youth groups and activities. A key task of these groups was to inculcate a spirit of patriotism. For many Soviet youth, their patriotism was indeed heartfelt. *Socialist Fun: Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1945-1970s*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More*. Gleb Tsipursky has noted that post-Thaw, the Komsomol placed great emphasis on discipline and in turn “devalue[d] grass roots voluntarism” and initiative among the country’s youth. *Socialist Fun*, 210.

<sup>40</sup> “Main Presentation of the Soviet Delegation,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 9, d. 1522, ll. 40-7. For the Soviet reports at the 1973 conference which can be read in similar ways, see RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 98-157.

manufacturing national consensus and an image of a perfect Soviet youth in large part by excluding those most likely to rebel: dissidents, minorities, actual young people—and the kinds of people included in the American delegation. Here at this conference they set up an almost Potemkin village-like depiction of their nation's youth because through a great deal of social vetting only senior Komsomol members represented the country. Therefore this article suggests the Soviet cultural show (*kult'pokaz*) presented to visitors included more than visits to carefully selected model sites (prisons, schools, factories) meant to convince foreigners of the superiority of the USSR. It also included acquaintance with carefully selected people who served as the grateful beneficiaries of Soviet progress and performed the role of happy, harmonious citizens.<sup>41</sup>

### The American Delegation

If the Soviet delegation at the 1972 conference appeared to march in lock-step, the American side looked divided. This divergence would be repeated at most of the future get-togethers. A Soviet report about the second Youth Conference in 1973 found the fragmented nature of the American side interesting and noted “during the discussion disputes arose not between the American and Soviet sides, but within the American delegation.”<sup>42</sup> At the same conference in Chicago, even the American bus driver and the tour leader, an American Communist named Jack Kling, fought openly with each other before their Soviet guests about how to present the United States to their Soviet guests during a guided tour of the city.<sup>43</sup> Another official described the make-up of the 1972 American delegation as diverse and pluralistic, features many of the Americans took pride in and something “persistently stressed” and “constantly emphasized” in the discussions and their individual speeches.<sup>44</sup> This diversity did not breed harmony, however. Several of the American participants threatened to leave the 1972 conference early because of the “sharp conflicts” plaguing the group.<sup>45</sup> “These disagreements should have

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<sup>41</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, InTourist, VOKs and other Soviet agencies working with foreigners brought visitors to model sites that to present the country as if it was on the brink of the creation of a new kind of civilization. Visits to these sites were at the heart of the Soviet cultural show which sought to convince both visitors and Soviet citizens of the superiority of the USSR. Critics of those visitors who praised the Soviet Union at this time accused them of being fooled by a new kind of Soviet Potemkin village. On Potemkin villages and model sites, see Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 98-107.

<sup>42</sup> “Report about work with Group 5,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 77-8.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Kling, the tour leader, wanted to show the seedy side of Chicago. The bus driver, Bob Prange, said Kling was “feeding them a line—the Communist line. That’s not what this city’s about. Let them see everything. Let them see the good, the bad, and the middle.” Soviet report on press coverage of the 1973 conference, including clippings from the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, l. 210-2, 217, 218.

<sup>44</sup> “Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 112-124.

<sup>45</sup> “Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 112-124

been settled before we left” because the disputes ended up harming the effectiveness of the conference and reflected poorly on the American side, recalled one American participant.<sup>46</sup>

The content and tone of the American presentations also differed sharply. While Soviet presentations championed Soviet successes and national consensus, the Americans dwelled on their country’s failures and fractures. If the Soviet delegation’s presentations can be described as performances of patriotism and unity, the American side offered up highly-individualistic performances of oppression. One speaker, Richard Simmons of the Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL, the youth wing of the American Communist Party), told the assembled audience that “We, American youth, live in a period of extreme turmoil characterized by the militarization of our economy, which has affected our youth environment with the disease of death due to war, and living death due to drugs and joblessness.”<sup>47</sup>



Small group discussion at the 1972 Conference in Minsk, TAM 134, Box 7, Folder 92.

Many of the other presentations followed the pattern laid by Simmons. Several speakers from the American side raged on their country, focusing on the poverty, racism, and violence present in the United States. Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Native American activists all advocated either separatism or national independence for their communities to prevent further “genocide” by the American government.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, a KMO report happily noted the communists within

<sup>46</sup> See the comment from Ed Rivera, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 57-64.

<sup>47</sup> “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 61.

<sup>48</sup> See the published excerpts from the speeches by Evelyn Aracon (Chicano), John Beaudin (Native American), Gabriel Ramos (Puerto Rican), in “US-USSR Youth

the American delegation took advantage of the “open tribune” and savored their opportunity to propagandize their views before their fellow Americans.<sup>49</sup> Rick Roberts, one of the American participants, said sarcastically he learned a great deal at the conference, most especially from the leftist members of the American delegation and their specific calls to nationalize certain sectors of the American economy. Other members worried the American delegation’s strong left-wing bent gave the Soviet side the wrong impression. “I would like to warn the Soviet delegation that the American delegation does not represent the United States,” wrote Jim Boldt in his post-conference comments to the Soviet organizers.<sup>50</sup>

The noticeable divide between the patriotic, optimistic Soviets on one side and the cynical Americans disappointed in their country on the other stunned many of the American attendees. Some of the Americans left the USSR impressed by the organized and confident demeanor of their Soviet counterparts. Their comradeship and unity were “so different. [A] Non-American reality,” commented one American participant.<sup>51</sup> The Soviet side’s shared sense of purpose, their optimism, altruism, and their belief that they had a constructive role to play in their society and the realization they lacked all these things struck the American participants. “Not only did I learn about the USSR, I learned about the States and about myself as well,” commented one American.<sup>52</sup> The Soviet side noticed this difference, too. As recalled by one of the Americans, a Soviet interpreter commented that the Americans appeared to lack “any collective or community spirit.” “We all seemed to look out only for ourselves,” confirmed Janet Crane, a student from the University of Wisconsin. “By the same token, I definitely did perceive this type of fellow feeling among the Soviets. And again I think it is a reflection of our societies.”<sup>53</sup> When some of the Americans strived to find common ground on the theme of alienation and disappointment, they pressed their Soviet colleagues to identify problems in their country. The Soviet side resisted. Their concerns, namely “agricultural backwardness,” drunkenness, and the lack of day care centers, might have appeared too innocuous for some of the Americans to relate to.<sup>54</sup> One “disillusioned” delegate later grumbled to the American press that the Soviets “just said the same thing over and over. When we asked about a particular problem, they would say, ‘We don’t have that problem in the Soviet Union.’”<sup>55</sup>

Refusal to acknowledge Soviet faults or offer any dissent from the party line continued at the later youth forums and was a feature of Soviet delegations at other international conferences, meetings, and seminars. This frustrated the typically frank and self-critical Americans. At the 1973 Youth Conference, for instance, the

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Conference,” 65-6, 68-9, 70-1. Racial minorities, as per the wishes of the KMO and the NCASF made up a significant portion of the American delegation.

<sup>49</sup> RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 112-124.

<sup>50</sup> Comments from American participants, RGASPI M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 57-64.

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous comment in “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 74.

<sup>52</sup> Anonymous comment in “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 75.

<sup>53</sup> Comment from Janet Crane, “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 52.

<sup>54</sup> Comment from Janet Crane, “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 51.

<sup>55</sup> Murray Seeger, “Subjected to Propaganda: Young American’s Illusions Shattered by Visit to Russia,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 1972.

Soviet delegation refused to answer questions about the status of Soviet Jews.<sup>56</sup> Other Americans participating in Soviet conferences encountered similar resistance to straying from the Party line. One American woman visiting the USSR in 1966, as part of a delegation of Quakers to participate in a two-week seminar on international issues, found “no dissenting voice to any fundamental government policy” among her Soviet colleagues. During the seminar, “when a party policy on the war in Vietnam or the Cuban missile [sic] crisis, for instance, was expressed, we would ask, ‘And does no one feel differently about this issue in any way?’ and feel like shaking the USSR participant from his unshakable statement that among 200 million people there was no one who disagreed with expressed policy.”<sup>57</sup>

### The Rejection of Consensus

The American delegation at the 1972 Youth Conference, which strikingly featured many of those previously written out of the American Cold War national narrative (students, radicals, and people of color), reflected the illusory nature of America’s national consensus and how it had been smashed by formerly excluded groups now determined to make their voices heard. Historians now speak of the American Cold War consensus as an “illusion of unity.” To manufacture a homogenous national identity and a narrative of anti-communism, whole groups of Americans needed to be excluded.<sup>58</sup> This image of consensus in the United States began to shatter in the face of the civil rights marches, anti-war protests, assassinations, and the student demonstrations that marked the 1960s and 1970s.

For American youth, especially those more-radically minded like many of those who made up the American delegation, national consensus was no longer a virtue, especially if it required the silencing of others. The NCASF, which organized the 1972 American delegation, likewise had been one of the rare voices objecting to America’s bipartisan anti-communist, anti-Soviet national mission since the late-1940s.<sup>59</sup> Besides the American Communist Party, the NCASF was the

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<sup>56</sup> Clipping from the American newspaper, *Jewish Journal*, RGASPI, M-3, op. 8. d. 691, l. 224.

<sup>57</sup> Field Report—Trip to the Soviet Union, December 1966, Betty Little, Member of American Friends Service Committee Delegation, Barbara Stuhler Papers—151. K. 16. 12F. Box 14, Minnesota History Center.

<sup>58</sup> Alan Brinkley, “The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2001), 62, 72, and Peter Filene, “Cold War Culture Doesn’t Say It All,” in *Ibid*, 157; Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, (New York: Basic Books, 1995); See also the discussion of this issue in Clare Croft, “Ballet Nations: The New York City’s Ballet 1962 US State Department-Sponsored Tour of the Soviet Union,” *Theatre Journal* 61:3 (October 2009), 438-9, 441.

<sup>59</sup> The NCASF opposed the Marshall Plan, the creation of NATO, and the Truman Doctrine, while its membership actively supported Henry Wallace’s 1948 presidential campaign on the Progressive Party ticket, see, David B. Wagner, “Alone Together: American Intellectuals in the American Soviet Friendship Movement,” (PhD Diss., University of California Riverside, 2016), 588. On other aspects of the group’s work, see Julia Tatiana Bailey, “The National Council of American-Soviet Friendship and Art in the Shadow of the Cold War,” *Archives of American Art Journal* 56:1, 2017, 42-65.

most pro-Soviet organization in the country and therefore drew upon its members and those from other radical or progressive groups to form the American delegation. Several members of the American delegation selected by the San Francisco chapter of the Friendship Society were the children of American Communists or other Soviet sympathizers.<sup>60</sup> The conference also served as an opportunity for the NCASF and the Soviet Union to attract a more youthful contingent to the cause of Soviet-American friendship. Soviet officials in the past had been consistently critical of the Soviet-American friendship groups for having a mostly geriatric base of supporters.<sup>61</sup> Following the conference, a few of the American participants planned to jump start the NCASF's youth wing and promote the USSR to American youth.<sup>62</sup>

Witnessing the display of unity on the Soviet side and the collective pride in their country and faith in their government, meanwhile, perplexed some of the American attendees. For the Americans, such beliefs had been shaken by the Vietnam War. Unlike the Soviet side whose mission in life appeared fused with the goals of the state, the Americans, with many coming from college campuses roiled by anti-war protests and student demonstrations and some being members of radical groups, had grown increasingly alienated from their home country and disillusioned with traditional politics. The Soviet side, almost all of whom were members of an official, state-sponsored youth group, could not grasp the alienation, lack of identity or the "continuing philosophical search for meaning" faced by many of the Americans, remembered one American delegate.<sup>63</sup> The Soviets were unprepared for the multiplicity of problems faced by the young Americans, confirmed the leader of the American delegation.<sup>64</sup>

At the conference, we can see how the American Cold War narrative with its united front and homogenous national identity had disintegrated. Yet, the Soviet Union's own Cold War narrative and united front appeared to hold strong—at least on the surface and especially when the USSR could be represented by senior Komsomolites. For some of the American delegates, however, the outward posture of the Soviet youth appeared too good to be true. And the Soviet emphasis on staging a show of consensus might have backfired at the conference.

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<sup>60</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 9576, op. 9, d. 105, l. 87.

<sup>61</sup> One Soviet report on the NCASF suggested the group operated in a "narrow circle" consisting mostly of pensioners of primarily Russian and Jewish descent. Spravka on the NCASF by Tamara Mamedova, 1963, GARF f. 9576, op. 18, d. 233, ll. 254-7. Prominent Soviet visitors to the US frequently met with the local friendship societies. Many were critical about the absence of young members, see the report G. L. Bondarshevskii, October 1980, GARF f. 9576, op. 20, d. 2764, ll. 43-54.

<sup>62</sup> Record of Conversation with Victoria Stevens, signed by Iu. Goriachev, September 4, 1972, GARF, f. 9576, op. 9, d. 85, ll. 148-151; Report about visits to San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle, August 18, 1972, GARF f. 9576, op. 9, d. 85, ll. 139-141.

<sup>63</sup> Comment from Janet Crane, "US-USSR Youth Conference," 13.

<sup>64</sup> Comment from Earl Scott, NCASF Minutes/Board Notes from 1972, TAM 134, Box 1, folder 52.

During the Cold War, while each side sought consensus, the accusations of enforced uniformity also became a weapon in the Cold War battle of images. The conception of the Soviet people as a monolithic bloc devoid of individuality in favor of conformity took hold in the American Cold War political imagination. This conception, often accompanied by adjectives like gray and cold to describe Soviet society, was used to critique and draw attention to the paucity of consumer goods and individual freedom in the Soviet Union. During the early Cold War, Soviet youth, in particular, were often imagined as “unthinking, conforming robot[s].”<sup>65</sup> The sameness of Soviet dress, the uniform appearance of Soviet housing blocs, and the aggressively pro-Soviet posture of the types of people, such as InTourist guides and other tourism workers, they encountered only served to accentuate this imagined picture of an ugly Soviet homogeneity for the foreigners who passed through the country.<sup>66</sup> Much like those short-term tourists who left the Soviet Union with the mistaken impression that the country marched in unison, some in the American delegation came away with a similar impression because their knowledge of the Soviet public and the country had been primarily shaped by members of the Komsomol.

At the 1972 Youth Conference, some of the American delegates rendered the appearance of consensus among Soviet youth a fault. One American remarked, “I felt young Soviets believe, very sincerely, that they are engaged in a great noble, social, political, economic experiment with the best form of government possible. The attitudes of the young people toward themselves as individuals was difficult for me, as an American, to believe. It seemed unreal.” While another concluded that although it might be a “cliché” to declare that the USSR’s youth “are pretty much alike in all but subtle ways,” this American found it to be true. “But I saw that not only do they all believe many of the same things, but that it must be like that in order for the system to maintain itself,” they concluded.<sup>67</sup> The drive for consensus had seemingly stolen their individuality and their apparent devotion to the state clashed with the anti-establishment mood of the Americans. Others questioned whether such consensus and uniformity were positive virtues. “I was surprised and worried by the lack of contradictions among people,” Jim Boldt told the KMO. “What is it for?”<sup>68</sup> Another flatly and negatively stated, “young people [here] have no contradictions.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> As Margaret Peacock has argued, Soviet authorities at the 1957 Moscow World Youth Festival actively sought to redraw this image of Soviet youth by replacing “uniformity, constancy and reliability as the idealized traits” with “artistic expression, creativity, and individualism.” Peacock, “The Perils of Building Cold War Consensus at the 1957 Moscow World Festival of Youth and Students,” *Cold War History* 12:2, 2012, 525.

<sup>66</sup> However, Americans who managed to stay in the Soviet Union for longer periods frequently rejected such notions. Making friends with a variety of Soviet people, some American visitors found Soviet citizens to be as individualistic and diverse as any. For example, Sally Belfrage, *A Room in Moscow* (New York: Reynal & Company, 1958), 182.

<sup>67</sup> The preceding quotations are all anonymous, “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 73-75.

<sup>68</sup> RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 57-64.

<sup>69</sup> Anonymous comment, “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 73.

### Breakdown of Solidarity

Reading between the lines of the American commentary on the conference one gets the sense that some on the American side considered their Soviet counterparts insufficiently radical. The performative aspects of the conference such as the carefully scripted presentations may have come off as staid to these more militant Americans accustomed to the heated debates back home on their college campuses where challenging authority stood as a virtue. While the words of the Komsomolites in opposition to war and imperialism matched the script of any progressive, the consensus on display on the Soviet side may have also smacked of conformity. One Soviet delegate even told one of the Americans, “The interests of the individual must mesh with those of society.”<sup>70</sup> Rather than challenge authority, the Soviet youth demonstrated incredible deference to their country’s leadership. In the largely sympathetic American report of the conference, the American attendees spoke of the Soviet delegation as a single mass seemingly lacking any internal diversity.<sup>71</sup> No names or individual characteristics of any of the Soviet delegates could be recalled and few personal interactions remembered. Even two of the three Soviet speeches included in the American report, later published as a pamphlet, lacked the name of the presenter.

Others were more upfront about their disappointment in the Soviet Union’s failure to live up to their radical standards. Alan Bernstein chastised the Soviet Union for abandoning proletarian internationalism in favor of peaceful co-existence and argued the Soviet Union no longer adhered to “true Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>72</sup> This was a common sentiment shared by many radicals, especially radical youth in the late 1960s and 1970s. For them, the Soviet Union was no longer synonymous with radicalism and in their search for inspiration their attention turned towards other seemingly more radical (and non-European) societies—Cuba, China, North Vietnam.<sup>73</sup>

Another critic, Michael Cutting, found the Soviet Union out of step on the issue of race. He and others rejected the Soviet insistence on prioritizing class over race. “They kept telling us everything in the world is a class problem, but I know it is more of a color problem.” He continued: “they wanted us to organize the blacks, the Chicanos, the youth and the women in to a single class organization.”<sup>74</sup> The Soviet organizers then failed to appreciate the importance of race to the American participants and the flowering of the ethnic pride movement

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<sup>70</sup> “US-USSR Youth Conference,” 46.

<sup>71</sup> The report was published as a stand-alone pamphlet titled, “The First-Ever USA-USSR Youth Conference—Minsk, Byelorussia, 1972,” and can be found in TAM 134, Box 7, Folder 92. The pamphlet was reprinted as “US-USSR Youth Conference, Minsk, 1972”, *New World Review*, Winter 1973, 41-77 and this version has been cited throughout the paper.

<sup>72</sup> Bernstein made these comments to KMO, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 57-64.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Niek Pas, “European Radicals and the ‘Third World:’ Imagined Solidarities and Radical Networks, 1958-73,” *Cultural and Social History*, 8:4, 450.

<sup>74</sup> Murray Seeger, “Subjected to Propaganda: Young American’s Illusions Shattered by Visit to Russia,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 1972.

in the US. Moreover, the Soviet organizers failed to understand these Americans were representatives of the New Left, not the Old Left who closely identified with the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s and whose focal point was class.<sup>75</sup> The American side, which included many racial minorities, had requested that a significant portion of the Soviet delegation be composed of (Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, etc.) people who they considered to be the Soviet Union's own racial minorities and people who they could find common ground. This wish was not granted, however.

The Soviet attempt to formalize proceedings, replete with official ceremonies, led to other unexpected occurrences and reversals. Such ceremonies and the efforts to treat the diverse set of individuals who made up the American delegation as a single national delegation, according to one Soviet report, inadvertently revived feelings of patriotism among some of the typically left-wing American attendees. This made them feel responsible for their behavior as citizens of a "great country," even though the Americans initially believed they represented only themselves. According to the same report, this caused some of the Americans to adopt a patriotic position, defending their country under a barrage of criticism—America was genocidal and cannibalistic according to some of the speeches, while no one appeared to utter anything resembling criticism of the Soviet Union—and questioning the Soviet Union even though such stances conflicted with their beliefs.<sup>76</sup> Even Charles White, a self-described Maoist from Howard University who wore a Mao button to the conference (which organizers forced him to remove), said he never felt more American or conservative than at the conference. "In the United States, I am considered left of the left. Here, I felt as if I were to the right of George Wallace."<sup>77</sup> So, while the posture of unity present among the Soviet delegation led some of the American attendees to grow more conscious of their alienation, the constant attacks on their country brought some of feuding Americans back together again.

The Soviet side expected the American delegation to be made up of progressive youth, who, like Simmons, would express opposition to their government. One lengthy Soviet report of the 1972 conference acknowledged the American side did not field a delegation representative of American youth in general.<sup>78</sup> This

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<sup>75</sup> The Soviet insistence on prioritizing class over race stirred dissension among a previous generation of African American visitors to the Soviet Union, see Meredith L. Roman, *Opposing Jim Crow: African Americans and the Soviet Indictment of U.S. Racism, 1928-1937* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

<sup>76</sup> "Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth," RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 112-124.

<sup>77</sup> "U.S. Maoist Youth Finds Soviet a Doctrinaire Place," *New York Times*, July 11, 1972.

<sup>78</sup> "Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth," RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 112-124. The New Left fascinated and perplexed Soviet officials and they repeatedly misjudged them. Most New Left adherents sought a fresh break from the past and a new form of participatory democracy. Few New Leftists were pro-Soviet and many condemned the US and the USSR in equal measure. The New Leftists from various countries caused problems at other Soviet sponsored conferences and festivals, Pia Koivunen, "Overcoming

clashed with the original goal, promoted in a series of press releases and official statements, of sending a diverse group to see the Soviet Union for themselves and represent the United States. Yet, the initial talk of representativeness seemed to be mostly just lip-service. And the KMO did not seem to mind this discrepancy and even desired it. Indeed, in the opening statement of the conference, a Soviet representative characterized the American guests as purely progressive young people who “mov[ed] in the vanguard of the anti-war movement” and were battling the scourges of racism and social inequality.<sup>79</sup> For young people to be anything other than progressive seemed unimaginable for the KMO and the Soviet participants.<sup>80</sup>

For many of the Soviet-sponsored international conferences and seminars, the KMO and other Soviet organizations used already established relationships with non-state organizations, in this case with the NCASF a left-wing, deeply pro-Soviet group, to procure foreign audiences and delegations favorable to the Soviet Union. For this conference, Soviet officials actively involved themselves in the formation of the American delegation. For the Minsk conference, Soviet officials advocated spots for Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL) members (15 total) and other communists.<sup>81</sup> A few Maoists however appeared to sneak through the vetting process. This delegation proved favorable to the Soviet Union with some of the other American delegates joking that the YWLL members acted as delegates for the “other side.”<sup>82</sup> In the end, they “helped create a benevolent atmosphere” and their presence neutralized the “right-wingers and Maoists” otherwise present on the American side according to the KMO.<sup>83</sup> The YWLL, a small fringe group and the youth wing of the American Communist Party, had been a favored ally and previously given the opportunity by the KMO to serve as the face

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Cold War Boundaries at the World Youth Festivals,” in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, ed., Sari Autio and Katalin Miklóssy (London: Routledge, 2011), 182-3.

<sup>79</sup> “Presentation before participants,” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 20-8.

<sup>80</sup> Despite the left-wing orientation of the delegation, one participant, Lucious Thomas from Chicago, still complained that the American delegation included the “most dishonorable, racist, pro-imperialist rightists, the worst I’ve ever seen in my life.” RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 299, ll. 57-64.

<sup>81</sup> The NCASF and KMO gave a certain number of slots to the YWLL. Morford letter to Kavartardaze, May 24, 1972 RGASPI, M-3, op. 8, d. 435, ll. 159-60. Per negotiations between Jarvis Tyner, the head of the YWLL and a high-ranking CPUSA official, Richard Morford of the NCASF and a Soviet official, the American delegation would include 15 people from the YWLL. Tyner appeared to want Victoria Stevens, a YWLL member, to be the leader of the American delegation. Morford disagreed because he believed the other members would resent the influence of the YWLL. Earl Scott, the NCASF’s youth director, instead ended up in charge of the delegation. Morford promised the conference organizers Scott would be a trusted substitute. Scott too was a Communist Party member, but importantly no one knew it. “Record of a conversation with Richard Morford,” signed by Iu. Goriachev, dated June 6, 1972, GARF f. 9576, op. 9, d. 102, l. 67.

<sup>82</sup> “Their politics are easy to sum up: the Soviet Union is best country in the world.” Lars Lih, “Account of trip to the Soviet Union.”

<sup>83</sup> Report about the meeting of Soviet and American Youth, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 112-124.

of American youth at other Soviet-sponsored youth events.<sup>84</sup> Tom Abraham, an American participant, identified a key difference between the Soviet and American delegations. The Soviet side had been carefully selected and vetted. “The Soviet side is supported [by] and supports the state,” he wrote. The American side, on the other hand, had been pulled together “by a small private organization” haphazardly from many sources and the result produced a messy and fractious delegation, dominated at times by the best organized and loudest contingent within it, the YWLL.<sup>85</sup>

At these future Soviet-American Youth Conferences a similar, slightly less dramatic spectacle would be repeated because Soviet officials, doggedly determined to present their youth as a united patriotic front, continued to field entire rosters made up exclusively of Party and Komsomol members—a scene of consensus only further heightened by the factious and usually radical nature of the American delegations. The 1972 conference therefore rather than provide an accurate snapshot of these two nations and their respective youth instead produced a distorted, fun-house-esque mirror version of both sides in which Soviet “youth” appeared as a monolithic bloc of devoted patriots and the American side as a rag-tag group of alienated radicals. Two unhappy American participants, speaking to the American press after the conference, castigated the event as a set-up and a farce.<sup>86</sup> For some the conference served as another Soviet propaganda stunt only this time cloaked in détente-era platitudes of open dialogue and the search for better understanding yet ultimately offering neither. Moreover, the conference failed to achieve its primary goal of fostering solidarity between American and Soviet youth. Solidarity failed to materialize in Minsk because the two sides struggled to relate to each other. The American side was too radical, alienated, and divorced from the mainstream (an inadvertent consequence of Soviet meddling in the formation of the delegation) and the Soviet side, who were often a decade older than the Americans, occupied the altogether opposite position by appearing too conformist and satisfied with their lives and country.

## Conclusion

These annual Youth Conferences, which rotated between the US and the USSR, would continue through the early 1980s and several hundred young Soviets and Americans would participate in these events.<sup>87</sup> For the USSR, the example

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<sup>84</sup> For example, Questionnaires of participants at the World Meeting of Working Youth (Moscow, 1972), RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 335, ll. 104-8.

<sup>85</sup> Comments collected by KMO, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 8, d. 575, ll. 57-64.

<sup>86</sup> To combat such criticism, the NCASF organized a press conference where some of the American participants accused the critics of seeking to drive a wedge between Soviet and American youth. “US-USSR Young People’s Conference: A Preliminary Report,” *New World Review*, Summer 1972, 16-18.

<sup>87</sup> By 1983 the conference would be renamed the Forum for American-Soviet Dialogue (although it was occasionally called the Meeting of Soviet-American Youth) and professionalized with the American side now largely featuring professionals and even Soviet experts. List of American delegates and staff, RGASPI f. M-3, op. 11, d. 154c, ll. 1, 3-7.

of these conferences attests to the determination on the part of the KMO and the Soviet authorities to seek careful contact with young people beyond their borders and showcase the unity and consensus of Soviet youth. For the individual American participants, the continuation of these conferences demonstrated the great desire of some in the US to meet Soviet people their own age, travel past the “Iron Curtain,” and the resonance of the détente-era message promoted by the conference about the potential of such people-to-people exchanges to break down barriers and reduce Cold War tensions. The conference offered them the very real possibility to participate personally in détente.<sup>88</sup>

The 1972 conference overall served as a sort of microcosm of Soviet policy toward visitors.<sup>89</sup> Contact was sought but it had to be controlled and shaped into an agreeable form. Organizers privileged formal speeches over open-ended discussions and approached the whole situation didactically, as a way to teach ignorant foreigners about the achievements of the USSR. Soviet officials involved themselves in the formation of the American delegation to secure a group of Americans considered more favorable to the USSR and one more likely to go along with the Soviet wish for transnational youth solidarity on Soviet terms. Moreover, the YWLL members and the other ultra-radicals that made up a significant portion of the American delegation offered only the familiar image of a cruel, exploitative America to a Soviet audience made up almost exclusively of Party and Komsomol members, who likewise confirmed many of the stereotypes westerners already had of Soviet youth. Therefore, this conference rather than demolish Cold War stereotypes only served to confirm them in the minds of many of its participants. All the differences between the delegations, meanwhile, existed alongside and unintentionally challenged one of the main messages of the conference and a common détente-era cliché, especially prominent in American peace circles, that “they’re just like us.” The 1972 Youth Conference also illustrated how foreign visitors made of the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union what they wanted. Many visitors, as occurred here, upon close examination drew their own conclusions about Soviet society while rejecting aspects of the Soviet cultural show and its self-representations.

### **About the Author**

Andrew Jacobs completed his doctorate in Russian history at Indiana University in 2019. His dissertation titled “Contact and Control: Americans Visit the Soviet Union, 1956-1985” explores the experiences of American visitors to the USSR during the Cold War and the ways in which their Soviet hosts both welcomed them and sought to manage their Soviet experience.

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<sup>88</sup> The desire for a peaceful conclusion to the Cold War became the primary rallying cry for the American participants in the conferences by the mid-1970s, see The American-Soviet Youth Forum’s brochures and statement of purpose, TAM 134, Box 9, Folder 27.

<sup>89</sup> For an overview of the experiences of some American visitors to the post-Stalin USSR, see Andrew Jacobs, “Contact and Control: Americans Visit the Soviet Union, 1956-1985,” PhD. Diss., Indiana University, 2019.

## Book Reviews

Shaun Walker, *The Long Hangover: Putin's New Russia and the Ghosts of the Past*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 253 pp., plus notes, index and illustrations. Hardcover, \$29.95.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and its people have grappled with a crisis that is not atypical for nations with a troubled past—the question of how to create a new identity that incorporates the positive achievements of its history. Shaun Walker's book, *The Long Hangover: Putin's New Russia and the Ghosts of the Past*, is a study of Vladimir Putin's popularity in Russia and his use of memory politics and Soviet nostalgia to create a new national identity of which modern Russians can be proud. In the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, the Russian people were left with a sense of confusion and emptiness. Their nation, a superpower for decades, had crumbled and long-buried secrets were exposed to the scrutiny of the world. From the time Vladimir Putin became president in 2000, one of his chief concerns has been the construction of a new sanitized version of Russia's history, one that selectively focuses on the nation's best and most heroic moments, particularly its victory over the Nazis in World War Two. This carefully curated image would satisfy the desires of the Russian people who needed an outlet for their patriotism. The generation of Russians who witnessed the end of the communist system are often sentimental about the past, but for the most part they do not long for the resurrection of the Soviet Union; what they want is the sense that Russia is still a strong and respected nation. Putin strategically elevated the victory over Germany to new heights, harnessing the people's thirst for purpose and meaning to weave together a new mythology of Russian greatness. Not surprisingly, this agenda necessarily involves a great deal of state-sponsored whitewashing and forgetting.

Walker is the Moscow correspondent for *The Guardian* and has spent a great deal of time in Russia, on the ground, witnessing the events and atmosphere of Putin's presidency. He was, for example, in Crimea

and Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine, during the events of 2014. His presence there allows him to explain the conflicts through its historical roots and through conversations with individuals on all sides. In Crimea, he reports that while few people were passionately pro-Ukraine and a larger number were pro-Russian, most residents were fairly neutral. The real longing was for stability and sense of meaning. In the end, however, Putin succeeded in taking Crimea for Russia, appealing to leaders within the region with promises of political appointments and financial support. When the question was put to a vote, officials' claims showed overwhelming support, but this failed to show that many Crimean Tatars and pro-Ukrainians boycotted the referendum. The situation in eastern Ukraine was similarly complicated, as Walker describes that there were indeed many pro-Russian individuals in Donetsk, but also a great deal of "fake news," Russian propaganda, and the presence of Russian soldiers. Walker's actual presence during and after these conflicts makes these sections particularly interesting and enlightening, and his conversations with both the actors in and the helpless victims of these events brings an authenticity to his work and reminds us of the human cost of Putin's plan to make Russia great again. To his credit, Walker also avoids one of the pitfalls of some journalistic writing; while much of his book is based on personal experiences and interviews, he keeps the focus on his subjects, not himself.

Similarly, Putin inherited the problem of a rebellious Chechnya when he became president and ending the conflict was a major priority. The Chechens had suffered greatly under the Soviet regime. Tens of thousands had been purged in the 1930s, and during World War Two, nearly half a million people had been deported to the Kazakh steppe, accused of collaboration with the Nazis. At least twenty-five percent of those deported died within the first four years. Now, as Putin tried to crush the current rebellion, the Chechen people suffered again as Russia bombed Grozny, claiming that the goal was protection, not defeat. Putin's ultimate victory, however, was the conversion of the local leader Akhmad Kadyrov and, after Akhmad's death, his son Ramzan, who struck a cynical deal with the president—money and personal power in exchange for peace and forgetting. In the first decade of Putin's presidency huge amounts of money were funneled into Chechnya, rebuilding Grozny and lining Ramzan's pockets. Ramzan was given free rein to settle old scores and crush any opponents of the new pro-Russian agenda. The acceptable story was that Chechnya had been liberated by Russia and anyone who questioned the narrative did so at the risk of torture and/or death.

There is one major problem with Walker's book, however, one that may already be evident from the content of this review: *The Long Hangover* is really two books in one. Walker promises in his introduction and first chapters to demonstrate how Putin harnessed contemporary pride in the Soviet defeat of the Nazis to create a sanitized version of history that provides a sense of meaning and national identity in a post-Soviet world. But then he spends the majority of his book (seven out of twelve chapters) explaining the complex events in Crimea and Ukraine. He dedicates one chapter to the Olympics in Sochi, but it is mysteriously short (only six pages) and fails to fully tie in his purported thesis. Other sections discuss Chechnya and Kolyma, a remote area in Russia's far east that served for decades

as an enormous prison colony for the Gulag system. These sections mention the Soviet victory in World War Two, but focus more on the state-inspired forgetting of Soviet crimes and atrocities in contemporary Russia.

This shortcoming of Walker's book is unfortunate because the question of how contemporary Russians deal with the Soviet past while still retaining a feeling of national pride is a fascinating one. As Walker aptly explains, many Russians today mourn the loss of Russian greatness that was part of the Soviet past, but for the most part this has nothing to do with Lenin or Communism. In 1991, Russians "experienced a triple loss ... The political system imploded, the imperial periphery broke away to form new states, and the home country itself ceased to exist." On an emotional and philosophical level, Russians had lost "not an empire or an ideology, but the very essence of their identity." He points out that while many people remember the Soviet period with more affection than they probably felt at the time, memory is fickle and malleable and can be manipulated by one's own needs and the influence of outside forces. As the architect of the post-Soviet narrative for contemporary Russia, Putin has been a master manipulator, offering a message of stability and glory through the reestablishment of Russian international strength and a selective narrative of Russian historical greatness.

The utilization of the Soviet victory in World War Two, historically a rallying point for Russian patriotism, to create a new cult of the Great War deserves a greater place in Walker's book, if his intent is to fully explore his thesis. One recent manifestation of this growth of World War Two celebration is the Victory Day event known as the march of the "Immortal Regiment." Conceived in 2011 by three journalists in Tomsk, the event involves a parade of individuals carrying portraits of their relatives who fought in or experienced the Second World War. The first year, 2012, the parade in Tomsk included about 6000 locals. The numbers grew as the movement spread to other cities, and the nature of the event changed from a popular procession to one that became state controlled with mandatory displays of patriotism and the appearance of Soviet and Stalinist symbols. Since 2015, Putin and other top Russian officials have participated. In 2019, an approximate 750,000 people marched in the parade in Moscow alone. Walker's book, published in 2018, fails to even mention the Immortal Regiment movement, an enormous oversight in a study that claims to explore Putin's exploitation of Russia's victory in the war. Anyone who has spent time in Russia or interacted with educated Russians who seemingly gloss over Soviet sins and praise the actions of their president will find Walker's omission of the Immortal Regiment and other Sovietesque acts of patriotism frustrating. Still, Walker's book is well written and his chapters on Crimea and Ukraine are interesting and useful in understanding the complexities of the crisis there. One wishes, however, that he had written a separate volume solely on these areas and more completely explored the search for Russian identity under Putin in the current volume.

Lee A. Farrow  
Auburn University at Montgomery

James Carl Nelson, *The Polar Bear Expedition: The Heroes of America's Forgotten Invasion of Russia, 1918-1919*. New York: William Morrow, 2019. Viii + 309 pp.

The stories of US military interventions in the Russian Civil War have continued to draw chroniclers in the twenty-first century. In 2001 Carol Willcox Melton, a professor at Elon College, published *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1921* (Mercer University Press, 2001). Following in the footsteps of Betty M. Unterberger, Melton reiterated the view that Woodrow Wilson sent US soldiers to Vladivostok in order to rescue the supposedly beleaguered Czechoslovak legion and facilitate humanitarian relief while remaining neutral in the struggle between various Russian forces. The next year two other professors, Donald Davis and Eugene Trani, presented a strikingly different perspective in *The First Cold War: The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson in U.S.-Soviet Relations* (University of Missouri Press, 2002). While concentrating on the interventions at Vladivostok and Archangel in only one chapter, Davis and Trani insightfully argued that those expeditions were part of a broader Wilsonian effort to accelerate the demise of the Bolshevik regime. Then Robert L. Willett, a Florida resident who had traveled to the Russian Far East in 1998 as a member of the Citizen Democracy Corps, produced *Russian Sideshow: America's Undeclared War, 1918-1920* (Brassey's, 2003). Willett was more critical than Melton of President Wilson's misguided decision to intervene, but refrained from taking a clear stand on different interpretations of the episode and focused instead on the experiences of US soldiers—"a tale of heroism, hardship, cowardice, and comradeship" that ended with the loss of 446 American lives in northern Russia and Northeast Asia. More recently, Carl J. Richard, a professor at the University of Louisiana, published *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013). Elaborating on ideas he first presented in an article in 1986, Richard argued that Wilson originally intended to help Czechoslovaks and patriotic Russians rebuild an eastern front against the Central Powers but after the end of World War I he left the US expedition in eastern Siberia in order to assist the overthrow of Bolshevism and to contain Japanese expansionism.

Now James Nelson, a former journalist who published three books about US military experiences in the First World War, has written a new account of the military expedition to northern Russia. Nelson's subtitle appears to be an allusion to a statement by one of the leading critics of Wilsonian policy toward Russia, Senator Hiram Johnson, who welcomed the return of the 339<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment to Detroit in July 1919 by saying, "To have done their duty as they did it marks every one of these boys a hero, for all time to come" (p. 272). Drawing on limited research in records of the American Expeditionary Force to North Russia at the National Archives, as well as memoirs by veterans of the expedition, Nelson colorfully retells the stories of their fights against Bolshevik troops who greatly outnumbered them. He clearly shows that many of the American doughboys had little understanding of why they had been sent to "the hostile wilds of north Rus-

sia” (p. 281). Yet his own analysis of Wilsonian motivations is not very incisive. “Woodrow Wilson had sent in troops with instructions to guard stores [of military supplies at Archangel] and stay the hell out of Russia’s internal affairs” (p. 275), he simply concludes. Nelson’s lack of familiarity with many scholarly studies of Wilson’s decision-making, including the books by Richard and Davis and Trani mentioned above as well as an earlier book by this reviewer, seems to have contributed to his having little more understanding of US policies than the soldiers of “Detroit’s Own” regiment.

Historians of Russian-American relations may find it valuable that Nelson’s book contains reproductions of a number of photographs from the Polar Bear Expedition collection at the Bentley Historical Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan. However, they will find little else of value in this work of popular military history.

David Foglesong  
Rutgers University

Michael Pullara, *The Spy Who Was Left Behind: Russia, the United States, and the True Story of the Betrayal and Assassination of a CIA Agent*. New York: Scribner, 2018. 322 pages, plus illustrations, appendix, and index. Hardcover, \$28.00.

In August, 1993, Freddie Woodruff, a branch chief for the CIA in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, was shot in the head and killed while riding in the back seat of a car driven by the chief bodyguard for the president of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze. According to officials in the Clinton administration, Woodruff was in charge of training Shevardnadze’s security forces, a joint project of the CIA and US Special Forces. Woodruff had reportedly been on a sightseeing trip in the mountainous Georgian countryside when struck and the seriousness of the injury and the remoteness of the location had made it impossible to save him. Nine days after the murder, the Georgian government declared the case solved, announcing that the shooting was an accident, the carelessness of a twenty-one-year-old off-duty soldier who had drunkenly fired at the car Woodruff was riding in when it failed to stop. Within a few short months, the young soldier was tried and convicted to fifteen years in prison.

Michael Pullara, the author of *The Spy Who Was Left Behind: Russia, the United States, and the True Story of the Betrayal and Assassination of a CIA Agent*, is an attorney who grew up in Searcy, Arkansas, where Freddie Woodruff and his family also lived. When he read about Woodruff’s death in the *New York Times*, he was intrigued by the story and suspicious of the circumstances and explanation of the shooting. He was especially interested in the possible connection between the murder and the arrest only a few months later of CIA agent Aldrich Ames for espionage. Ames had been chief of an antinarcotics intelligence task force in the Black Sea region and had been in Tbilisi a week before the shooting. At the time of his arrest, the FBI suspected that Ames had betrayed at least ten CIA agents spying on the USSR, leading to their deaths. As this story unfolded over

the next year or so and the CIA began to question the story of Woodruff's death, Georgian officials changed their tune and asserted that a successor organization to the KGB's foreign operations and intelligence branch was behind the murder. At the same time, the "press"—Pullara does not specify where—revealed that at the time of the trial, the convicted soldier has claimed that he had been tortured into confessing. This jumble of claims prompted Pullara to submit several Freedom of Information Act requests in 1997, and thus began his search for the truth.

What followed was a decade and a half of research, interviews, and secret meetings in the United States, England, Georgia, and Russia. Pullara spoke with a wide variety of people, from Woodruff's sister, who still lived in Searcy, to Georgian President Shevardnadze. With the help of an intrepid translator, he interviewed virtually everyone involved in the case at all levels, including the other individuals in the car, the accused murderer, the attorneys, and a cast of shady characters. Pullara enjoys regaling his reader with stories of bribes paid, unusual meetings, and the danger he faced by investigating a case that others wanted to forget. In the end, Pullara believes he comes as close to the truth as anyone is likely to get. Spoiler alert: Woodruff's death was not an accident.

Pullara's book is informative, as much for the story of his investigation as for his descriptions of post-Soviet Georgia and its corrupt political and security networks. There are many agencies, sub-agencies, and information services in this case, and the sheer number of them can be a bit confusing at times. As one might expect in this type of book, the author gets a little too self-absorbed at times, focusing on his own role in the examination instead of the tangled tale itself. Moreover, the book lacks citations of any sort, failing to include even a bibliography, so readers are left wondering about sources. Nonetheless, those who are intrigued by the world of spies and post-Soviet espionage will find the book an interesting read.

Lee A. Farrow  
Auburn University at Montgomery

William J. Burns, *The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for its Renewal*. New York: Random House, 2019. 501 pages, and index. Hardcover, \$32.00.

Over the past forty years, American diplomatic relations with many nations in the world have gone through many changes. The end of the Cold War and the 9-11 attacks radically altered the way American foreign policy has been conducted. William J. Burns' memoir, *The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal*, documents a career in the American foreign service that took him to many of the most critical parts of the world.

Burns' career spanned from the Reagan to the Trump administration. His nearly forty years public service started with a failure in Lebanon in 1983. The attack on the U.S. Marine barracks rattled the Reagan administration and also

proved to be a defining event in Burns' career. His service under the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations allowed Burns to work closely with James Baker. Burns credits Baker's wisdom and expertise with helping ease the end of the Cold War and help him develop as a diplomat. He spent most of his time between the Soviet Union (and later Russia) and Lebanon and other areas of that region. The early part of the memoir is less detailed than the later sections on Russia under Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev.

Burns' work in the 2000s under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama in Russia in particular illuminate a great deal about attempts by the United States to foster better relations with Russia in this new era. While this era in Russian-American relations was quite complicated and Burns reveals much about how and why the U.S. took the positions that it did, his account also reveals much about how and why Putin, Medvedev, Obama, and Clinton were re-establishing better Russian-American relations. Burns acknowledges that both sides many mistakes and competing interests did not allow the relations to improve, but rather deteriorate.

Throughout the memoir, Burns emphasizes the centrality of the State Department in American diplomacy. Burns drives home the point that American diplomacy, especially the State Department, has been diminished over the past three years of the Trump administration under Secretaries of States, Rex Tillerson and Mike Pompeo. Burns argues that the drift away from diplomacy and toward military responses needs to be reversed to avoid escalating conflicts. His role in the negotiating the Iran nuclear agreement supports this argument, but the abandonment of this agreement by the Trump administration further drives Burns to make this point.

The memoir is instructive and revealing, but the lack of detail early in the book leaves the reader with more questions than answers, especially about his work in Lebanon that he would return to later in his career. The later sections are more detailed, but also seem to give an aura of caution related to some of the most pressing matters in the relations with Russia during the Obama administration, in particular the story of the Magnitsky Act of 2012 which is not even mentioned in the work.

In the end, most political memoirs are cautious by design and Burns' work continues that tradition. However, his life and career illustrate clearly a person dedicated to public service who recognizes and is concerned about the current state of professional diplomacy in the United States. It is a worthwhile read for scholars of Russian-American relations.

William Benton Whisenhunt  
College of DuPage

## Field Notes

### **Conference: Concepts of Conflict and Concord in Russian and European History, September 2019, Ekaterinburg, Russia**

On 3-4 September 2019 the Ural Humanities Institute of the Ural Federal University (Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation) sponsored an international conference, “Concepts of Conflict and Concord in Russian and European History.” The organizers were Professors James White and Sergei Sokolov, and their intent is to co-edit a volume of essays based on papers from this conference and related proceedings under the conflict and concord rubric. There were five panels, each with two-three participants reading papers in Russian or English. Topics ranged from “Conflict, Concord, and the Theory of Colonial Revolution” (Konstantin Bugrov, Ural Federal University), to “How the Anti-Slavery Movement in the West Influenced those Involved with the Liberation of Serfs in Russia” (Shane O’Rourke, York University, UK), and on to “Conflicted Loyalties: Emperor Nicholas II and His Imperial High Command, February 1917” (Bruce Menning, University of Kansas).

### **ASEEES Conference: November, 2019, San Francisco, California – Program Highlights**

A.

“Cold War Citizen Diplomacy”

Discussant: Lyubov Ginzburg, Independent Scholar

Chair: Jennifer Hudson, U of Texas at Dallas

The Belief in Soviet-American Musical Encounters During the Cold War

Meri Herral, U of Helsinki (Finland);

Official, Professional, and Personal: Finnish-Soviet Artistic Networks in Context

Simo Mikkonen, U of Jyväskylä (Finland);

Global Citizens Defy Star Wars: How Spacebridges Promoted Star Peace

Jennifer Hudson, U of Texas at Dallas

## B.

“Revolution from Abroad and Internal Dissension: Émigré Anti-Communism and the Cold War”

Chair: Jennifer Hudson, U of Texas at Dallas

Discussant: Laurie Manchester, Arizona State U

Soviet Emigres and Old Russian Socialists during the Cold War: Hopes and Disappointments

Alexey Antoshin, Ural Federal U (Russia);

Judgment in Moscow? Returning Dissenters and the Struggle for Political Authority in Moscow and Kiev, 1987-1991.

Manfred Zeller, Bremen U;

Emigre Anti-Communism meets American Philanthropy: The Ford Foundation’s East European Fund, 1950-1955

Benjamin Tromly, U of Puget Sound

## C.

“Religious dimension of Russian-American imagology: from the Tsarist Empire to Putin’s Russia”

Chair: Lee Farrow, Auburn U at Montgomery

Discussant: David Holloway, Stanford University

How did religion frame American perception of the Late Tsarist Empire

Victoria Zhuravleva, Russian State U for the Humanities (Russia);

Religious aspect of the Soviet dissident movement in representations of the US media

Nadezhda Azhghikina, Lomonosov Moscow State U (Russia), PEN Moscow;

Mastering the American style: religious motives in the modern Russian political rhetoric

Aleksandr Okun, Samara U (Russia);

## D.

““Believing in Peace and Freedom: Soviet Citizens and Foreign Friends during the Cold War””

Roundtable Member: Alexis Peri, Boston U

Roundtable Member: David Foglesong, Rutgers, The State U of New Jersey

Roundtable Member: Christine Varga-Harris, Illinois State U

Roundtable Member: Matthias Neumann, U of East Anglia (UK)

Chair: Choi Chatterjee, California State U, Los Angeles

## E.

“American Belief (or not) in the Bolshevik Revolution”

Chair: Lee Farrow, U of Kansas

Roundtable Member: Lee Farrow, Auburn U at Montgomery

Roundtable Member: Matt Miller, U of Northwestern-St. Paul

Roundtable Member: Lyubov Ginzburg, Independent Scholar

F.

“The New Cold War and the Magnitsky Act”

Chair: Choi Chatterjee, California State University, Los Angeles

Roundtable Member: Mitchell A. Orenstein, University of Pennsylvania

Roundtable Member: Barbara Brigitte Walker, University of Nevada, Reno

Roundtable Member: Denise J. Youngblood, University of Vermont

Roundtable Member: Victoria I. Zhuravleva, Russian State University for the Humanities

**CEERES of Voices: Ben Whisenhunt – Slavica Publishers, Americans in Revolutionary Russia Series, with William Nickell – January 26, 2020, 3-4pm – Seminary Coop Bookstore, Chicago, IL.**

<https://www.semcoop.com/event/ben-whisenhunt-slavica-publishers-americans-revolutionary-russia-series>

### **Three New Books!**

Slavica Publishers has just published three new books in the series, “Americans in Revolutionary Russia,” edited by Norman E. Saul and William Benton Whisenhunt.

[https://slavica.indiana.edu/series/Americans\\_in\\_Revolutionary\\_Russia](https://slavica.indiana.edu/series/Americans_in_Revolutionary_Russia)