



IPGNY

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Russian Revolution: A Contested Legacy

Curated by Masha Chlenova

A century in pursuit of
individual freedoms through
printed works of the Russian
avant-garde and works by
contemporary artists
Yevgeniy Fiks and Anton Ginzburg

October 12 - December 16, 2017





Introduction

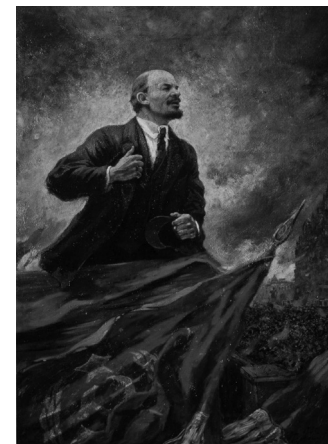
by Masha Chlenova

In 2011, artist Yevgeniy Fiks, who was born in Moscow and has lived and worked in New York since 1994, did a staged reading in Moscow, on the sites of recent violent crimes committed against people of African descent, of an essay entitled “Soviet Russia and the Negro” (1923) by the African-American poet and activist Claude McKay. McKay’s essay was inspired by his 1922 visit to Moscow as an invited speaker at the Fourth Congress of Communist International. There, he spoke about solidarity between “all workers of the world regardless of race or color” in the struggle for social justice. For McKay, Soviet Russia in 1922 embodied freedom and equality, and he found that the fledgling socialist state was implementing the values that African-Americans were seeking at home. Fiks’s artistic strategy—using this juxtaposition to evoke a specific, historical moment of idealistic social aspirations within the grim reality of growing xenophobia in today’s Russia—provokes our reflection on both.

The exhibition *Russian Revolution: A Contested Legacy* at IPCNY uses a similar strategy. It celebrates the centennial of the Russian revolution by highlighting those genuine objectives that are important to preserve today: namely its pursuit of individual freedoms, such as the emancipation of women; racial equality and the rights of ethnic minorities (especially Jews) as part of a push towards internationalism; and sexual and gay liberation. While the rhetoric of individual freedoms and civil rights in the Soviet Union outlived their actual implementation and thus largely lost credibility by the mid- to late 1930s, it is important to remember the real gains that did take place, even if their lifespan was limited. The exhibition’s narrative combines broadly outlined issues such as internationalism and women’s emancipation, illustrated with iconic graphic works of the Russian avant-garde such as agitational posters by Gustav Klucis, Elizaveta Ignatovich, and Sergei Sen’kin, with snapshots of individual experiences, such as Claude McKay’s travels to the Soviet Union or El Lissitzky’s continued preoccupation with traditional Jewish culture, as evidenced in his Yiddish publications in the early 1920s. New light is shed on some of the most poignant aspects of the early Soviet



Yevgeniy Fiks
*Leniniana no. 1 (after Aleksandr Gerasimov
“V.I. Lenin on the Tribune”)*, 2008
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Sator, Paris
Image © 2017 Yevgeniy Fiks



Aleksandr Gerasimov
V. I. Lenin on the Tribune, 1929-30
Oil on canvas
State Historical Museum, Moscow

revolutionary years thanks to contemporary takes on these facets of history by Russian-born, New York-based artists Yevgeniy Fiks and Anton Ginzburg. Their work reflects their sustained interest in the highest aspirations of Soviet revolutionary culture, combined with a critical perspective from today’s vantage point. The exhibition’s ultimate goal is to underscore our shared historical responsibility towards revolutionary history in all its complexity, and to advocate for the continued protection of individual freedoms, which remains just as relevant today, in Russia, the United States, and the world at large.

The exhibition starts with a painting from Yevgeniy Fiks’s *Leniniana* series, in which the artist repaints some of the best known portraits of the revolutionary leader, but erases his figure from the compositions thus signaling a lacuna of memory—a deliberate erasure by censorship or a forgetting and distortion brought about by layers of historical circumstances. In this work Fiks invokes one of the most iconic early portraits of Lenin painted by Aleksandr Gerasimov in 1929-30. Painted without a commission, this inspiring, romanticized portrait of a revolutionary hero who rises high above the masses against the background of gathering storm clouds, propelled by the arrow-like diagonal of the fluttering red flags, struck a chord with the Soviet masses and authorities alike. Widely popular, the painting quickly acquired the status of an iconic prototype of the image of a revolutionary leader, while Gerasimov became Stalin’s favorite portrait painter for decades. Distributed widely through millions of printed reproductions, a few on view in the exhibition, throughout Soviet history, *Lenin on the Tribune* is one the most ingrained images in the visual vocabulary of the Russian revolution and continues to carry a specific DNA of historical memory.

Fiks’s *Leniniana no. 1* functions as a kind of epigraph for the exhibition—it announces the specificity of historical experience of the revolution as well as the complexity of its legacy, carried through the print medium as the quintessential vehicle of mechanical reproduction and wide distribution. This work also anchors the exhibition’s key strategy: to take at face value the iconic and broadly framed proclamations of Soviet revolutionary society through its posters, which call their viewers to repay the coal debt to the country, conquer the Five-Year Plan, bolster the multi-million ranks of Komsomol, and celebrate proletarian solidarity. It is not an easy task to maintain the genuine pathos of these slogans or to ascertain in which cases they were indeed fully earnest, when we know how many of the promises of the

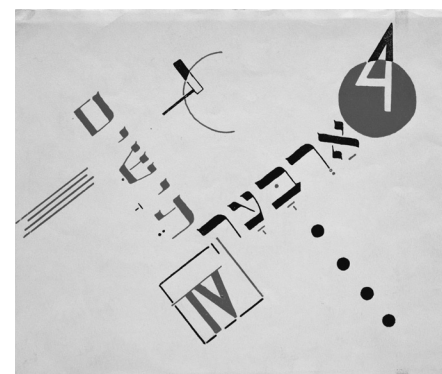




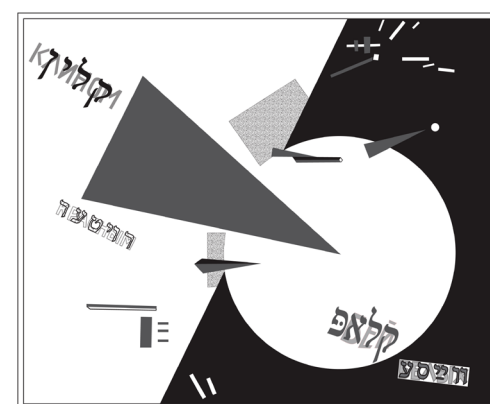
revolution were discredited by subsequent Soviet history, and were ridiculed as empty and hypocritical rhetoric by Soviet non-conformist artists in the 1960s and 70s. Yet by restoring the historical facts of the real gains of Soviet revolutionary society—a task which the timelines in this brochure take on—and by including specific individual experiences, the exhibition validates these revolutionary efforts and thus asserts the possibility of social transformation and the need for a continued advocacy for individual freedoms mixed with a healthy sense of historically informed discernment.

The topic of internationalism and the associated gains in racial and ethnic equality is presented in the exhibition through several specific narratives that function as a lens for broader histories and experiences. Claude McKay's visit to Moscow in 1922 and his enthusiastic essay in the African-American activist magazine *The Crisis*, where he praises Soviet achievements in fighting racial prejudice, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, makes him but one example of a multitude of Black activists, writers, artists, and actors, who visited or lived in the Soviet Union and found inspiration in its genuine internationalist aspirations and racial equality. Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes spent a year in the USSR between 1932 and 1933, while Wayland Rudd, an actor frustrated with racial prejudice in the American film industry, moved to the Soviet Union in 1932 and continued his career in film and theater there until his death in 1952, working with such prominent directors as Vsevolod Meyerhold, Lev Kuleshov, and Sergei Radlov. Fiks's archive of representations of Africans and African-Americans in Soviet visual culture, entitled *Wayland Rudd Collection* (2014), is dedicated to the American actor, while the breadth of imagery reveals a complex and sometimes contradictory relation between socialist ideals and Soviet reality.

A different mode of identity shift happens in the work of Jewish artists Natan Al'tman and Lazar (El) Lissitzky. Both joined the ranks of the Russian avant-garde after the February revolution of 1917 granted Jews the freedom to live and work outside of the Imperial-era Pale of Settlement, to which they were confined since the late 18th century. The integration of Jews into the building of a socialist society was an important part of Bolsheviks' policy to give equal rights to ethnic minorities. Seen from this perspective, the work of El Lissitzky, a leading figure of International Constructivism who continued to advocate for a modern, international Jewish culture in a modern graphic language



El Lissitzky
Ukrainian Folk Tales (top), 1923
Cover with photogravure
Private collection, New York
Chad Gadya by El Lissitzky (bottom), 1922
Letterpress cover
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Jan Tschichold Collection, Gift of Philip Johnson, 1977
Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art,
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Yevgeniy Fiks
Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge (Red), 2015
Screenprint
Collection of Richard Gerrig
and Timothy Peterson
Image © 2017 Yevgeniy Fiks



Mikhail Dlugach
Poster for the third lottery organized by
OZET to raise funds for Birobidzhan, 1930
Lithograph
Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio



Anton Ginzburg
Zaum / ESL #7, 2017
Anodized print on aluminum
Courtesy of the artist
Image © 2017 Anton Ginzburg

in such works as *Chad Gadya* (1922) and *Ukrainian Folk Tales* (1923), challenges the established art historical narrative of Lissitzky's definitive break with the provincial ethnic visual culture of the *shtetl* and instead presents him through a modern, hyphenated, Soviet-Jewish identity. The term "hyphenated" comes from Fiks's own description of his prints *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge* (2015), where he superimposes Yiddish letters onto the Russian ones in Lissitzky's famous poster made during the Russian Civil War. Records of other aspects of Soviet-Jewish graphics are found in Al'tman and Sergei Sen'kin's designs for the covers of books that report on the largely forgotten episode in Soviet history in which, starting in the mid-1920s, the Soviet government gave land to Jewish communities and facilitated their transition into agriculture after centuries of severe restrictions on land ownership and cultivation. Strikingly modern Yiddish graphics by Mikhail Dlugach and Mark Epshtein accompanied the Jewish settlement in Birobidzhan in the Russian Far East starting in 1928. In the 1920s and 1930s, modern Yiddish-language Jewish culture thrived in the Soviet Union, and it is important to see its legacy as inextricably linked to avant-garde graphics. Today, in his *Meta-Constructivism* poster series, Anton Ginzburg addresses the internationalism of the Yiddish Kultur League in his poster of the same name, where he uses the graphic language of Constructivists to underscore their common ground. In another poster from this series, titled *Esperanto*, Ginzburg casts a contemporary glance at the broader pursuit of the protagonists of Soviet internationalism as embedded within modernist aspirations worldwide: the search for a universal language. Ginzburg's starkly contemporary series of anodized aluminum prints entitled *Zaum/ESL*, created in conjunction with this exhibition, play on (dis)junctures between the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets of Russian and English. This series further asserts deep ties between the *zaum'* (trans-rational) poetry of the Russian avant-garde and its Western counterparts. At the same time, these prints invoke today's globalized world where the pursuit of universality and fluid communication collides with the unsettlement and limitations of displacement.

The third of Ginzburg's *Meta-Constructivism* posters boldly proclaims: "Revolution Was Ruined When It Rejected Free Love. It Must Not Exclude Pleasure From Its Program." This work brings up yet another central aspect of the Soviet 1920s: sexual liberation, effective legalization of homosexuality, and advocacy of the rights of sexual minorities. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1917 and the 1920s was a time when a gay subculture thrived in major Russian



cities, while leading Soviet doctors exchanged progressive findings in sexology with their German colleagues. This short-lived but very important aspect of early Soviet society, just like its internationalism, fascinated and inspired some of the most progressive western minds. Sexual liberation was an essential goal for Revolutionary advocates of women's rights such as Inessa Armand and Aleksandra Kollontai, two prominent female members of the Communist Party who, with Lenin's support, founded its Women's Section (Zhenotdel) in 1919. The Zhenotdel exercised its legislative powers to give Soviet women rights that had not been seen anywhere else in the world, including the right to have abortions, file for divorce, and keep their maiden names in marriage. The emancipation of women and their liberation from domestic chores through the establishment of communal childcare centers and public canteens was a central trope in Soviet graphic arts. Elizaveta Ignatovich's poster calls for women to receive technical education, Sen'kin's appeals to them to join the ranks of Komsomol, the communist youth organization, and the most graphically fascinating poster by the lesser-known Boris Klinch and Vladimir Kozlinskii calls on working women to rise against the enslaving power of religion and fight for socialism instead. Here the viewer is put in an active role, shining light into the space of the image, where socialism triumphs over the dark scenes of domestic violence on the bottom right and superstitious praying on the left, and instead bringing clarity and transparency powered by the woman architect or engineer who is instrumental in creating the light and ultra-modern glass structures of the workers' club and the communal canteen behind her. Her determined, forward-looking gaze is backed by the authoritative support of Lenin himself, whose profile mimics that of the woman and whose wisdom rests on the volume of Karl Marx.

In a society where individual body and psyche were meant to be in sync with the collective body, images of homosociality (social relations of a non-sexual nature between men) were as ubiquitous as those of equal and liberated women. Gustav Klucis's well-known posters *Let's Storm the Third Year of the Five-Year Plan* (1930) and *Let's Repay our Coal Debt to the Country* (1931), create a dynamic diagonal rhythm of repeated male bodies lined up in a march of solidarity to conquer the heights of socialist construction. These images of homosociality embodied the socialist collective model, where labor was a communal task shared among equals. This theme is further underscored by a selection of covers from the popular magazine *Krasnaia Niva* (1923-1931) where images of male bonding and indepen-



Boris Klinch and Vladimir Kozlinskii
Working Woman to the Battle for Socialism, to the Battle against Religion, 1931
Lithograph
Private collection, New York



Gustav Klucis
Let's Repay the Coal Debt to the Country, 1931
Lithograph
Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio



Anton Ginzburg
Revolution Was Ruined When it Rejected Free Love
from the *Meta Constructivist* poster series, 2016
Digital print
Courtesy of the artist
Image © 2017 Anton Ginzburg

dent women appear in a broad variety of artistic styles—a helpful reminder that Constructivist graphics and photo-montage were not the only visual language in the 1920s and early 1930s, but one of the most effective amidst a range of modes of artistic expression.

As history often has it, each of the idealistic arcs of social and political transformation presented here had its downturn, and slogans and agitational imagery started losing their grounding in actual lived reality. The timelines on the following pages trace some of the historical markers in each trajectory, some better known than others: in 1929 Stalin proclaimed that, “the Woman question in the USSR was solved completely and definitively,” and in 1930 the Zhenotdel was closed; in 1934, homosexuality was recriminalized; foreign visitors to the USSR faced increasingly strict conditions, while the autonomy of Jewish communities was significantly curtailed by the late 1930s. The difference between the proclaimed freedoms and their actual implementation, as well as the fragility of political reforms whether in the Soviet Union, the United States or elsewhere, is made evident in Yevgeniy Fiks's reflection on the individual experience of Harry Hay (1912-2002), the founder of the modern gay rights movement in the United States. Having been a communist activist in the 1930s and 1940s, Hay was forced out of the Communist Party USA during the McCarthy era. Fiks's *Toward a Portfolio of Woodcuts* (Harry Hay) (2013) narrates the contradictions of being communist and gay in mid-century America, revealing the conflicts between political beliefs and sexual identity and the ways in which the two intersected. The complete series consists of eight woodblocks, each of which has a quote from Hay scratched in with a sharp tool, as if in preparation for woodcut prints that never materialized. One of these invokes the idea of the Soviet Union, the hypothetical land of communism where justice reigns: “Wouldn't it be nice if we lived in the Soviet Union and could do this every day?”; another phrase evokes the McCarthy-era question on the application for American citizenship (which is still asked today): “Are you now or have you ever been a homosexual?” where the word “communist” is replaced with “homosexual”, underscoring the exchangeability of these markers as potentially threatening one's entitlement to full civil rights. On yet another woodblock a fragment of a dialogue formulates a socially active position: “With my Communist background I knew I could not work in a group without a theory, I said. All right, Harry, what is our theory? And he said: We are an oppressed minority culture. I agreed instantly.” These suggestive propositions situate us as viewers in an



open-ended field of historical reflection combined with an active social position of responsibility, of the kind this exhibition seeks to evoke in relation to the complex historical legacy of the Russian revolution.

Anton Ginzburg's *Stargaze: Orion* (2016) concludes the exhibition's narrative with a tribute to the legacy of the Revolutionary avant-garde that also links it to universalizing modernist aspirations. The work's main component is a sculpture, shown here as a 1/8 scale model, commissioned in 2014 by the U.S. Department of State's "Art in Embassies" program for the American Embassy in Moscow, and which is planned to be erected in its inner courtyard in the Spring of 2018. The sculpture consists of a vertical structure, whose colored planes frame prescribed views that direct the gaze, while its mirror-polished surfaces reflect the sculpture's surroundings and the viewers. The base, a black-bronze pentagon, represents a stellar map of the Orion constellation. The accompanying poster further clarifies the work's symbolism. Stargazing is a universal mode of humanity's aspirations to find its place in the universe and establish its underlying structural principles. The ambition of Russian Constructivists was nothing less than that, grounded also in the goal of perfecting the organizational principles of the future socialist society. Ginzburg conceived this work as a tribute to these universalizing goals of Russian Constructivism and of much radical modernist art that came after it. The sculpture is meant to bridge the divide between national identities and the limitations of discrete historical moments, yet remains attentive to both in their momentary specificity. The political climate has changed greatly since the work was commissioned under the Obama administration, and as a result of current strained diplomatic relationship with Russia, in August 2017 Putin ordered the U.S. diplomatic personnel in Russia to be drastically reduced. Made only a year ago as a model and also fabricated in full scale in 2016, *Stargaze: Orion* not only bears witness to just how quickly political circumstances change; it also demonstrates to what degree questions posed through aesthetic means carry through the changing tides of politics. Works inevitably embody specific conditions of their creation, which, in addition to being broadly historical, are also always personal and deeply felt by individuals under concrete circumstances. Good culture workers do their best to balance both, as this exhibition's curator and artists have attempted to do.



Anton Ginzburg
Stargaze: Orion, 2016
 Model for public sculpture at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow
 (1/8 of actual size)
 Chromed aluminum, stainless steel, anodized aluminum,
 and enamel paint
 Courtesy of the artist
 Installation photo by Rod Leland

Timelines



Claude McKay addressing the 4th Congress of the Comintern in the Throne Room of the Kremlin, Moscow, 1922. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library



Grigorii Zinoviev, Claude McKay, and Nikolai Bukharin in Moscow, 1922. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library



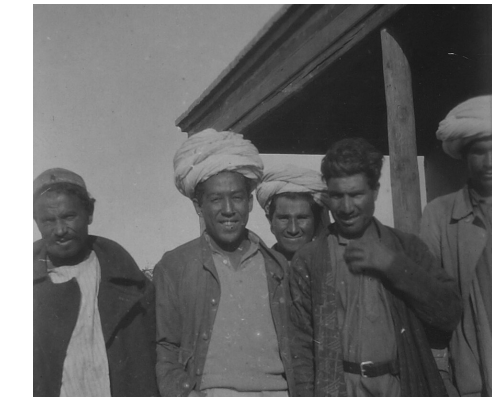
Film still of Wayland Rudd playing a convict in the film *The Great Consoler* by Lev Kuleshov, 1933. National Film Foundation of the Russian Federation, Moscow



W.E.B. Du Bois, 1928 (detail). Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library



The *Black and White* troupe pose beneath a Leninist banner in Central Asia, 1932. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library



Langston Hughes in a Beluchi turban on a collective farm near Merv, Turkmenistan, 1932. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

INTERNATIONALISM I: RACIAL EQUALITY

JULY 1920

The Second Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) adopts Lenin's "Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions," which establishes a connection between working class struggles in imperialist countries and national liberation movements in the colonies, and thereby establishes liberation movements in the colonies and oppressed nationalities in imperialist countries as part of the world-wide Socialist revolution.

APRIL 1921

The Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) is established in Moscow by Comintern as a training college for communist cadres in the colonial world. Its curriculum includes both theoretical and practical matters, including Marxist theory, party organization and propaganda, law and administration, theory and tactics of proletarian revolution, problems of socialist construction, and trade union organization. Among its students are many African-American communists, including Harry Haywood and William Patterson.

NOVEMBER 1922

The Fourth Congress of Comintern considers in detail the development of revolutionary movements around the world and states the danger of dividing the working class along racial lines. African-American activist and poet Claude McKay visits the USSR as a speaker, upon an informal invitation from John Reed, an American writer who lived in the USSR at the time. One of the first politically-motivated African-Americans to visit the Soviet Union, McKay gives an impassioned speech on the "Negro question" (the anti-Black racial oppression and consequent struggle for equality, integration, and civil and political rights), which is partially reprinted in the leading newspaper *Pravda* the following day.

NOVEMBER 1923

McKay publishes "Soviet Russia and the Negro" in the African-American activist magazine *The Crisis*, where he extolls Soviet achievements in the area of fighting racial prejudice, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, and sees in the Soviet example a promise of racial integration, internationalism, and non-discrimination. He writes of good treatment of people of African descent, Jews, and Central Asians in Soviet Russia.

1926

Another African-American activist, W.E.B. Du Bois, visits the Soviet Union for the first time to observe and study the Soviet experiment, encouraged to do so by American progressives such as Max Eastman and H.G. Wells. Initially cautious and skeptical about the promise of revolutionary communists to bring positive change to African-Americans, Du Bois becomes engaged and continues to visit the Soviet Union decennially, finally formally joining the Communist Party in October 1961, at the age of 93.

JULY-AUGUST 1928

The Sixth Congress of Comintern adopts the "Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States," more binding and wider-reaching than the 1922 theses. The Congress discusses different liberation movements around the world, calling for the "right of self-determination for Negroes" in the "Black Belt" of the American South, and establishing a subcommittee of Comintern on the "Negro Question."

OCTOBER 1930

The Executive Committee of the Third Congress of Comintern issues a resolution on the "Negro Question" in the United States, stating unequivocally the precise Communist view that African-Americans constitute an oppressed nation.

1932

A delegation of 21 African-Americans are invited to travel to Moscow to participate in the making of the Soviet-sponsored anti-racist film project entitled *Black and White*. Two months after their arrival, the project is cancelled as it is seen as an impediment to the upcoming diplomatic recognition of the USSR by the USA. Members of the delegation are offered a chance to travel across the USSR.

Among the few who accepted the offer is the poet and writer Langston Hughes, who spends a year in the USSR and publishes numerous accounts of his impressions, reflecting on issues of internationalism and interracial alliances that reshaped his understanding of African-American identity. His most famous account is his short tract entitled *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia* (1932).

Another prominent figure is the actor Wayland Rudd, who chooses to continue his career in the USSR, learns Russian, and works with such prominent directors as Vsevolod Meyerhold, Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Radlov. In 1934 he publishes an account of his experience "Russian and American Theater" in *The Crisis*.

1934

After the assassination of high-ranking Soviet official Sergei Kirov, a climate of suspicion of foreigners and xenophobia starts to settle in and numerous foreign specialists working in Soviet industry have to renounce other citizenship and accept Soviet citizenship in order to remain in the Soviet Union.

"In all their propaganda and agitation...the Communist parties must consistently expose that constant violation of the equality of nations and of the guaranteed rights of national minorities which is to be seen in all capitalist countries, despite their 'democratic' constitutions.... All Communist parties should render direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the American Negroes, etc.) and in the colonies."

— VLADIMIR LENIN, "THESES ON THE NATIONAL AND THE COLONIAL QUESTIONS", 1920

"There is one great nation ...that is thinking intelligently on the Negro as it does about all international problems. When the Russian workers overturned their infamous government in 1917, one of the first acts of the new Premier, Lenin, was a proclamation greeting all the oppressed peoples throughout the world, exhorting them to organize and unite against the common international oppressor—Private Capitalism."

— CLAUDE MCKAY, "SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE NEGRO", 1923

"I stand in astonishment and wonder at the revelation of Russia that has come to me.... [I]f what I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears in Russia is Bolshevism, I am a Bolshevik."

— W.E.B. DU BOIS, 1926

"I have seen a bit of Russia; just a two month's glimpse of this tremendous land. But what I saw convinced me of certain things: that Russia is earnest."

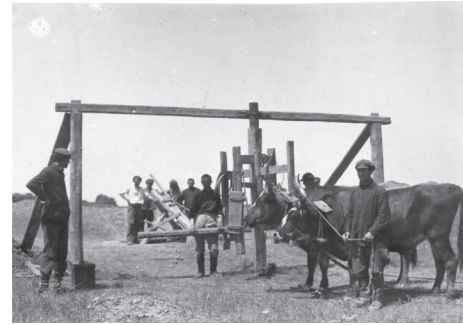
— W.E.B. DU BOIS, 1926

"When I was in Tashkent, the regional capital of the Republics of Soviet Central Asia, there were funny little old street cars running about the size of the cable cars in San Francisco. I noticed a partition at the center of these street cars, and asked a brownskin Uzbek friend why it was there. He explained to me that in the old Tzarist days, the partition separated the Europeans from the Asiatics. I said, 'You mean the white people from the colored people?' He said, 'Yes, before the Revolution, we would have to sit in the back. But now everybody sits anywhere.'"

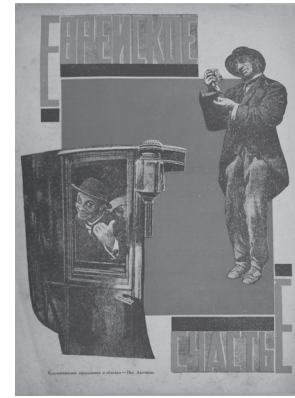
— LANGSTON HUGHES, "ARE YOU A COMMUNIST?", 1947



Mikhail Kalinin addressing a conference of OZET, 1926
Archives, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York



Workers dig a well in a Jewish agricultural colony in Crimea, 1928
Archives, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York



Natan Al'tman
Cover of the film program for *Jewish Luck*, 1926. Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio



Still from the film *Jews on the Land*, 1927, directed by Abram Room
National Film Foundation of the Russian Federation, Moscow



Mark Epshtein, *Member of Genend! Help to Recruit Jewish Workers to take part in building a Socialist Society!*, 1932
Private collection, New York



Comrade Frid on an Airplane during the Weekend, nd. Media Archive of the "Heritage of the Jewish Autonomous Region", Birobidzhan

INTERNATIONALISM II: JEWISH EMANCIPATION

1917

Jews, who were previously restricted to an area called the Pale of Settlement in tsarist Russia, are allowed free movement within Russia. The Pale of Settlement is officially abolished by the Provisionary Government after the February Revolution of 1917.

1917-1921

Jewish artists and intellectuals of the former Russian empire envision Jewish culture as secular, open, and modern, leading to a Jewish "Renaissance." Among its most prominent artists are Natan Al'tman and Lazar (El) Lissitzky whose work through the 1920s bridges their identities as Jews and as modern international artists.

AUGUST 1920

The Yiddish language receives official status and is recognized by the Central Executive Committee of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as one of its four official legal languages (alongside Belorussian, Russian, and Polish). Belarus is one of the two Soviet republics, along with Ukraine, with a massive Jewish Yiddish-speaking population.

1918-1939

A series of Yiddish schools are established in Soviet Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. A public educational system entirely based on the Yiddish language is established in a number of Soviet cities, including Kharkov, Kiev, and Moscow. By 1933 over 4,000 students are trained as Yiddish teachers in 20 Soviet colleges and universities. More than 2,600 students attend Yiddish agricultural colleges and universities, including a Yiddish medical college (in Haisyn), musical, art, and co-operative colleges (in Kiev), and a college of political education, among others.

1925

The Soviet government grants Jews land in Crimea and southern Ukraine, reversing centuries of restrictions on Jews cultivating crops. OZET (the Association for the Agricultural Settlement of Jewish Workers in the USSR), a non-political organization, is established to carry out the resettlement of Jews and to foster Jewish agriculture. The American Jewish community via the organization Agro-Joint donates a large part of the funds needed for implementing these plans.

1926

Aleksei Granovskii stages *Jewish Luck*, a play based on short stories by Sholem Aleichem, at the State Jewish Theater (GOSET) in Moscow. The play is then turned into a film starring Solomon Mikhoels, with intertitles written by Isaac Babel. The poster and brochure for the film are designed by Natan Al'tman. A satire on the provincial, close-minded ways in Jewish *shtetls*, the film calls on Jews to modernize.

NOVEMBER 1926

The First OZET Congress takes place in Moscow with 269 participants and 14 delegations from abroad. Mikhail Kalinin, chairman of the Central Executive Committee, gives a speech where he mentions the possible establishment of autonomous Jewish territories.

1927-1937

Jewish settlements in northern Crimea, where the first communal agricultural communities were created, are turned into Jewish National Districts with different degrees of autonomy. OZET publishes a periodical, *Tribune of the Soviet Jewish Community*, and issues two volumes of documentation of the resettlement entitled *Jewish Peasant*. The plan is to resettle 500,000 Jews from mostly destitute *shtetls* to the new autonomous agricultural communities. By 1930 some 47,000 Jewish families, or approximately 231,000 persons, were engaged in agricultural activities throughout the Soviet Union.

1927

Key figures of the Russian avant-garde, Viktor Shklovskii, Vladimir Maiakovskii, Lilia Brik, and Abram Room, make a documentary film about Jewish settlements in Crimea entitled *Jews on the Land*, which receives wide critical acclaim. Lilia Brik works for OZET.

1928

The scale of resettlement brings tensions with leaders of Crimea's Tatar ethnic group, leading the Soviet government to choose a new territory for Jewish agricultural settlements. Located on the other side of the continent, in a remote, sparsely populated region near the Amur River in the Far East, it is initially called the Birobidzhan Jewish National District.

1928-1933

OZET holds several lotteries in order to raise funds for Birobidzhan, which in 1934 acquires official status as the Jewish Autonomous Region (J.A.R.) within the USSR.

1928-1937

OZET is broadened to include many non-Jewish members, its leadership is purged and its rights curtailed. Starting with the collectivization of the First Five Year Plan, non-Jewish settlers are introduced into the Jewish autonomous regions; purges ensue and ethnic autonomy is gradually curtailed.

1937

A group of artists in the Chicago-area creates a portfolio of woodcuts entitled, *A Gift to Birobidzhan*, as a fund-raising project for the Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan. During the Great Depression, all these artists worked in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and their works in the portfolio displayed images of oppression and despair as well as of hope for a "new life." Artists include Mitchell Sirotin, Alex Topchevsky, and Todros Geller, among others.

1937

Repression of the leadership of OZET and of Birobidzhan. Gradual phasing out of Yiddish cultural institutions in the USSR and closing of the Jewish national districts in Crimea.

1938

OZET is closed by the order of the Central Committee of the Party. With the onset of WWII, Jews in Crimea are in the midst of the war zone and most are killed by the Nazis. After the war only few survivors are allowed to return to their lands, effectively ending Jewish life in Crimea.

"Disgrace and infamy to whoever sows enmity against Jews and hatred against other nations! Long live brotherly faith and unity in struggle of all nations, for the overthrow of capitalism!"

— VLADIMIR LENIN, 1919

"It is completely natural that the Jewish population... strives to find its place in the Soviet Union... the Jewish people faces the great task of preserving its own nationality, and to this end a large part of the Jewish population must be transformed into an economically stable, agriculturally compact group which should number at least hundreds of thousands. Only under such conditions can the Jewish masses hope for the future existence of their nationality."

— MIKHAIL KALININ, 1926

"We are interested in the strength of migration and the transformation of landless people into productive workers as one of the basic factors in the establishment of agricultural production."

— AGRO-JOINT, MOSCOW, 1926

"We, a group of Chicago Jewish artists, in presenting our works to the builders of Birobidzhan, are symbolizing with this action the flowering of a new social concept wherein the artist becomes molded into the clay of the whole people and becomes the clarion of their hopes and desires. Thus we will better translate, in our media, these aspirations for a new and better life and pour forth, to a more understanding world, from our fountain of creation the first sparkling glimpses that are the new Jew in the making."

— A GROUP OF CHICAGO-AREA ARTISTS, 1937



Women demanding voting rights at a demonstration on the International Women's Day, March 8, 1917 in Petrograd. This mass protest sparked the revolution that led to the abdication of the tsar.



Inessa Armand, one of the founders of the Women's Section (Zhenotdel), 1918



Aleksandra Kollontai addressing the 2nd International Congress of Communist Women, June 1921, Moscow



Krasnaia Niva no. 39, 1925. Photo by V. Loboda. International Day of Youth. Banner with a quote from Lenin: "Every female cook has to be able to rule the country." Private collection, New York



Krasnaia Niva no. 13, 1931 Photo by N. Petrov depicting female tractor driver Private collection, New York



Krasnaia Niva no. 33, 1931 Female shock worker, Kemarovo mining camp (Kuzbass) Private collection, New York

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

MARCH 1917

40,000 women come to a demonstration in Petrograd (present-day St. Petersburg) demanding voting rights, which are granted by the Provisional Government in April to "all citizens over 20 years old regardless of nationality and religious faith."

OCTOBER 1917

In the months immediately following the Revolution, the Soviets adopt several decrees protecting women's rights: an 8-hour work day, prohibiting night shifts for women, state assistance during pregnancy, the right to paid maternity leave, a required minimum salary regardless of gender, and equal rights for women in marriage.

JULY 1918

The Soviet Constitution mandates equal rights between men and women.

NOVEMBER 1918

The First National Congress of Soviet Working Women (Perviy Vsesoiuznii S'ezd Rabotnits) is initiated by Bolshevik leader Aleksandra Kollontai, and is comprised of 1,147 delegates, following vast, local preparations among women. Lenin gives a speech in support of the congress, stating that conditions must allow for women to work, take part in political life, and be mothers. Kollontai, Inessa Armand, and others speak on specific topics of women's rights in socialist society. Women's sections are created in local chapters of the Bolshevik Party, in order to educate women about their rights and involve them in social and political activity.

1918-1919

Kollontai publishes articles in several major newspapers and two important pamphlets: *The Family and the Communist State* and *The Working Woman in the Year of the Revolution*.

AUGUST 1919

Aleksandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand are among the six women who establish Zhenotdel, the Women's Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Armand becomes its first director. Zhenotdel's goals are to inform female workers and peasants about their rights, teach women how they could be useful for the Soviet state, and how to use their rights to improve their situations. Armand drives through reforms in women's rights including access to civil marriage, divorce, and abortion; the right to keep their maiden names after marriage and to participate in government affairs; as well as the creation of facilities like mass canteens and mothers' centers. The Zhenotdel reaches 95,000 delegates by 1922, and by 1926 the number of its members grows to 620,000.

1920

The journal *Communist Woman* (*Kommunistka*) begins publication upon Armand's initiative, with the goal of publicizing and coordinating the activities of Zhenotdel. It deals with "the broader aspects of female emancipation and the need to alter the relationship between the sexes if lasting change was to be effected." It appears monthly until 1929. In September, Armand dies of cholera at age 46.

APRIL 1921

The first Congress of Communist Women from the Soviet East is founded, through which women from the Caucasus, Volga region, and Central Asia, who were traditionally subjected to very different sexual codes, especially in Muslim regions, assert their rights to equality.

JUNE 1921

The Second International Congress of Communist Women takes place in Moscow, with delegates from 21 countries. Kollontai presents the forms and methods of the Communist party's work among working women.

1923

Aleksandra Kollontai publishes her best known book *The Love of Worker Bees*, a fictionalized account in which she outlines her vision of the future emancipated woman.

1929

Stalin declares that "The woman question [in the USSR] has now been solved completely and definitively."

JANUARY 1930

The Zhenotdel is closed. Its functions are taken over by women's divisions of the Communist Party's Agitation and Mass Campaigns section, which existed until 1934.

1935

Contraceptives are no longer manufactured in the USSR. "It is high time" announced the central newspaper *Izvestiia*, "to declare frivolity in family affairs a crime, and unfaithfulness an offense against the morality of the Socialist regime."

1936

Abortion is outlawed, and new laws make divorce difficult.

"Specific economic factors have brought about the subjugation of woman. Her own natural characteristics, and her role as mother, have played only a secondary part in this. Only the disappearance of the economic causes of her oppression, and the transformation of the mode of production that has enslaved her, can fundamentally change her status. ... It is only [in the new world of labor] that a woman would learn to discard the slave mentality that has clung to her, and step by step transform herself into an independent worker and personality, free to love and marry on her own terms."

— ALEKSANDRA KOLLONTAI, THE SOCIAL BASES OF WOMAN QUESTION, 1909

"Laws alone are not enough, and we are by no means content with mere decrees. In the sphere of legislation, however, we have done everything required of us to put women in a position of equality and we have every right to be proud of it. The position of women in Soviet Russia is now ideal as compared with their position in the most advanced states. We tell ourselves, however, that this, of course, is only the beginning."

— VLADIMIR LENIN, SPEECH AT THE WORKING WOMEN'S CONGRESS, MOSCOW, 1918

"If women's liberation is unthinkable without communism, then communism is unthinkable without women's liberation."

— INESSA ARMAND, 1920

"If in a bourgeois society the right of choice belongs to a man, and the woman is relegated to a sexually passive role, to be chosen or bought, by contrast in a communist society this right will definitely be given to the woman. The woman, a free and equal worker, will herself choose a man, following her own attraction, like a 'worker bee.'"

— ALEKSANDRA KOLLONTAI, LOVE OF WORKER BEES, 1923



Members of the First Petrograd Women's Battalion, organized by the Provisional Government, 1917. Women who sought to stretch the boundaries of femininity were attracted to soldiering. Archive of O. A. Khoroshilova



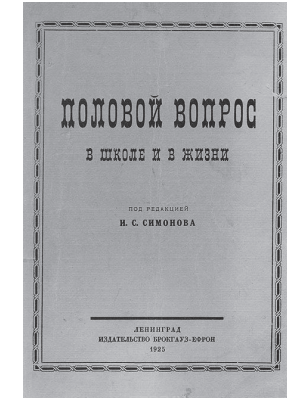
Cleaning the space of the Women Sailors Team, 1917. Photo by Iakov Shteinberg. Central State Archive of Film and Photo Documents, St. Petersburg



Simeonovskaia Street, Petrograd, January 15, 1921. All present are men. Central State Archive, St. Petersburg. Photo courtesy Irina Roldugina



Two actors, one of them is a female impersonator. Petrograd, early 1920s. Archive of O. A. Khoroshilova



The Sexual Question in School and in Life. Edited by I.S. Simonov. Leningrad: Brokgauz-Efron Publishing, 1925

SEXUAL AND GAY LIBERATION

1917

Following the Revolution, the Bolsheviks create "People's Courts" to uphold Soviet decrees. These courts only apply existing laws when they do not contradict socialist principles, and although the new government issues numerous decrees criminalizing certain sexual transgressions, the courts have no means of enforcing them. The result is a period of laxity.

1922

The first Soviet criminal code is issued, deliberately omitting sexual relations between men as a prohibited act and essentially legalizing it between consenting adults. Intersex people, long marginalized in their communities, receive the right to change the gender on their passports and to receive state-sponsored medical assistance (ranging from psychotherapy to surgical intervention). Sexuality is no longer a taboo topic.

1923

People's Commissar of Health and professor of medicine at Moscow University, Nikolai Semashko visits Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute of Sex Research in Berlin, accompanied by a delegation of Soviet doctors. Semashko indicates to his German allies in sex reform that the Soviet legalization of male same-sex relations was a deliberately emancipatory measure, part of the sexual revolution in the USSR.

1925

In the 1920s, social hygienist Grigorii Batkis, along with Bolshevik leader Aleksandra Kollontai and Kiev professor Nikolai Pasche-Oserski, are prominent members of the World League for Sexual Reform (WLSR) giving it the appearance of official Soviet support. Batkis publishes a German-language pamphlet in Berlin, entitled *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, in which he states that in the USSR homosexuality is a private matter and that the state does not interfere "as long as nobody is injured."

1926

The second Soviet criminal code again omits sexual relations between men as a prohibited act. Following a visit to the USSR sponsored by Semashko's Health Commissariat, Dr. Hirschfeld returns to Germany apparently disappointed with Bolshevik prudery, remarking that scientific interest in homosexuality is in decline and that homosexual behavior is regarded as "plebeian" in the new socialist state.

1930

The official Soviet stance on homosexuality, which appears in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia of 1930, states its acceptance and non-criminalization.

1933

On September 15, the deputy chief of the secret police (OGPU) Genrikh Iagoda writes to Stalin to argue for the need for legislation against "pederasty" (a pejorative Russian term for homosexual men) as a matter of state security. Iagoda reports that "organizations of pederasts eventually turned into espionage cells. Pederast activists... politically demoralized various social layers of young men, including young workers, and even attempted to penetrate the army and navy." In December, Iagoda sends Stalin a draft of the law which outlined arguments in support of the measure. It is promptly approved by the Communist party, and on December 17, homosexuality is criminalized in a new penal code, punishable by up to 8 years in prison.

1934

In the wake of the first arrests of homosexuals in Moscow and Leningrad, Harry Whyte, a 27-year old working-class British Communist and head of the editorial staff of the English-language Moscow newspaper *Moscow News*, sends a letter to Stalin, in which he comes out as a homosexual and offers a fierce defense of homosexuality from a Marxist-Leninist perspective. Whyte's letter in the archive contains Stalin's inscription: "To the archive. An idiot and a degenerate. J. Stalin."

1934-1991

Article no. 121 of the Penal Code of the Russian Federation is used to imprison 25,762 people on charges of homosexuality.

"Soviet legislation declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured, and no one's interests are encroached upon—concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offences against morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly as so-called *natural intercourse*."

— GRIGORII BATKIS, 1925

"Soviet legislation does not recognize so-called crimes against morality. Our laws proceed from the principle of protection of society and therefore countenance punishment only in those instances when juveniles and minors are the objects of homosexual interest ... While recognizing the incorrectness of homosexual development ... our society combines prophylactic and other therapeutic measures with all the necessary conditions for making the conflicts that afflict homosexuals as painless as possible and for resolving their typical estrangement from society within the collective."

— SEREISKII, GREAT SOVIET ENCYCLOPEDIA, 1930

"I assume that certain kinds of talent (in particular, talent in the realm of the arts) are startlingly often combined with homosexuality. This should be kept in mind, and it seems to me that one should carefully weigh the dangers of sexual levelling precisely for this branch of Soviet culture, for at present we do not as yet possess a sufficiently scientific explanation of homosexuality."

— HARRY WHYTE, FROM A LETTER TO STALIN, 1934

"I would like to point out that I view the condition of homosexuals who are either of working-class origin or workers themselves to be analogous to the condition of women under the capitalist regime and the coloured races who are oppressed by imperialism. This condition is likewise similar in many ways to the condition of the Jews under Hitler's dictatorship, and in general it is not hard to see in it an analogy with the condition of any social stratum subjected to exploitation and persecution under capitalist domination."

— HARRY WHYTE, FROM A LETTER TO STALIN, 1934



Exhibition Checklist

This checklist reflects the narrative structure of the exhibition and introductory essay; it is divided into sections that correspond to their themes. *Leniniana* by Yevgeniy Fiks (after Aleksandr Gerasimov) opens the story, and Anton Ginzburg's works, which speak to the exhibition's overall focus, serve as a coda. Within each thematic section, works installed on the wall precede works shown in nearby cases. The books and journals on the checklist are identified by the names of artists and designers, rather than their authors, and mediums listed describe their artistic contributions.

Yevgeniy Fiks
Leniniana no.1 (after Aleksandr Gerasimov, "V.I. Lenin on the Tribune"), 2008
Oil on canvas, 72 x 53 in.
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Sator, Paris

Aleksandr Gerasimov (Russian, 1881-1963)
Reproductions of the painting *V. I. Lenin on the Tribune*, 1929-30 in the magazine *Ogonek* (Nov 1952): 32 and on postcard and postal stamps, 1941, 1945, 1953
Courtesy of IPCNY

INTERNATIONALISM I: RACIAL EQUALITY

Sergei Sen'kin (Russian, 1894-1963)
Gustav Klucis (Latvian, 1895-1938)
Pervoe Maia - Den' Mezhdunarodnoi Proletarskoi Solidarnosti (First of May - Day of the International Proletarian Solidarity), 1930
Lithograph, 41 1/4 x 29 1/4 in.
Published by Gosizdat, Moscow
Edition: 20,000
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase Fund, Jan Tschichold Collection, 1937

Photograph of Grigorii Zinoviev, Claude McKay, and Nikolai Bukharin in Moscow, 1922 (reprint 2017)
Courtesy of the Claude McKay Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Photograph of Claude McKay with Clara Zetkin and Arthur Holitscher, date unknown (reprint 2017)
Courtesy of the Claude McKay Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Yevgeniy Fiks
Wayland Rudd Collection, 2014
Multimedia installation
Courtesy of the artist

Sergei Sen'kin (Russian, 1894-1963)
Rabskii Trud (Slave Labor) by Evgenii Kronman, 1931
Cover with lithograph and letterpress, 10 1/2 x 7 1/4 in.
Published by Ogiz-Izogiz, Moscow
Edition: 5,000
Private collection, New York

Yevgeniy Fiks
Soviet Russia and the Negro. Kaddish, 2011
Video documentation of a performance in Moscow
Courtesy of the artist

Konstantin Vialov (Russian, 1900-1976)
Negritianskaia Operetta: gastrol'i v SSSR (Negro Operetta: USSR tour) (Special edition of the journal *Circus*), 1926
Cover with lithograph, 10 1/4 x 8 2/3 in.
Published by Central Administration of State Circuses, Moscow-Leningrad
Edition: 20,000
Private collection, New York

Claude McKay (American, 1889-1948)
"Soviet Russia and the Negro"
Article published in *The Crisis*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Dec. 1923): 61-5 and vol.27, no. 3 (Jan. 1924): 114-18. Page: 9 3/4 x 6 3/4 in.
Courtesy of Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Photograph of Claude McKay addressing the Third Congress of the Communist International in the Throne Room of the Kremlin, Moscow, 1922 (reprint 2017)
Courtesy of the Claude McKay Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

INTERNATIONALISM II: JEWISH EMANCIPATION

Yevgeniy Fiks
Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge (Red), 2015
Screenprint, 30 x 36 in.
Printed by Axelle Editions, New York
Published by Eminence Grise Editions, New York
Edition: 18
Collection of Richard Gerrig and Timothy Peterson

El Lissitzky (Russian, 1890-1941)
Chad Gadya by El Lissitzky, 1922
Letterpress cover, 8 1/4 x 10 in.
Published by Tairbut, Warsaw
Edition: unknown
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Jan Tschichold Collection, Gift of Philip Johnson, 1977

Yevgeniy Fiks
Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge (Grey), 2015
Screenprint, 30 x 36 in.
Printed by Axelle Editions, New York
Published by Eminence Grise Editions, New York
Edition: 18
Courtesy Eminence Grise Editions/Michael Steinberg Fine Art, NY

El Lissitzky (Russian, 1890-1941)
Di hun vos hot gevo/t hoben a kam (The Hen that Wanted a Comb) by Uncle Ben Zion (Ben Zion Raskin), 1919
Book with ten lithographed illustrations, page: 4 5/16 x 5 3/4 in.
Published by Idisher Folks Farlag, Kiev-St. Petersburg
Edition: unknown
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 2001

Mark Epshtein (Russian, 1897-1949)
Generd mitglid! (Member of the Generd! Help to recruit Jewish Workers to take part in building a Socialist society), 1932
Lithograph, 28 1/4 x 20 9/16 in.
Published by *Der Emes (The Truth)*, Moscow
Edition: 5,000
Private collection, New York

El Lissitzky (Russian, 1890-1941)
El'fandel (The Elephant's Child), by Rudyard Kipling 1922
Book with fourteen letterpress illustrations, page: 10 3/4 x 8 7/16 in.
Published by Shveln, Berlin
Edition: unknown
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 2001

Mikhail Dlugach (Russian, 1893-1985)
Poster for the third lottery organized by OZET to raise funds for Birobidzhan, 1930
Lithograph, 40 x 28 1/4 in.
Published by OZET, Moscow
Edition: 50,000
Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

El Lissitzky (Russian, 1890-1941)
Ukrainishe Folkmaises (Ukrainian Folk Tales), 1923
Translated from Ukrainian into Yiddish by Leib Kvitko
Cover with photogravure
8 1/4 x 6 5/8 in.
Published by Der idisher seksie bam kamisariat far folkbildung, Berlin
Edition: unknown (3 known copies)
Private collection, New York

Mikhail Dlugach (Russian, 1893-1985)
Poster for the fifth lottery organized by OZET to raise funds for Birobidzhan, 1932
Lithograph, 21 5/16 x 15 3/16 in.
Published by Ogiz-Izogiz, Moscow
Edition: 40,000
Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

Sergei Sen'kin (Russian, 1894-1963)
Evrei Zemledel'tsy v Krymu (Jewish Farmers in the Crimea) by Luliy Golde, 1932
Cover with lithograph
7 1/16 x 5 3/16 in.
Published by *Der Emes (The Truth)*, Moscow
Edition: 15,000
Private collection, New York

Artist Unknown
Letterpress lottery tickets to raise funds for Birobidzhan, 1930-1933
Ticket for the third lottery, 1930, 5 7/8 x 4 in.
Ticket for the fourth lottery 1931, 4 1/8 x 2 7/8 in.
Tickets for the fifth lottery, 1932 (green and red), 4 1/8 x 2 7/8 in.
Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

Natan Al'tman (Russian, 1889-1971)
Evreiskii krestianin (The Jewish Peasant), vol. 1, 1925
Journal with letterpress cover, page: 9 15/16 x 5 15/16 in.
Published by OZET, Moscow
Edition: 3,500
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 2001

Natan Al'tman (Russian, 1889-1971)
Evreiskoe shchast'e (Jewish Luck), 1926
Film program with lithographed cover and letterpress text and illustrations.
Page: 11 7/8 x 8 15/16 in.
Published by Kinopechat', Moscow
Edition: 100,000
Two copies shown: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 2001; Private collection, New York

Iosef Chaikov (Russian, 1888-1979)
Evreiskii krestianin (The Jewish Peasant), vol. 2, 1926
Journal with letterpress cover, page: 9 7/8 x 6 1/8 in.
Published by OZET, Moscow
Edition: 5,000
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 2001

Natan Al'tman (Russian, 1889-1971)
Evreiskaia Grafika Natana Al'tmana (Jewish Graphics of Natan Al'tman) by Max Osborn, 1923
Cover with letterpress, 19 1/10 x 15 2/3 in.
Published by Petropolis, Berlin
Edition: 250
Private collection, New York





EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

Elizaveta Ignatovich (Russian, 1903–1983)
Bor'ba za Politekhnikheskuiu Shkolu Est' Bor'ba za Piatiletku, za Kadry, za Klassovoe Kommunisticheskoe Vospitanie (The Struggle for the Polytechnical School is the Struggle for the Five-Year Plan, for the Communist Education about Class Consciousness), 1931
 Letterpress and lithograph, 20 1/4 x 28 1/4 in.
 Published by Ogiz-Izogiz, Moscow
 Edition: 20,000
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Miss Jessie Rosenfeld, 1943

Mariia Bri-Bein (Russian, 1892–1971)
Rabotnitsa, Kolkhoznitsa Bud' Udarnitsej Oborony (Female Worker and Collective Farmer, Be a Shock Worker of Defense), 1931
 Lithograph, 34 x 24 1/2 in.
 Published by Ogiz-Izogiz, Moscow
 Edition: 30,000
 Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

Sergei Sen'kin (Russian, 1894–1963)
Za Mnogomillionnyi Leninskii Komsomol (For Lenin's Komsomol of Millions of Members), 1931
 Lithograph, 39 13/16 x 27 13/16 x in.
 Published by Ogiz-Izogiz, Moscow
 Edition: 20,000
 Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

Boris Klinch (Russian, 1892–1946)
 Vladimir Kozlinskii (Russian, 1891–1967)
Trudiashchiasia Zhenshchina Na Bor'bu za Sotsializm na Bor'bu s Religiei (Working Woman to the Battle for Socialism, to the Battle Against Religion), 1931
 Lithograph, 40 9/18 x 28 1/2 in.
 Published by Izogiz, Moscow
 Edition: 20,000
 Private collection, New York

Natan Al'tman (Russian, 1889–1971)
S'ezd Rabotnits i Krestianok Severnoi Oblasti (Conference of Women Workers and Women Peasants from the Northern Region), 1919
 Lithograph proof of a cover design, 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 in.
 Private collection, New York

Various Artists (Mariia Bri-Bein, Yurii Pimenov, Aleksandr Deineka, Natalia Pinus, Valentina Kulagiva, and others)
Krasnaia Niva (Red Field), 1923–1931
 Covers with lithograph, each: 11 3/4 x 9 in.
 Published by Izvestiia, Moscow
 Edition: 90,000 in 1925–1926; 110,000 in 1927–1928
 Six issues with representations of equal Soviet women and six issues with images of homosociality
 Private collection, New York

HOMOSOCIALITY AND GAY RIGHTS

Gustav Klucis (Latvian, 1895–1938)
Vernem Ugol'nyi Dolg Strane (Let's Repay our Coal Debt to the Country), 1931
 Lithograph, 41 x 29 3/16 in.
 Published by Izogiz, Moscow
 Edition: 20,000
 Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

Gustav Klucis (Latvian, 1895–1938)
Na Shturm Tretiego Goda Piatiletki (Let's Storm the Third Year of the Five-Year Plan), 1930
 Lithograph, 40 5/8 x 29 1/16 in.
 Published by Izogiz, Moscow
 Edition: 10,000
 Courtesy of Productive Arts, Bratenahl, Ohio

Yevgeniy Fiks
Toward a Portfolio of Woodcuts (Harry Hay), 2013
 Five from a set of eight incised woodblocks, each 24 x 18 in.
 Unique
 Courtesy of the artist



Anton Ginzburg
Zaum/ESL #1-8, from the *Zaum/ESL* series, 2017
 Eight anodized prints on aluminum, each 12 x 24 in.
 Courtesy of the artist

Anton Ginzburg
Esperanto, Yiddish Kultur Lige, and
Revolution Was Ruined When it Rejected Free Love
 from the *Meta-Constructivism* poster series, 2016
 Three digital prints, each 48 x 36 in.
 Courtesy of the artist

Anton Ginzburg
Stargaze: Orion, poster from the *Meta-Constructivism* series and model for public sculpture at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, 2016
 Poster: digital print, 36 x 48 in.
 Model for sculpture: chromed aluminum, stainless steel, anodized aluminum, and enamel paint, 16 x 16 x 32 in. (1/8 of actual size)
 Courtesy of the artist



Recommended Reading

by Masha Chlenova and Yevgeniy Fiks

INTERNATIONALISM I: RACIAL EQUALITY

Baldwin, Kate A., *Between the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters between Black and Red, 1922-1963* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2002)

Gardner, John, "African Americans in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s: The Development of Transcontinental Protest" in *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 23, no. 3 (1999): 190-200

Kiaer, Christina, "African Americans in Soviet Socialist Realism: the Case of Aleksandr Deineka" in *The Russian Review* 75, no. 3 (2016): 402-433

Lee, Steven S., *Ethnic Avant-Gardes: Minority Cultures and World Revolution* (New York: Columbia UP, 2015)

Matusevich, Maxim, "Harlem Globe-Trotters: Black Sojourners in Stalin's Soviet Union" in *The Harlem Renaissance Revisited: Politics, Arts and Letters*. Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2010)

McKay, Claude, "Soviet Russia and the Negro" in *The Crisis* (November 1923): 61-65 and "A Moscow Lady: A Study in Prejudices" in *The Crisis* (September 1924): 225-228

McKay, Claude, *Amiable with Big Teeth: a Novel of the Love Affair between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem*. Edited with an introduction by Jean-Christophe Cloutier and Brent Hayes Edwards (New York: Penguin Books, 2017)

Mukerji, S. Ani, "'Like another Planet to the Darker Americans': Black Cultural Work in 1930s Moscow" in *Africa in Europe: Studies in Transnational Practice in the Long Twentieth Century*, Eve Rosenhaft and Anne R. Aitken, eds. (Liverpool UP, 2013): 120-142

INTERNATIONALISM II: JEWISH EMANCIPATION

Bemporad, Elissa, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk* (Indiana UP, 2013)

Dekel-Chen, Jonathan L., *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1924-1941* (Yale UP, 2005)

Estraiakh, Gennady, *In Harness: Yiddish Writers' Romance with Communism* (Syracuse UP, 2005)

Kazovsky, Hillel, *Khudozhniki Kul'tur-Ligi / The Artists of the Kultur-Lige* (Moscow: Mosty Kul'tury 2003)

Moss, Kenneth B., *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Harvard UP, 2009)

Shneer, David, *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet Jewish Culture: 1918-1930* (Cambridge UP, 2004)

Weinberg, Robert, *Stalin's Forgotten Zion: Birobidzhan and the Making of a Soviet Jewish Homeland: An Illustrated History, 1928-1996* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

Clements, Barbara Evans, *Daughters of Revolution: a History of Women in the U.S.S.R.* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1994) Edmondson, L.H., ed. -- *Women and Society in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge UP, 1992)

Elwood, Ralph Carter, *Inessa Armand: Revolutionary and Feminist* (Cambridge UP, 2002)

Engel, Barbara Alpern, *Women in Russia, 1700-2000* (Cambridge UP, 2004)

Goldman, Wendy Z., *Women, the State, and Revolution: Society, Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge UP, 1995)

Kollontai, Alexandra, *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, Alix Holt, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1980)

Mickenberg, Julia L., *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet Dream* (University of Chicago Press, 2017)

Novikova, Natalia and Muravyeva, Marianna, *Women's History in Russia: (Re)Establishing the Field* (Cambridge UP, 2014)

Porter, Cathy, *Aleksandra Kollontai: A Biography*. 2nd revised edition (London: Merlin Press Ltd. 2013)

Stites, Richard, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton UP, 1991)

Trotsky, Leon, *Women and the Family* (Pathfinder Press, 1970)

Wood, Elizabeth A., *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Indiana UP, 1997)

SEXUAL AND GAY LIBERATION

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Curator and Artists Biographies

Masha Chlenova (Ph.D., Columbia University; b. 1973 Moscow; has lived and worked in New York since 1995) is a curator and modernist art historian specializing in the Russian avant-garde. She has worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and The Museum of Modern Art where she co-organized a major survey of abstraction across media entitled *Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925* with Leah Dickerman. This exhibition and its publication won awards from the International Association of Art Critics, the Association of Art Museum Curators, The Association of American Publishers, and the Dedalus Foundation. Her writing has appeared in the journal *October* and in publications of the Guggenheim Museum, MoMA, Tate Modern, Royal Academy of Arts in London and Art Institute of Chicago. She recently contributed a chapter to a monograph on Wacław Szpakowski, the Polish abstract artist of the 1920s-30s, and organized the first extensive presentation of his work in the United States in the exhibition *Grounding Vision: Wacław Szpakowski*, held at Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York in January 2017. She served as curatorial consultant for the upcoming exhibition on the Russian avant-garde at the Art Institute of Chicago entitled *Revolutsiia! Demonstratsiia! Soviet Art Put to the Test, 1917-37* and contributed an essay to its catalogue. Her other publications in 2017 include: "Soviet Museology in the Cultural Revolution: An Educational Turn, 1928-33" in the French peer-reviewed journal *Histoire@Politique* and "Soviet Art in Review: 'Fifteen Years of Artists of the Russian Soviet Republic' in Leningrad, 1932" in *Revolution: Russian Art, 1917-32*, John Millner and Natalia Murray, eds. London: Royal Academy of Arts. Since 2015 she has been teaching art history at The New School and in April 2017, she began as a project-based curator at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, where she is initiating a multi-year research and exhibition project dedicated to the Stedelijk's outstanding collection of Russian modernism and is organizing a major exhibition of Willem de Kooning.



Yevgeniy Fiks (b. 1972, Moscow; has lived and worked in New York since 1994) is a contemporary artist who works across mediums and disciplines, producing artworks, exhibitions, and books that seek out and explore repressed microhistorical narratives that highlight the complex relationships between social histories of the West and the Soviet bloc in the 20th century. Fiks's work has been shown at Winkleman and Postmasters galleries (New York), the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Marat Guelman Gallery (Moscow), Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros (Mexico City), and the Museu Coleção Berardo (Lisbon). His work has been included in the Biennale of Sydney (2008), Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011), and Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2015). His most recent projects include the installation *Óptica Bronstein* (2017) (with Pablo Helguera) in the exhibition *Space Force Construction* at the V-A-C Foundation, Venice; and the curatorial project *In Edenia, a City of the Future* (2017) (with Larissa Babij) in Yermilov Center, Kharkiv, Ukraine. www.yevgeniyfiks.com


Anton Ginzburg (b. 1974, St. Petersburg; has lived and worked in New York since 1992) is a contemporary artist known for his films, sculptures, paintings, and text-based printed work investigating historical narratives and poetic studies of place, representation, and post-Soviet identity. His work has been shown at the fifty-fourth Venice Biennale, the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston, Palais de Tokyo in Paris, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, White Columns in New York, Lille3000 in Euralille, France, and the first and second Moscow Biennales. His films have been screened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Les Rencontres Internationales in Paris, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. Recent and forthcoming projects include *Stargaze: Orion* (2016), a 24-foot outdoor sculpture commission for the U.S. Embassy in Moscow (Art in Embassies), as well as screenings of his recent films at Whitechapel Gallery in London on October 1, 2017 and at Anthology Film Archives in New York on November 28, 2017. His work will be the subject of a one-person exhibition at Fridman Gallery in New York, November 14 - December 23, 2017. www.antonginzburg.com



Public Programs

Friday, October 27, 2017, 3:00pm, **IFPDA Print Fair**: Curator **Masha Chlenova** will give a lecture entitled “Embattled Images: Print Culture in the Russian Revolution,” followed by a Q&A session. Tickets: www.printfair.com. 5:00pm: Following her IFPDA talk, Chlenova will lead a walkthrough of the exhibition at IPCNY for IPCNY Members and IFPDA VIPs.

Saturday, October 28, 2017, 1:00–4:00pm, 524 West 26th Street, Ground Floor: Exhibiting artist **Yevgeniy Fiks**, working with **Bushwick Print Lab**, will lead “Obama, Trump, and the Russian Revolution,” a poster-making workshop exploring the use of re-purposed Russian Revolutionary imagery to satirize contemporary American politicians. Using a selection of thematic imagery, participants will let their political subconscious run loose to reveal what philosopher Boris Groys defined as “Russia as the West’s subconscious.” Free and open to the public.



Tuesday, November 28, 2017, 6:45pm and 9:00pm, **Anthology Film Archives**: “Show & Tell: Anton Ginzburg.” Two screenings of exhibiting artist **Anton Ginzburg**’s short films, each followed by Q&A sessions. Tickets: www.anthologyfilmarchives.org.

Thursday, November 30, 2017, 7:00pm at IPCNY: “Lily Golden, Harry Haywood, Langston Hughes, Yelena Khanga, Claude McKay, Paul Robeson, Robert Robinson on Soviet Jews” (2017). A performative reading organized by **Yevgeniy Fiks** which traces the history of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union between the 1920s and 1980s via memoirs of Soviet citizens of African American descent and African Americans who resided in or visited the USSR. Curator introduction and exhibition viewing at 6:00pm. Free and open to the public.

Friday, December 1, 2017, all day, **Columbia University**: In collaboration with the Harriman Institute, Columbia University, curator **Masha Chlenova** and Harriman Postdoctoral Research Scholar **Maria Ratanova** have organized an academic conference where leading scholars of Soviet modernism, including **Maria Gough** (Harvard University), **Dan Healey** (University of Oxford), **Christina Kiaer** (Northwestern University), **Julia Mickenberg** (University of Texas, Austin), and **Kate Baldwin** (Northwestern University), will address key topics of the exhibition, while Chlenova, **Yevgeniy Fiks** and **Anton Ginzburg** will discuss responsibility towards Russian revolutionary history and its legacy in a round-table. More information: www.harriman.columbia.edu.



Credits

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Cover images: Front, **Yevgeniy Fiks**. *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, 2015. Screenprint. 30 x 36 in. Back, **Anton Ginzburg**. *Zaum ESL#2*. 2017. Anodized print on aluminum. 12 x 24 in. Images © 2017 the artists..

International Print Center New York (IPCNY) is New York’s flagship non-profit arts institution dedicated to the innovative presentation of prints by emerging, established, national, and international artists. Founded in 2000, the print center is a vibrant hub and exhibition space located in New York’s Chelsea gallery district. IPCNY’s artist-centered approach engages the medium in all its varied potential, and includes guest-curated exhibitions that present dynamic, new scholarship as well as biannual New Prints open-call exhibitions for work created in the last twelve months. A lively array of public programs engages audiences more deeply with the works on display. A 501(c)(3) institution, IPCNY depends on foundation, government, and individual support, as well as members’ contributions to fund its programs.

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