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Hope, Despair, and the Struggle for Survival

Everyday Life in Revolutionary Petrograd Through the Eyes of Edith Almedingen and Zinaida Hippius

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The Russian Revolution brought vast changes to the inhabitants of Petrograd. The capital of the Russian Empire experienced the collapse of the Tsarist government in the liberal February Revolution 1917 and the Bolshevik takeover in October. The central political processes and social uprisings took place in Petrograd. The city represents both Tsarist authority and people's rebellion. However it is questionable whether for most people the political changes themselves were tangible or even relevant. From the perspective of individuals not directly involved in politics, a revolution brings uncertainty about one's own future and that of one's family. Questions about safety, income, and food become important, simply because they are in people's direct experience. Then there is the question of how people coped with the challenges arising, and whether they were merely passive victims of the revolutionary circumstances or indeed actively engaged in the process.

This study investigates this issue of everyday problems and coping mechanisms by switching the perspective to that of people who were not or at least at some point no longer involved in revolutionary politics: the Russian-English novelist and historian Edith Almedingen (1898-1971) and the Russian poet Zinaida Hippius (1869-1945). Both women lived in the Petrograd during the Russian Revolution and the Civil War and had to cope with plenty of daily challenges.

There is not much secondary literature on Edith Almedingen. This study primarily relies on the information that Almedingen herself provided in her autobiographical accounts. To a large extent, these can be confirmed by an entry about her in the *Third Book of Junior Authors* and a review article on one of her works. Edith Martha Almedingen, née Marta Aleksandrovna Almedingen, was born the seventh child of Olga Poltoratsky and Alexander Almedingen in the neighbourhood of the famous Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Both parents were of aristocratic origin. Edith's father abandoned the family before she turned two, so that Edith and her mother had to move away from the city centre to Vassily Island and lived in poverty.[1] Also because her mother educated young Edith privately, she could attend the prestigious Xénia Institute until 1916 and afterwards Petrograd University. Almedingen

[1] Edith M. Almedingen, *My St. Petersburg : a reminiscence of childhood* (New York: W.W. Norton 1970) 18-19.

would leave Russia for England in 1922. In England she wrote numerous novels and historical studies and taught at Oxford University.[2]

Zinaida Hippius[3] is better known than Almedingen, but most literature on her focuses on Hippius's literary works and not on her personal life. Hippius was born in the Russian province of Tula. Her father Nikolai was a lawyer and high official. Due to the opportunities afforded her father, the family often had to move to new cities. Hippius's father died from tuberculosis when she was twelve years old. Hippius was privately educated, and had been writing poems from a young age. She married the poet Dmitry Merezhkovsky in 1889, and soon thereafter they moved to St. Petersburg. The two became known as Symbolist writers in the Russian 'Silver Age'. Russian Symbolists regarded aesthetics as a value in its own right. For Symbolists, art was a medium of philosophical insights, and they wanted to use their art, in order to create a new culture.[4] Hippius was religious and politically active. She supported the liberal Provisional Government after the February Revolution, and was an opponent of the Bolsheviks. In 1919 Hippius and Merezhkovsky emigrated to Poland and later to Paris where they continued to publish anti-Bolshevik material.

Thus Almedingen and Hippius experienced the revolutionary upheavals in the same city; both were religious, and educated and skilled observers. This makes the two in many ways comparable and productive observers of everyday life in revolutionary Petrograd. As the history of the Russian Revolution had largely been written by men, it is fruitful to investigate female voices. Yet there were also differences between the Hippius and Almedingen: Almedingen was unpolitical, while Hippius put forward strong political positions. The greatest difference between Almedingen and Hippius was their social and material situation. Despite her noble origin, Almedingen always had to live in poverty and had no connections to politicians or intellectuals, while Hippius and her husband were part of the Intelligentsia and materially comparably well-off. The following thesis will be concerned with how these differences played out in both women's coping strategies.

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[2] Doris De Montreville and Donna Hill (eds.), 'E.M. Almedingen,' *Third Book of Junior Authors* (New York: H.W. Wilson 1972) 10.

[3] 'Hippius' is spelled 'Gippius' in Russian, but Hippius prefered the Latin version of her last name.

[4] Other famous Symbolists were Valery Bryusov, Aleksandr Blok, and Andrey Bely. For an overview of the development of Symbolism, see Ronald E. Peterson, *A History of Russian Symbolism* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1993).

Primary Sources

Both Almedingen and Hippius not only experienced Petrograd in war and revolution, but they also put them on record. Almedingen's autobiography *Tomorrow Will Come* (first published in 1941) provides detailed personal stories which Almedingen experienced prior to and during the revolution. It is a valuable source for a close reading, as Almedingen was in the midst of bread queues and hospitals, the common everyday experience in Petrograd. Almedingen's autobiography on her childhood *My St. Petersburg : a reminiscence of childhood* (1970) will be used supplementarily. It reveals more about her as a person and the pre-revolutionary period.

Almedingen's apolitical attitude supports her reliability as a witness. There appears to be no clear political interest in portraying daily life in Tsarist Russia as better or worse than that in Bolshevik Russia. More importantly, Almedingen's education in history and her local knowledge of Petrograd should be acknowledged. Her historical research should have also taught her to engage critically with potential biases. At the same time, the format of the autobiographies have to be considered. These personal memoirs are well-written and engaging like a novel. It was important to entertain the audience. *Tomorrow Will Come* was first published in 1941, about 20 years after the fact, and *My St. Petersburg* even later. This is a long time to remember the concrete dialogues which are presented in the works. Almedingen mentioned that she wrote diaries at the time, although not covering the entire period.[5] It is not clear which parts of the autobiographies are based on her diaries and which on her memory.

Zinaida Hippius kept various diaries during the revolution which are collected in *Dnevniki* (2 Vols.; 1999), edited by the historian of literature Alexandr N. Nikolyukin. They mostly document contemporary politics and Hippius's interpretation of them. More important for this study and valuable for a close reading are Hippius' diaries from 1919: In the *Black Booklet (Chernaya Knizhka),* its preface and the *Grey Notebook (Sery Bloknot)* she wrote about more personal matters. Hippius's diaries were written down immediately which is in favour of their accuracy. It is not clear whether Hippius thought that there was a chance of publishing her diaries later on. During the research it has to be considered that Hippius' anti-Bolshevik bias might have affected her perspective even of non-political issues;

[5] Edith M. Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell P 1983 [1941]) 215.

however, her knowledge of the larger context also helped her understand everyday events and rumours better.

In the following supplementary sources will be used, in order to illustrate some of the points made by the two women. *Russia in War and Revolution, 1914-1922: a documentary history* (2009), edited by the historians Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov, provides more details of how people survived on a daily basis. In particular, rector Vladimir Ziornov's descriptions of dealing with the shortages at a provincial university is a productive addition to Almedingen's descriptions of her own university life in Petrograd. Lastly, Zinaida Shakhovskaya's account comes from a different perspective in terms of age and class. The nobly born Shakhovskaya was ten years old at the time of the February Revolution and attended a girl's school. She was later to become a Russian émigré writer and published the article 'The February Revolution as Seen by a Child' (1967).

Historiography of the Russian Revolution

In broad terms Western historical research on the Russian Revolution has shifted from political to social and cultural history. Political history focuses on political parties and ideologies, while social history takes ordinary people into consideration in political processes, and cultural history studies symbols and language.

In 1983, the historian Ronald Suny outlined the difficult situation of Western historians to find common ground, in order to explain the Bolshevik ascend to power during the October Revolution in 1917. In the context of the Cold War, political views in terms of sympathy or disdain for Russian Communism almost inevitably shaped the outcomes of research to some extent. According to Suny until the 1960s the top-down rationales of political history prevailed. The focus was on the Tsarist, Provisional and Bolshevik governments and their ideological underpinnings. The narrative of the October Revolution concentrated on single-minded leaders such as Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky and an allegedly homogenous Bolshevik party.[6]

Suny showed that social history of the Russian Revolution had become more prevalent in the 1970s. Social historians took the role and agency of previously neglected groups such as workers, soldiers and peasants more seriously and shifted the spotlight of

[6] Ronald G. Suny, 'Toward a Social History of the October Revolution,' *American Historical Review* 88:1 (1983) 31-52; therein: 32.

analysis to the impact of popular social division on political events. From this point of view, the end of the Tsarist régime was "largely spontaneous action by thousands of hungry, angry, and war-weary women and men."[7] Those people felt alienated by the autocracy. Another deep-seated societal divide became apparent in the course of the revolution: Especially workers were increasingly opposed to more moderate political parties. Their radicalisation helped explain the descent of the Provisional Government and the ascent of the Bolsheviks.[8]

Since the publication of Suny's article, research has evolved significantly. In their articles on the occasion of the revolution's centenary in 2017, the historians Steven Smith and Rex Wade traced the more recent development of the historiography of the Russian Revolution, although each with a different focus. While according to Wade earlier works had already widened the timeframe, both Wade and Smith noted that especially research from the turn of the millenium broadened the focus of the revolutionary events in a 'continuum of crisis' between 1914 and 1921. This perspective emphasised the significance of the First World War in the revolutionary events and in turn the Russian Civil War in shaping the institutional structure of the USSR. The revolution was then delineated as attached to European history at the outset of the twentieth century.[9]

Smith and Wade also stated that the collapse of the Soviet Union had a profound impact on research: Vast amounts of archival material became accessible for both Russian and Western historians. This was especially significant for research in the provinces which hitherto had been forbidden territory for noncitizens of the Soviet Union.[10] Regional studies considered the role of ethnicities and other minorities in the revolution. Matters of gender have also increasingly been taken into account in studies such as on soldiers' wives, female soldiers and workers.[11] Importantly, much of this more recent research was undertaken against the backdrop of the cultural and linguistic turns. Cultural history has become more

[7] Ibidem, 34.
[8] Ibidem, 34-35.
[9] Rex Wade, 'The Revolution at One Hundred: Issues and Trends in the English Language Historiography of the Russian Revolution of 1917,' *Journal of Modern Russian History and Historiography* 9:1 (2016) 9–38; therein: 36; Steven Smith, 'The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On,' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16:4 (2015) 733–749; therein: 735. Smith also pointed to other notable developments in the historiography of the Russian Revolution. These included the emergence of the 'modernity school' which was inspired by Michel Foucault and put the revolution in the context of European modernisation of government and science; it also highlighted the role of violence. German scholars examined brutality as well, although they were more cautious than the 'modernity school' in assuming that violence stemmed from the Bolsheviks' beliefs (738-739).
[10] Wade, 'Historiography,' 34-35; Smith, 'Historiography,' 740.
[11] Wade, 'Historiography,' 25.

prevalent since the 1990s. As Rex Wade put it, historians leaning towards cultural approaches came to regard the Russian Revolution

> "[...] on one level as an arena of competing symbolic systems that attempted to define groups, identify enemies, and mobilize supporters behind programs and actions, and lay claim to popular symbols, words, dress, and slogans."[12]

While cultural approaches indeed enriched our understanding of the revolution, 'high' and everyday culture during the revolution have largely been neglected by historians. For the most part, researchers only touched upon certain aspects of culture, though mostly not everyday life of the populace. As Wade rightly pointed out, it appears to be challenging to find patterns in people's routines during a time as disruptive as in Russia in war and revolution. However there are important questions to be answered, such as

> "[...] how people continued to go about their lives (or did not) with shopping and eating, getting around the city or countryside, did or did not do their jobs, family and other personal relationships, how they coped with the ongoing demonstrations, crises, and other public disorders."[13]

Indeed, irrespective of whether the people were politically active or not, workers, soldiers and peasants also lived private lives. To investigate these would enrich our understanding of the revolution. Shifting the perspective to people for whom the political events were far away from their everyday concerns implies 'democratising' the history of the Russian Revolution. It means considering those groups whose agency has often been doubted.

Method and Procedure

This study relies on contemporary approaches to the history of everyday life. The history of everyday life, or *Alltagsgeschichte,* started to attract the attention of German historians in the 1970s, among them most prominently Alf Lüdtke. It was influenced by cultural studies and anthropology, and impugned prevailing understandings both of political and social history. Everyday history does not look at societal averages. According to Lüdtke it asks about specific forms of expression of individuals and groups and how they deal with societal rewards and demands. This includes people's work and freetime, their physical surroundings and social relationships. It emphasises particularities and depth, and asks open 'how'

[12] Ibidem, 19.
[13] Ibidem, 24.

questions. Importantly, Lüdtke underlined that the history of daily life is not to be regarded as a scholarly field. It is best understood as a different angle from which historical questions can be investigated.[14]

It is difficult to draw clear boundaries between areas of everyday life. How could the experience of working in a factory be separated from the friendships one might develop with one's fellow workers? In fact there is not even an academic consensus on how to define the seemingly simple notion of 'daily life', or which domains are included and excluded from this term.[15] Lüdtke did not think that classification was problematic, quite the contrary. An integrative perspective allows one to recognise "grey areas of 'neither/nor' actions and choices."[16]

This thesis attempts to answer the question: What do Edith Almedingen's and Zinaida Hippius's accounts reveal about daily life in revolutionary Petrograd? By using Lüdtke's open approach this study will largely be source-driven. In line with the trend to view the Russian Revolution in the context of the First World War from 1914 and the Civil War up until 1922, this study will also take into account the extended revolutionary period.

Following Lüdtke, it is not the primary goal to describe daily life in terms of food prices. Rather it will be central to find out which demands Hippius and Almedingen faced and how they coped with them. Were the two women passive and unconscious victims of political circumstances beyond their control? Or did they actively and creatively engage with their everyday reality? Coping does not only extend to physical actions, but also encompasses emotions and making sense of the revolutionary circumstances.

The first chapter of this study traces the historiography of everyday life. It considers important questions that are raised by the academic literature and that potentially can be answered by the primary sources. French and German historians were the first ones to engage with daily life from a historical perspective. The historiography of everyday life in the early Soviet period was inspired by German historians' works. Studies on the 1920s and '30s offer important clues for revolutionary daily life, also because of the proximity timewise and

[14] Alf Lüdtke, 'Introductory Notes,' In *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion,* edited by Alf Lüdtke (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2016) 4-5.
[15] Andreas Eckert and Adam Jones, 'Introduction: Historical Writing about Everyday Life,' *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 15:1 (2002) 5–16; therein: 5.
[16] Lüdtke, 'Introductory Notes,' 5.

the changing nature of daily life. Lastly previous studies related to revolutionary daily culture will be examined.

As Alf Lüdtke pointed out, it is challenging to classify daily life, because seemingly separate realms belong together. This study attempts to distill from its primary sources elements of coping into three chapters, that is, the political aspect of daily life, survival in the revolutionary environment, and social matters. The second chapter investigates how political life penetrated into the daily experiences. What did it mean for Hippius to write about politics as a way of coping with revolutionary circumstances? How were new Bolshevik political structures noticeable in people's daily life even if their political knowledge was limited? The third chapter delves into all the means and strategies which people used to deal with immediate problems. In particular, the difficulty of finding and keeping work, shelter and enough food will be examined. Here differences in material possessions, between Hippius and Almedingen, and their impact on coping strategies will be discussed as well. Hippius's views of how ordinary citizens reacted to the revolution is also of interest.

If the revolution influenced people's psychologies, the fourth chapter focuses on how the effects on their relationships with both their families and strangers were. How did Almedingen and Hippius deal with the death of close relatives? The question of whether people became more selfish in times of shortages or if there was still cooperation present will also be addressed. The thesis concludes by highlighting the outcomes and placing them within the context of the academic debate.

1. The Study of Everyday Life

The Origins: French and German Historiography

Issues in daily living have already been taken into consideration by historical research from the early 20th century onwards. According to the historian Vladislav Aksenov it was the French 'Annales school of historiography' which started to investigate routines and psychology of 'simple' people, yet the term 'everyday' as a point of reference for historians was proposed by Fernand Braudel only in the 1960s.[17] Braudel belonged to the second generation of Annales scholars. In *Civilisation Matérielle, Economie et Capitalisme* (1979) Braudel outlined the complex and evolving nature of material culture between the 15th and the 18th centuries.[18] Most innovative of Braudel's work was his perspective on time. In his view the *longue durée* was the decisive perspective on history which explained many structural continuities. For example Braudel examined the living conditions in Europe between 1400 and 1800 and found a persistency in the low life expectancy. This led him to call this period a "long-lasting biological *ancien régime*".[19]

The integration of economics with everyday culture and indeed the long-term perspective on history are Braudel's main achievements. These justify Braudel's approaches to become mainstream in France. However according to the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm the Annales school had already started losing its clout both domestically and internationally after 1968.[20] It is true that Braudel's theory and methodology were vague in part. And historians inclined to social anthropology rightly questioned Braudel's view of an an almost ahistorical material culture of the everyday. Hans Medick emphasised the complexity and inconsistency of everyday history. Medick argued that everyday history deserves to be investigated in its own right vis-á-vis the great historical processes.[21]

Medick's arguments were to be considered by historians. In the 1970s *Alltagsgeschichte* or the history of everyday life started to attract the attention of German

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[17] Vladislav B. Aksenov, 'Povsednevnaia zhizn Petrograda i Moskvy,' Candidate diss., Moscow Pedagogical State University (2002) 4-5.

[18] Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme (XVe–XVIIIe siècles),* 3 Vols. (Paris: Colin 1979). For the English translation see Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century,* 3 Vols. (New York et al.: Harper & Row 1981).

[19] Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism. Vol 1: The Structures of Everyday Life* (New York et al.: Harper & Row 1981) 90.

[20] Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times : a Twentieth-Century Life* (London et al.: Allen Lane 2002) 295.

[21] Hans Medick, ''Missionare im Ruderboot?' Ethnologische Erkenntnisweisen als Herausforderung an die Sozialgeschichte,' In *Alltagsgeschichte : Zur Rekonstruktion Historischer Erfahrungen Und Lebensweisen,* edited by Alf Lüdtke (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Campus 1989) 49.

historians. *Alltagsgeschichte* emerged also because new approaches to understand East Germany were necessary. Historians of daily life argued that that the functioning of the East German society cannot be fully understood if one merely studies the party and the state. Instead they embraced switching the perspective to that of 'ordinary' people.[22] *Alltagsgeschichte: Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (1989), edited by the historian Alf Lüdtke, was the first book to summarise approaches to the history of daily life. Though slightly varying in methodology, a common denominator of all the works in this volume is that they did not take a statist point of view; this would view everyday life as a collection of routine activities, and only a few exceptional people could step out of the routine and 'make' history. Instead, the authors elevated ordinary people to both objects and subjects of history.[23]

The emergence of the historiography of everyday life was far from unanimously appreciated. Historians of the 'Bielefeld school' inclined to the social sciences fiercely criticized the new scholarly research as 'unscientific' and 'irrational'. Jürgen Kocka argued that historians should see history as by and large a unitary process. According to him, this enables us to explain major interrelations between past and present. By way of this focus, the 'Bielefeld school' argued that the repetition of daily activities out to be excluded to understanding history as a whole.[24] The criticism of the history of everyday life also had a political dimension: Conservative critics saw in it an attack on the achievements of Western civilisation. Left-wingers were triggered by a seemingly unchallenged sympathy for ordinary people who often enough facilitate repression by states.[25]

Thus a seemingly simple change in perspective did have profound implications of our view of history. Lüdtke explained historian's resistance towards the 'everyday turn' in that the research undermined the standard notion of Western rationality by relating it to the experience of the ordinary.[26] Yet the more monographs and articles were published, the more established and internationally recognised it became. In fact, according to the historian

[22] Heléna Huhák, Review of *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion,* edited by Alf Lüdtke, *The Hungarian Historical Review* 7:4 (2018) 845–849; therein: 845.
[23] Alf Lüdtke, 'Einleitung: Was ist und wer treibt Alltagsgeschichte?' In *Alltagsgeschichte : Zur Rekonstruktion Historischer Erfahrungen Und Lebensweisen,* edited by Alf Lüdtke (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Campus 1989) 12.
[24] Jürgen Kocka, 'Geschichte als Aufklärung?' In *Die Zukunft der Aufklärung*, edited by Jörn Rüsen, Eberhard Lämmert, and Peter Glotz (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 1988) 91-98.
[25] Lüdtke, 'Einleitung,' 16-17.
[26] Ibidem, 15-17.

Heléna Huhák, Lüdtke's everyday approach has turned into a predominant tendency in the analysis of totalitarian states.[27] This of course includes the Soviet Union.

Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia

Most historical research on Soviet daily life so far went into the 1920s and 30s. When the necessities of the Civil War ceased, not only had a new state to be built, but also some kind of daily life for the Soviet subjects. And Stalin's 'revolution from above' had its own particularities for the *Homo Sovieticus*, including the First Five-Year Plan and the collectivisation.[28]

A major initial work on everyday life during the early Soviet period was *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (1995) by the historian Stephen Kotkin. He studied daily life of citizens in the city of Magnitogorsk in the Urals in the 1930s. Like some of the German historians of everyday life, Kotkin made use of Michel Foucault's discourse analysis. Kotkin analysed the complex interplay in the power relations between individual and state with a particular focus on engagement and resistance. Kotkin emphasised the extent to which state power permeated into the lives of private individuals and built a model for examining these relations.[29] This raises the question of whether or how political power during the Russian Revolution and the Civil War was (or was not) visible in the life of citizens.

The historian Catriona Kelly acknowledged the innovative character of Kotkin's study, but found that Kotkin took a reductionist approach by overemphasizing power. According to her, Kotkin left out not only important parts of daily life such as family and intimate relationships, but also continuities in traditional pre-revolutionary leisure time activities in Magnitogorsk inherited.[30] Kelly also outlined a tendency of historical analysis of Russian everyday life: On the one hand, the change of worldviews and behaviours was

[27] Huhák, Review, 845.

[28] It is beyond the scope of this review to take into consideration all research by Western and Russian historians, anthropologists, and other scholars on everyday life in pre- and post-revolutionary Russia. For an overview of pre-revolutionary and Soviet ethnography, see Catriona Kelly, 'Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Chronicles of the Quotidian in Russia and the Soviet Union,' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3:4 (2002) 631-651; therein: 632-635. Kelly showed that the height of Soviet ethnography was in the 1960s when repression in the Soviet Union declined (634). Kelly also pointed out the relationship between literary realism and research on daily culture. She argued that the approaches alike are "employed in a 'prosaics' of small details, tolerant inclusivity, mistrust of the extraordinary as of the metaphysical, and sense of the infinitesimal slowness of change" (631).

[29] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California P 1995) 23.

[30] Kelly, 'Ordinary Life,' 639-641.

emphasised, as in the case of *Magnetic Mountain.* On the other hand, permanence was in the centre of scholarly attention. In her monograph *Everyday Stalinism : Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s,* the historian Sheila Fitzpatrick managed to encapsulate both elements of continuity and change, and transcend Kotkin's analytical lense between conformity and resistance, according to Kelly.[31] Fitzpatrick did think that the Soviet state in the 1930s was central for private lives. This led her to include the connectedness to the state in her definition of the 'everyday'.[32] Yet it is true that she covered considerably more themes of daily life than Kotkin.

In general Fitzpatrick showed how people created some degree of continuity and order in these disruptive times. Of particular interest for this study is 'Hard Times', the second chapter of *Everyday Stalinism*. In the chapter Fitzpatrick gave a substantial overview of shortages and respective coping mechanisms. And the enormous difficulty for Soviet people to obtain goods was reflected in their language: One did not "buy" things anymore, but merely searched for goods "hard to get hold of". Bread, milk, meat, and basic artisan goods were obtainable either by standing in long queues or often enough not at all. Houses in cities were immensely overcrowded which provoked conflicts and denunciation between the involuntary roommates: "For the greater part of the urban population, life revolved around the endless struggle to get the basics necessary for survival—food, clothing, shelter."[33] Importantly, the people used a lot of effort and creativity in meeting these basics, and survived the hardships. It was not uncommon to fictitiously marry or divorce someone just in order to gain an advantage in the competition for a modest space to stay in a house.[34]

Writing in 2008, the historian Jan Plamper argued that Kotkin's and Fitzpatrick's works turned into distinct historiographical schools with a significant impact in the overall development of American historiography of the Stalin era. Kotkin's Columbia' school, also known as 'modernity' school uses historical-genealogical comparisons. Fitzpatrick's 'Chicago school' leans more towards political science and emphasises the non-modern

[31] Ibidem, 639-641.
[32] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism : Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP 1999) 3. For an intriguing comparative perspective of everyday life, see Sheila Fitzpatrick and Alf Lüdtke, 'Energizing the Everyday : On the Breaking and Making of Social Bonds in Nazism and Stalinism,' in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared,* edited by Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2008) 266-301. The authors argued that in both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia many people felt motivated to serve greater purpose of the totalitarian society which transformed their everyday interactions with others.
[33] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 41.
[34] Ibidem, 46.

elements in the Stalinist society.[35] The fact that two of the most influential scholars on the Soviet Union started using this approach shows how important the examination of daily life in historical research has become.

Daily living has also been under examination from different theoretical approaches. While Fitzpatrick did include linguistic characteristics under Stalinism, it was even more so a focus of the contributors to *Everyday Life In Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (2005), edited by the art historian Christina Kiaer and literary scholar Eric Naiman. The scholars did not only make use of the recent 'linguistic turn' in historiography, but also created an impressive interdisciplinary project on daily life. "Ultimately, this turn pulls historians into the territory of novelists, as the desire to explain what historical actors believed or felt encourages new historiographic forms of close, imaginative, self-consciously heuristic reading."[36] This also means to take the agency of 'ordinary' individuals more seriously and not viewing them merely as mechanic entities within a constraining structure. Furthermore it suggests that writing history 'from below' means observing the *meaning* constructed by individuals (as opposed to the approach of the Annales school which focused on the material aspect of everyday culture).

Previous Research on Revolutionary Everyday Life

As noted, for long historical research on the Russian Revolution leaned towards political history, while social and later cultural approaches were used later on. Here the few previous studies related to revolutionary culture will be outlined, naturally with an emphasis on everyday culture.

A notable work in the context of the new attention to culture and language since the 1990s is historian Mark Steinberg's *Voices of Revolution* (2003).[37] He collected various primary documents, in order to explore what the revolution meant for participants and observers, especially the less powerful and more indigent parts of the population. Steinberg found that the same words could be used with an entirely different meaning. While Steinberg's approach indeed enriches our understanding of the revolution, 'high' and

[35] Jan Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries: Popular Opinion in Stalinism,' In *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism,* edited by Paul Corner (Oxford: Oxford UP 2009) 64–80; therein: 68-69.
[36] Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman, 'Introduction,' in *Everyday Life In Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*, edited by Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP 2006) 4.
[37] Mark D. Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution, 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003).

everyday culture during the revolution have largely been neglected by historians. A rare example of studies which considered diverse elements of culture such as fashion, money, and music are two volumes of *Russian Culture in War and Revolution* (2014) consider. The authors concluded that despite lack and hunger during the revolution artistic productions did not decline, as culture was believed to have the power to change society. Also, many people had the serious need to understand the events in their country; others felt the urge to run away from the harsh realities of everyday life.[38] The editors further argued that from a cultural point of view the revolutionary year of 1917 was less less salient, and even the period from 1914 to 1922 was "a transitional rather than a revolutionary one for culture".[39] For instance, the research showed that traditional celebrations have remained part of the culture of the new Soviet state's citizens.

A couple of studies touched upon daily life more specifically. The historian Tsuyoshi Hasegawa studied crime in revolutionary Petrograd in *Crime and Punishment in the Russian Revolution* (2017). Hasegawa made productive use of the sociological theory of anomie which offers a framework to analyse the mechanisms of societal cohesion (or, in the case of the revolution, societal breakdown). This approach was combined with sociologist Max Weber's theory of the failed state, emphasising the crucial state function to provide its citizens with security. Hasegawa then argued that exploding violence and mob justice and the police force's inability to cope with those coupled with the disintegration of daily life worked in favour of the Bolsheviks.[40]

Hasegawa distinguished between 'revolutionising' and 'revolutionised' parts of the population. The 'revolutionising' people were revolutionary actors such as politicians and members of trade unions. The 'revolutionised' in turn were not actively involved in the upheavals, although they responded to the events. While many among the upper and middle classes were passive, Hasegawa concentrated on the poor in Petrograd. Most likely their reactions to the events were expressed in violence instead of letters and pamphlets. Hasegawa painted a bleak picture of the reality of the many. Their everyday life was characterised by insufficient lighting, electricity, malnutrition, and above all a constant danger of being a

[38] Murray Frame et al., 'Preface,' in *Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914-22,* edited by Murray Frame et al. (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2014) xx.
[39] Ibidem, xxi.
[40] Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Crime and Punishment in the Russian Revolution : Mob Justice and Police in Petrograd* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP 2017) 2; therein: 12-15.

victim of crime.[41] Hasegawa emphasised the psychological function of violence, that is, it was "the outpouring of frustrations over lives worsening by the day" and "symbolized the fleeting empowerment of the urban poor."[42]

Hasegawa convincingly demonstrated how a mostly nonpolitical issue such as crime related to the political events of 1917 onwards. Although his main focus is not on daily life, his conclusions indeed suggest to take the daily experience as a factor in the revolutionary events more seriously. Hasegawa built some of his study's methodology from Vladislav Aksenov's PhD dissertation *Povsednevnaia zhizn Petrograda i Moskvy* (2002); in particular the juxtaposition of 'revolutionising' and 'revolutionised' people.[43] Russian historians in general were more active in the examination of revolutionary everyday life than their Western counterparts. Steven Smith even observed an 'anthropological turn' in Russian historiography.[44] These works concentrated on the dynamics of conformism in Soviet Russia, [45] and the life of soldiers and prisoners of war[46]. Unfortunately the studies are not available to the author of this thesis; however far more related to the topic of the thesis is indeed Aksenov's dissertation. This is the only study so far exclusively concerned with the big picture of revolutionary everyday life in the cities of Moscow and Petrograd in 1917. Aksenov concluded that the revolutionary upheavals penetrated into all spheres of daily life. He emphasised the people's psychological stress, especially those of children. For the 'revolutionised', the street and public transport became a dangerous space, because violence and illnesses were likely to encounter. The threats consequently spilled over to private housing. Domestic 'coziness' was jeopardised by robberies and the interruption of water supply. According to Aksenov the discrepancy between wages and prices and the resulting malnutrition undermined people's productivity at work. Social apathy to politics supported the Bolsheviks in their revolutionary endeavors. Lastly, Aksenov demonstrated that the revolutionary changes were perceived similarly in Petrograd and Moscow.[47]

[41] Ibidem, 9-11.
[42] Ibidem, 263.
[43] Vladislav B. Aksenov, 'Povsednevnaia zhizn Petrograda i Moskvy,' Candidate diss., Moscow Pedagogical State University (2002) 29.
[44] Smith, 'Historiography,' 736.
[45] Sergei V. Iarov, *Konformizm v Sovetskoi Rossii: Petrograd, 1917–20 gg.* (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom 2006).
[46] Olga M. Morozova, *Antropologiia grazhdanskoi voiny* (Rostov-on-Don: Iuzhnyi nauchnyi tsentr RAN 2012).
[47] Aksenov, 'Povsednevnaia zhizn,' 200-203.

Aksenov's dissertation gives a useful overview of the different spheres of daily experience of the *gorozhany* and how these spheres relate to each other. Aksenov neither romanticised the survival of ordinary Russians under harsh conditions which becomes apparent in some of the Russian historians' work on daily life in the 1920s and 30s.[48] Unfortunately Aksenov did not make use of the linguistic turn or any other more recent developments in the historiography of the revolution. He neither mentioned Lüdtke's approach in shifting the perspective, but exactly such an approach would have been more fruitful. Aksenov did consider the psychological situation of ordinary people, yet the analysis still appears to be somewhat descriptive and superficial. Facts and figures of the everyday are important, but in order to not only *know* but to *understand* the situation of the 'revolutionised' people, a true shift in perspective is necessary.

[48] For instance, see Nataliia B. Lebina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii. 1920-e–1930-e gody* (St. Petersburg: Zhurnal 'Neva' and 'Letnii sad' 1999). Lebina concluded her study on the early Soviet period by stating: "Through social openness to others Soviet people turned out to be more than Western people [...] open to friendship and mutual assistance, more capable of surviving in extraordinary living conditions. The care of private life and the priority of informal contacts for solving many life situations ensured [...] the preservation of the spiritual potential of the Russians [...]" ["При внешней социальной открытости советские люди оказались более, чем западные, [...] открытыми к дружбе и взаимопомощи, более способными к выживанию в экстраординарных бытовых условиях. Уход в частную жизнь и приоритетность неформальных контактов для решения многих жизненных ситуаций обеспечивали [...] сохранение духовного потенциала российской [...]"] (187).

2. Coping with the Political Revolution

The Russian Revolution was a political event which saw the autocracy falling in the February of 1917 and the Bolshevik takeover in October. The capital Petrograd was the centre of the political revolution. It was home of the two organs which competed with each other in a situation of 'dual power': The Provisional Government which represented the business interests and Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Yet the majority of people were in no way involved in the events. They were the 'revolutionised', as Aksenov put it. Still, if we want to understand the reality of those people and their (in)ability to act on their circumstances, the political factor is not to be underestimated. Awareness of the political broadened or limited the perspective of the individual, and it may have influence on how he or she perceived their personal life. How did Edith Almedingen and Zinaida Hippius perceive the political landscape of the revolutionary days? And what did this mean for their daily lives?

Context: Almedingen, Hippius, and Politics

In *Tomorrow Will Come* and her other works, Edith Almedingen made almost no political statements for or against the Tsar, the Provisional Government, or the Bolsheviks. In fact, she clearly stated that she did not know anything about the political situation nor was she particularly interested in politics. She read about the political revolution later on: "it was something of an effort to realize that, while those very things were in the process of happening, we, living in their midst, were ignorant of them."[49] Almedingen explained her ignorance about politics that the only means of acquiring information was reading censored newspapers. Almedingen and her mother were no political insiders, and lived on the Vassily Island which was far away from the city centre where the most important revolutionary events took place.[50]

Hippius's location was more favorable in this regard. Her apartment was close to the Tauride Palace which accommodated the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.[51] Hippius was concerned about politics long before 1917. In Hippius's words, she and her husband Merezhkovsky "belonged to that broad circle of the Russian 'intelligentsia'

[49] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 219.
[50] Ibidem, 127;131.
[51] Zinaida Gippius, *Dnevniki*, Vol. 2, edited by Alexandr N. Nikolyukin (Moscow: Intelvak 1999) 183.

which is rightly or wrongly called Russia's 'conscience and reason'"[52]. According to Hippius, this group was unanimously opposed to the Tsarist autocracy. Hippius's political ideals were mostly inspired by her religious views. Literary scholar Temira Pachmuss in *Zinaida Hippius : an Intellectual Profile* pointed out that Hippius had a strong inclination to mysticism and believed in the existence of a higher reality in addition to the bodily world. Through her poetry, religious and political visions, Hippius wanted to prepare humanity for the Apocalypse. Her intention was to realise the Kingdom of God on earth; this did not necessarily encompass far-reaching changes in practical political, as the spiritual dimension was far more important to Hippius.[53] Hippius was opposed to positivism and its goals of "unceasing progress, technological achievement, and the durability of the human race".[54] In her view, the middle class and its bourgeois craving for material abundance was a serious obstacle to reaching her ideal.

Hippius was against Russia's involvement in the First World War, as war facilitated resentment towards other nations which in turn undermined reaching an ecumenical Kingdom of God (although later she virtually came to terms with the war).[55] Hippius met the February Revolution with optimism, but did not favour all revolutionary factions. Hippius was opposed to parties advocating economic materialism such as the Social Democratic Party. This party was established in 1905 and soon split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Although she never attained membership, Hippius prefered the Social Revolutionaries. She saw their program most suitable to the state of affairs of Russia.[56] Already before the revolution, Hippius and her husband were acquaintances of Alexander Kerensky, the Social Revolutionary prime minister of the Provisional Government. "We loved Kerensky. It was in him something spirited, rapturous, and childlike. Despite his hysterical nervousness he appeared to us more perspicacious and sober than many others back then."[57] Regular phone calls with Kerensky helped Hippius to be up to date with the political situation. She also witnessed 'kitchen meetings' in her apartment in which Kerensky and others discussed the questions of the day.[58]

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[52] "[...] мы принадлежали к тому широкому кругу русской 'интеллигенции', которую справедливо или нет, называли 'совестью и разумом' России." Ibidem, 179.
[53] Temira Pachmuss, *Zinaida Hippius : an Intellectual Profile* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 1971) 20; 179-180; 188.
[54] Ibidem, 180.
[55] Ibidem, 181; 186.
[56] Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 181.
[57] "Мы любили Керенского. В нем было что-то живое, порывистое и - детское. Несмотря на свою истерическую нервность, он тогда казался нам дальновиднее и трезвее многих." Ibidem, 184.
[58] Ibidem, 202.

Hippius identified herself with the Provisional Government and its goals, it was "*us*, the same intellectuals, people of which everyone had a *face* to us [...] This is the movement, this is the struggle, this is history."[59] However Hippius was quickly disappointed in Kerensky and the results of the February Revolution. She judged the October Revolution negatively, because she saw in it the end of the struggle for a better Russia.

Political Rumours

In the course of the revolution reliable information became more and more scarce even for formerly politically informed individuals, and both Almedingen and Hippius were increasingly confronted with rumours. Almedingen already mentioned a rumour from 1916 when she still went to school. A classmate of hers said that her mystically inclined aunt predicted that a profound change was about to come in Russia, something not directly related to the war: "She said it all looked like chaos in the country. She said we would live and die in that chaos."[60] Almedingen and her fellow pupils tried to ignore it, but other conspiracies such as "vast sums of money being sent to Germany from Russia"[61] did not create a calm mood among the students.

While in 1916 people could still wish that disturbing rumours were untrue, the actual events could not be ignored. Almedingen did not mention the day when she made those experiences, but it must have been right at the outbreak of the February Revolution. Almedingen was at her friend Gabrielle's house for supper, and Gabrielle's maid Dasha was present. Although Almedingen gave no context about Dasha, considering her occupation we can assume that Dasha probably received little or no political education. The three women heard noise outside. Gabrielle and Almedingen wanted to find out what was going on and looked through the open window. Dasha suddenly shouted to close the window: "For pity's sake, pull the curtains, *baryna* [mistress]! The Cossacks are tearing down the street. The *dvornik* [janitor] says it is the revolution. They are burning down houses, palaces … there is not a train running anywhere … they'll starve us … they'll burn us to death, anti-christs…"[62]

[59] "[...] да ведь это же *мы*, те же интеллигенты, люди, из которых имели для нас свое *лицо* […] Вот движение, вот борьба, вот история." Ibidem, 185.
[60] Ibidem, 96.
[61] Ibidem, 97.
[62] Ibidem, 125.

Dasha's reaction suggests that being politically unaware could lead to absolute uncertainty and outright panic.

Later in the course of the Civil War Almedingen said that no one whom she knew was aware of politics. "Of the broader political principles, as laid down by the Sovnarkom, a great many among us preferred to know nothing. Discussions in public were prohibited. Even private critical outbursts were not always safe."[63] Thus political ignorance was one of Almedingen's background and objective circumstance. At the same time, ignorance was the method of choice in order to avoid getting into trouble. Matters of personal security outweighed interest in politics.

Despite Hippius different social position, she was also forced to rely on rumours. She once knew almost everything about politics, but after October her informational abundance ceased to exist. Hippius did not stand in the centre of political action anymore. Kerensky had fled abroad, and Petrograd was under the 'devil's' control, as Hippius called the Bolsheviks. Hippius had less and less information about the political situation. According to her no one could comprehend the newspapers' content.[64] By mid 1919 Hippius admitted that she had no idea of the political events even in the close the Tauride Palace anymore.[65]

> "Everyone without exception is now a medium of rumours. Everyone spreads rumours which correspond to his mental disposition: optimists optimistic rumours, and pessimists pessimist rumours. Thus every day there are *various* rumours which mostly refute each other. There are almost no facts."[66]

Hippius wrote about an alleged new front in Tambov-Kozlov or the in her view anti-Bolshevik populace.[67] It may seem meaningless to engage in such gossip, considering the contradictory nature of the rumours. Still rumours appear to have an important function in coping with the uncertainty. For Hippius, they created at least some political knowledge which was better than having no idea at all. Writing down what Hippius knew or heard and interpreting it was a way to make sense of the world and to create some mental order in chaos and confusion. She could not act or directly speak to the Bolsheviks; it appears that her diary

[63] Ibidem, 219.
[64] Ibidem, 212.
[65] Ibidem, 218.
[66] "Все теперь, все без исключения, - носители слухов. Носят их соответственно своей психологии оптимисты - оптимистические, пессимисты - пессимистические. Так что каждый день есть всякие слухи, и обыкновенно друг друга уничтожающие. Фактов же нет почти никаких." Ibidem, 222.
[67] Ibidem, 222.

was a platform to express her political beliefs, write down evidence which confirms her views. It was not really significant whether those rumours were true.

Zinaida Shakhovskaya: Mourning the Tsar's Abdication

Zinaida Shakhovskaya (1906-2001) was born in Moscow and went to school in Petrograd. Princess Shakhovskaya was nobly born. She described her experience during the revolution in 'The February Revolution as seen by a child'. After the revolution Shakhovskaya emigrated to Paris and became a writer and editor of the journal *Russkaya Mysl* (*Russian Thought*), an organ of the Russian émigré Intelligentsia.[68]

During the February Revolution, Shakhovskaya was a ten year-old girl, and attended the Empress Catherine Institute for Young Ladies of the Nobility. On 26 February the routines of her school were interrupted. "We were [...] startled by the hurry with which our mistress in charge, breaking with the traditional composure, without even bothering to put us in pairs or order us to keep silent, led us to the corridor."[69] School staff rushed around, including men who usually were not allowed to enter some parts of the building. The pupils were thrilled because they were "liberated [...] from the tedious obligation to behave ourselves in a lady-like manner - which meant walking demurely with hands gently crossed over our stomach and making deep reverences when we saw one of our teachers. Discipline was shattered, to our great delight."[70] While the girls were also afraid about the occasional shots around the building, they were even more excited when rumours spread that young men were about to come guard them.

Evidently excitement was the girl's predominant reaction. Their excitement was not that of Hippius's in February who craved liberation from the Tsarist autocracy. It was a naive excitement of children who only saw their little world changing and did not comprehend the meaning of the change. They did not have a reason to be overly hysterical, as they belonged to those noble families of Petrograd to whom hunger and shortage was unknown. Yet excitement was replaced by other emotions in the course of the revolutionary days. When it

[68] Dictionary of Women Worldwide, 'Shakhovskaya, Zinaida (1906–2001),' *Dictionary of Women Worldwide: 25,000 Women Through the Ages* (2007) <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/shakhovskaya-zinaida-1906-2001> 3 August 2019.

[69] [Shakhovskaya] Schakovskoy, Zinaida, 'The February Revolution as Seen by a Child,' *The Russian Review* 26:1 (1967) 68-73; therein: 68.

[70] Ibidem, 69.

came out that Tsar Nicholas II. had abdicated, the change of the traditional morning prayer became uncomfortable. "For the first time in about two centuries the prayer for the Tsar and his family was to be omitted [...]. The girl, who was about 18, stumbled over her words and was unable to pronounce, 'Let us pray for the Provisional Government.' She started to cry. The teachers and mistresses took their handkerchiefs and soon the four or five hundred of us were sobbing over something that was lost forever."[71] The collective expression of sadness reveals a deep attachment to the old order.

Bolshevik Intrusions Into the Private Sphere

While rumours were one way of making sense of politics, Petrograd's population was also on some level confronted with the newly erected Bolshevik institutions. The reorganisation of housing led to the establishment of the function of the 'house commandant'. Almedingen received a "dirty slip of coarse grey paper" and had to start her work as a house commandant the following day. A refusal of this unpaid job might have led to losing her room.[72] Among her tasks was to assess requests for reparations and to distribute ration cards. Almedingen was far from enthusiastic about this job, but took it seriously and helped her fellow tenants. A leaky roof made a family's life uncomfortable. "I had sent in some four or five applications to the local commissariat. I had begged for the repairing order to be given."[73] Finally her insistence was rewarded and the roof was fixed.

Hippius never served as a house commandant, but there were other duties. In June 1919 the Bolsheviks were afraid that Petrograd would be attacked by White troops in the Civil War. As a safety measure, inhabitants of Petrograd had to keep watch at their door around the clock. Hippius and all other tenants in her neighbourhood were obliged to watch for three hours each. Hippius described how even women of age and children had to do it. "What for one has to sit outside in the bleak and always bright street, no one knows. But all sit."[74] Hippius was powerless, yet she showed some inner resistance.

Another form of Bolshevik political intrusion into the private sphere were house searches. Almedingen witnessed how one of her neighbours was searched in late 1918. In

[71] Ibidem, 70.
[72] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 241.
[73] Ibidem, 243.
[74] "Для чего это нужно, сидеть на пустынной, всегда светлой улице - не знает никто. Но сидят." Ibidem, 205.

order to not being noticed she turned off the light. Almedingen and her mother never got searched themselves. In her mother's opinion this was because they were not important in any regard to the Bolshevik authorities.[75] In contrast to that Hippius's apartment was searched by night several times. Hippius was told that the officers were looking for money, political literature, and weapons.[76] When Hippius was interrogated at a search in 1919 she denied that she still published. Indeed Hippius's activism in form of poetry ceased in early 1918 when *Poslednie stikhi* (Last Poems) was printed.[77]

At one search children were present, and a boy actively scanned Hippius's apartment. "Under which regime but the Communist would such a young statesman have the possibility to scrabble about in dressers of strangers?"[78] In Hippius's view the Communists corrupted children and felt ashamed about it. In general, Hippius showed some irony in the interaction with those who searched. When talking about the leader of the action, 'Comrade Savin', she always wrote in quotation marks. This appears to have helped Hippius to distance herself from the immediacy of the confrontation with the new authorities and her own powerlessness. [79] Even if Hippius did not get arrested and no possessions were seized, to be disturbed in the middle of the night by arbitrary searches is very disruptive for any 'normal' daily routines and the privacy of personal spaces.

Confrontation with the Communists in Writing and Outside of Home

Hippius did not interact much with members of the Communist Party in person, quite understandably so considering her political views. For Hippius it appears that her diary and other writing was a means to deal with the Communists. It may seem trivial to state that writing was for Hippius a way to express her emotions, as this is a typical motive to write diaries; in her case, however, this becomes especially apparent. In the winter of 1918, Hippius composed her poem 'Nyet' in which she continued to hold on to the hope of Russia's 'resurrection' and 'salvation' in spite of the Bolshevik takeover.[80] In her political writing, Hippius expressed her anger and fear, most visible when using capital letters. On 5 January

[75] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 138.
[76] Ibidem, 240.
[77] Pachmuss, *Intellectual Profile*, 202.
[78] "При каком еще строе, кроме коммунистического, удалось бы юному государственному деятелю полазить по чужим ящикам?" Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 206.
[79] Ibidem.
[80] Pachmuss, *Intellectual Profile*, 201-202.

1918 the Constituent Assembly held a session. Before the Assembly was crushed by the Bolsheviks in the morning of 6 January, conflicts between the Bolsheviks and the other parties already became apparent, and Hippius wrote: "EVERY ADDITIONAL DAY PARTICULARLY UNDER BOLSHEVIK RULE IS AN ADDITIONAL YEAR OF RUSSIA'S DISGRACE."[81] Hippius seemed to be attached and dependent on politics. She was excited when the Bolsheviks made a mistake, and outraged when they became more powerful. It is likely that much of what Hippius observed in daily life outside of the realm of politics she actually interpreted through her political views.

In contrast to Hippius, Almedingen had several longer personal encounters with Communists after the October Revolution. At times Almedingen taught English and French. Her first student was a Commissar's wife. She had a peasant background, but was now being part of the "privileged class, unconcerned about shortage and untouched by privation", living around "barbaric luxury", as Almedingen put it[82]. The Commissar's wife paid her one pound of bread per class, although the payment was soon lowered. When Almedingen complained, her student retorted that "any private occupation is illegal" and that Edith should be "grateful" for any bread.[83]

Almedingen's next Communist student worked as a researcher. Almedingen reported about a tough argument between the two. Almedingen told the story about the Commissar's wife and concluded that the Bolsheviks talked about equality all the time, but she couldn't see it realised. Her pupil became furious, and an argument about religion followed. Almedingen insisted that God existed, while her student thought it right to smash religion. Edith concluded: "That girl was indeed an honourable enemy, and though I abhorred her Party and its teachings, I could not but wish that there might have been more like her in its ranks."[84]

This is the only clear statement against the Bolsheviks in *Tomorrow Will Come*. Almedingen found the incongruence of the Bolshevik theory and practise and their anti-religious stance most problematic. Despite Almedingen's apolitical stance, her fundamental worldviews still shaped her attitude towards the revolutionary groups. From this perspective, religious people were a conservative force in the non-political sense, holding on

[81] "КАЖДЫЙ ЛИШНИЙ ДЕНЬ ИМЕННО БОЛЬШЕВИЦКОЙ ВЛАСТИ - ЛИШНИЙ ГОД ПОЗОРА РОССИИ." Gippius, *Dnevniki*, Vol. 2, 42.
[82] Ibidem, 207; 209.
[83] Ibidem, 210.
[84] Ibidem, 213.

to their beliefs and culture despite the revolutionary changes. This conservative resistance becomes apparent in Almedingen's whole identity which was tied to the old St. Petersburg. Almedingen never used the more Slavic name 'Petrograd' which was introduced at the beginning of World War I. She became a historian for a good reason, and later published studies about Empress Catherine the Great and others. In *My St. Petersburg : a reminiscence of childhood* Almedingen devoted an entire chapter to the history of St. Petersburg. Already as a child she was curious and walked for hours through St. Petersburg. Her uncle Alexis told her stories about emperors who reigned in the city.[85]

In this regard Almedingen was surprisingly similar to Shakhovskaya and Hippius. Shakhovskaya was emotionally attached to the old régime and with it the way society used to be before the revolution. Hippius also preferred 'St. Petersburg' over 'Petrograd'. In the preface to her *Black Booklet* Hippius nostalgically looked back to the city which she inhabited and saw dying in the October Revolution: "Yes, the whole city which was created by Peter the First and sung about by Pushkin, the beloved, strict and horrible city died [...]."[86]

Of course, Shakhovskaya, Hippius, and Almedingen had their own take on the exact meaning of 'old St. Petersburg'. Still, this suggests that in many ways inhabitants of Petrograd were attached to the way in which they lived before the revolution. Consciously or subconsciously, they coped with the revolutionary changes with resistance. From this perspective the 'revolutionised' were a force which worked against the Bolsheviks.

[85] Almedingen, *My St. Petersburg*, 21.
[86] "Да, целый город, Петербург, созданный Петром и воспетый Пушкиным, милый, строгий и страшный город - он умирал [...]" Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 183.

3. Working, Housing, Eating, and Selling

Personal stories were the focus of many of Almedingen's works, and indeed *My St. Petersburg* and *Tomorrow Will Come* largely consist of those narratives. Meanwhile Hippius seemed to be obsessed with politics. Between the February and the October Revolution and in 1918, her diaries are almost exclusively about political matters. This may also be explained by Hippius's general tendency to refuse disclosing biographical and personal details, as "[m]y works reveal me as an artist and as a person."[87]. In 1919 more personal matter surfaced. In fact, for the 'revolutionised' to survive in a chaotic revolution was often enough a very practical matter: It was to guarantee one's own and one's family's safety, food, and shelter. Then how did the individual coping strategies differ? Did Zinaida Hippius and Edith Almedingen actively engage in the process or not? The meaning assigned to the situation will also be important to consider.

Context: Almedingen, Hippius, and Their Coping Strategies

Edith Almedingen grew up poor because her father abandoned his family before Edith turned two. And yet according to a book review and a newspaper article about *Tomorrow Will Come*, Almedingen coped well with the personal challenges during the revolution. The journalist L. P. Hartley reviewed *Tomorrow Will Come* in the newspaper *The Sketch* in 1941 and found that "I have read few autobiographies in which the triumph of spirit over suffering is more triumphantly displayed."[88] For Sonia Tomarova, Almedingen's life turned into 'martyrdom' during the revolution. Tomarova thought that *Tomorrow Will Come* was dark, but that this "darkness was in the author's soul rather than in Russia".[89] Tomarova did not appreciate that Almedingen was "utterly allergic to the beauty of Russia"[90] and interpreted Edith's admiration of England and wish to leave Russia as anti-Russian.

Zinaida Hippius enjoyed relative material luxury before the revolution; yet it is questionable whether this helped her in coping with the revolutionary changes: Hippius was a complicated individual, and many of her contemporaries had a hard time comprehending her personality. Typically she was described as very smart, provocative and daring, and at the

[87] Pachmuss, *Intellectual Profile*, xii.
[88] L.P. Hartley, 'The Literary Lounger,' *The Sketch* (31 December 1941) 438.
[89] Sonia Tomarova, Review of *Tomorrow Will Come* by E.M. Almedingen, *The Russian Review* 1:2 (1942) 109-110; therein: 110.
[90] Ibidem.

same time feminine and charming. Hippius thought life was inherently offensive to her and suffered a lot. The literary scholar Nataliia Osmakova argued that Hippius's challenging experiences often lead to the erection of psychological defences; in order to 'defend' herself, Hippius needed to have certain groups and people as her enemies.[91]

Working during War and Revolution

The First World War from July 1914 onwards brought about challenges to the population of the Russian Empire. The historian Matthias Neumann examined the reciprocal relationship between the state's efforts to mobilise the youth and the agency of children and focused on Kiev. Naturally the experience of war varied greatly among ages and locations, and Petrograd was further away from the frontline. Importantly, Neumann showed that many children were energetic actors in supporting the Russian Empire in the war.[92]

After leaving the Xénia Institute in 1916, Edith Almedingen started to engage in 'war-work' for about a year, that is, volunteer work to support the Russian army. It was not her own idea: Her mother nudged her until she started working. Almedingen said that the whole atmosphere of Petrograd was enthusiastic about war-work. Some of her former classmates working as nurses "looked tired but cheerful. Their Mecca was the front."[93] Almedingen helped in the administration of the Obuchovsky Hospital, mostly gathering data from wounded soldiers. Many others engaged in knitworking, as Almedingen noted.

Almedingen and her mother were far from fervent Russian patriots and rather identified as 'British'. Edith worked together with a British official's wife, as the British Empire fought along with the Russian Empire in the war. It appears that for them it was rather about supporting Britain than Russia. Overall Almedingen's accounts suggest that ordinary people still had some time and energy to spare for the 'greater' good, and did not only act in order to ensure their personal survival.

Hippius rarely mentioned any kind of work in her diaries in 1919. Hippius said that she and Merezhkovsky worked on proofreading a translation of a French novel to Russian and in 14 days earned as much as what was needed to survive half a day, and selling old

[91] Nataliia Osmakova, 'Edinstvennost Zinaidy Gippius,' *Gippius* (2001) <http://gippius.com/about/osmakova-edinstvennost-gippius.html> 3 August 2018.
[92] Matthias Neumann, 'Mobilizing Children: Youth and the Patriotic War Culture in Kiev during World War I,' in *Russia's Home Front in War and Revolution, 1914-22. Book 2: The Experience of War and Revolution,* edited by Adele Lindenmeyr, Christopher Read, and Peter Waldron (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica 2016) 285.
[93] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 102.

clothing would be more useful.[94] Although this number is probably exaggerated, it shows how low the wages were. This is mirrored in Almedingen's accounts. After the February Revolution Almedingen did not engage in voluntary work anymore but was forced to work for herself. Most of the time she had "brief-lived but varied" jobs. Many jobs were maddening, but she could also use her knowledge of English and French, either as a teacher, translator, or a correspondent.[95] In early 1919 Almedingen translated two English books to Russian. When Edith tried to hand in the third translation, the publishing company had gone out of business, and her work remained unpaid.[96] Of course businesses can go bankrupt outside of revolutionary times, but even though Almedingen did not mention the name of the publisher, it was likely political reasons which caused it to shut down, as the Bolsheviks wanted to gain informational control. Thus again the revolution directly interfered with private work, and Almedingen was powerless, unable to do anything about it. She had to stomach it and search for new work.

A neighbour of Almedingen told her about a job offer in the administration of the Stock Exchange Hospital. The position was highly coveted. Almedingen was taken because she knew how to read and write. It was similar to the voluntary war-work: The job involved managing cards with patients' data and interacting with them. In the hospital the wages were as meagre as in other jobs, but Almedingen pointed out that the main reason to have a recognized job (as opposed to a private occupation) was to receive food rations.[97]Almedingen seemed to be glad to have some kind of routine in the hospital: She described how she arrived at the same time every morning to her workplace and had breakfast in the kitchen. Almedingen mentioned several times that the working conditions were far from comfortable, yet she did not complain much and simply accepted her situation.

Almedingen often worked in jobs for which she was profoundly overqualified. Already in 1916 she registered as a student at Petrograd University, but did not start her studies. Only when her friend Esther insisted that Almedingen's right place is the university, Almedingen started attending lectures. She subsequently proved to be a successful student. Later she became a lecturer for English medieval history at a university which aimed at

[94] Gippius, *Dnevniki*, Vol. 2, 212.
[95] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 135.
[96] Ibidem, 142.
[97] Ibidem, 143.

training Russians to enable them to spread Bolshevik Communism around the world.[98] Despite her undoubted academic talent which already showed itself at the Xénia Institute, Almedingen did not seriously consider studying. Students received ration cards as well which would have alleviated the food issue. Evidently Almedingen was stuck in the mode of finding jobs to survive in the short term. This limited her perspective to even entertain the possibility to pursue more appropriate occupations. Thus the pressure to survive during the revolution limited people's ability to strive for productive endeavours.

Housing

Hippius's housing condition was comfortable. She and her husband lived in the same apartment throughout war and revolution and were never homeless. Almedingen's situation was as unstable as her work. Already before the upheavals she and her mother had to move quite often, typically because they could not afford the rent anymore. During the course of the February Revolution rent was abolished, but this did not alleviate the housing shortage in Petrograd.[99]

Almedingen once lived in a room, and shared the flat with six other tenants, including her friend Esther whom she got to know at the hospital. Conflicts among them were a daily occurence. A sailor's wife "thieved, spied and eavesdropped, she used kitchen, hall and corridor as though they were her own premises."[100] She also gave loud parties and gossiped about Esther and Edith even in front of them, expressing jealousy of their rooms: "When those two *bourjouy* pigs are dead, you shall have the big bedroom and I will go into the old drawing-room."[101] Also, when moving in Esther and Edith were told that potentially dangerous individuals occupied the apartments above them. And the staircase was not lit and slippery. When Almedingen forgot to bring matches at night she encountered strangers in the staircase, but luckily nothing happened. Finally, there was no tap water, as the tubes had broken.

Again, Edith described the truly precarious living conditions, but did not complain. She simply ignored the flatmate's gossip. Instead Almedingen was thankful to have a shelter, also because she did not always have a proper room. Often enough Almedingen had to find a

[98] Ibidem, 231
[99] Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 132.
[100] Ibidem, 204.
[101] Ibidem.

new home within hours. Once when coming home from the hospital, the head of the housing committee bluntly told her that she instantly needed a smaller apartment because her mother died. Almedingen then slept in a consultation room in the hospital until she found something new.[102]

Food

While Hippius could live for a couple of months from selling her possessions, food became an issue in spring 1919 when there were no potatoes to buy anymore, and Hippius had to consume the fish soup *vobla* which she found disgusting.[103] Hippius became more creative. Hippius dried carrots and other roots and infused them to make 'tea'. At the same time one had to be careful with the food one consumed, because sometimes broken pieces of glass could be found in bread and nails in the buckwheat groats, allegedly to increase its weight.[104] For Almedingen, already after the February Revolution "[t]he entire meaning of existence was centred round food, food and food again."[105] Perhaps the most obvious reaction to lack of food was to eat things which are usually not eaten: "Potato peelings were saved and used for making funny flat cakes. Queer herbs were infused in fond pretence of tea. Grass in public gardens was gathered for soups. Somebody argued that bark could be edible."[106]

Many inhabitants of Petrograd also went to the countryside to acquire food and to sell it in Petrograd. This activity as so-called 'bagmen' was illegal. No food items were allowed to be privately transported into the city, as the authorities wanted to gain control over food supplies. Yet the historians Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov estimated that more than half of the grain circulated through private traders.[107] While Hippius did not engage in such excursions, Almedingen and Esther went by train to Kolpino, a German settlement about 25 km away from Petrograd. A German woman opened the door for the two and let them eat. She even insisted that Edith should eat more: "You look honest enough to me - not like some of those people from Petrograd who come here and look as though they would rob us of

[102] Ibidem, 144.
[103] Ibidem, 194.
[104] Ibidem, 223.
[105] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 134.
[106] Ibidem, 217.
[107] Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov (eds.), *Russia in War and Revolution, 1914-1922: a documentary history* (Indianapolis: Hackett 2009) 171.

everything - if they knew the way to set about it."[108] Esther and Edith regularly went there and became friends with a couple of families.[109]

Almedingen described the signs outside bakeries and grocery stores before the revolutionary upheavals as huge and colourful. Provokingly they remained in the hungry days even though the shops had closed down. In 1919 on her way to work at the hospital, Almedingen witnessed how an old man desperately held on to a merry sign of ham until his fingers were bleeding. Almedingen recalled him saying: "No, my dear, I simply must have another slice of that ham. [...] If we were to leave it here, somebody else would get it, and nobody could be as hungry as you and I are."[110] Hippius witnessed someone interacting with those signs as well. She saw a little girl crying and beating a sign which fell on the ground. The girl justified her actions sniveling that these groceries could not be consumed.[111] Understandably hunger was a severe issue for people and caused despair.

Overall, people in need used all possibilities available to them in order to survive. At the same time, Almedingen's work, housing, and food situation reveals the short-term nature of solving problems. Coping with material conditions was reactive and 'mechanical'. When Almedingen did not have work, she looked for new work; when she was homeless, any opportunity for getting accommodation had to be used. Almedingen was in no position to have a long-term strategy to improve her living conditions. And it is doubtful whether such an endeavour would have even been possible.

Selling

At a time in 1918, Almedingen could not find a job which let her start selling her and her mother's modest goods, even though "we were never *au courant* of the intricate business of selling and barter."[112] The private markets were regularly raided by Red Guards, a workers' militia which later in 1918 joined the Red Army. This made the markets dangerous and could lead to losing all possessions. Still Almedingen told an amusing story about how she sold an essentially valueless old photo album to a peasant. In general Almedingen found trading "brisk and amusing."[113] It is noteworthy that Almedingen had a positive view on this perilous

[108] Ibidem, 276-277.
[109] Ibidem, 279.
[110] Ibidem, 151.
[111] Hippius, *Dnevniki*, 225-226.
[112] Ibidem, 135.
[113] Ibidem, 136.

enterprise; she could have also been fearful about it. Almedingen had the capacity to frame some of her difficulties in a positive light.

Hippius and her husband earned most of their income with selling goods in order to buy victuals. They had plenty of possessions to sell, such as shoes and a piano.[114] Like Almedingen, Hippius did not feel competent to be an effective trader. Hippius had a hateful attitude towards those who bought her possessions, they were 'spivs'. Even though Hippius was generally interested in Jewish culture, she claimed: "All kinds of Jews come as well, always of the same type as our Grezhebin: always the same business sense, enrichment on others' misery. Grzhebin is even an interesting individual. He is a born cadger and marauder of the intellectual circles."[115] Grzhebin was Hippius's neighbour, and she dedicated several pages to him. Greshebin dealt with various publishing firms, and was writer Maxim Gorky's chief assistant. He helped Gorky to buy porcelain and other objects of art. According to Hippius, Grzhebin had a publishing firm and bought the right to publish all known writers. At the time this was not very useful, as the Bolsheviks prohibited all other publications. If the Bolsheviks had not managed to stay in power, he could have made use of these rights very profitably. Hippius was involved with Grzhebin personally: "I feel ashamed to say for how much he bought Merezhkovsky and me. Of course, I do not feel ashamed of ourselves. People with a snare around their neck are not ashamed of those matters."[116]

Evidently Hippius was not grateful that she had possessions to sell. On the contrary, she felt angry and ashamed to lose what she had. Gorky himself was another victim of Hippius's anger. Hippius disliked that he worked with the Bolsheviks. This came with privileges such as better food. Hippius's friend and neighbour Y.Y.[117] once went to Gorky during lunch time. Gorky did not offer him any of his chops of meat, cucumber, and blueberry dessert. Hippius said that she was not jealous of Gorky's food: "Our smelly porridge and our watery soup are [...] really a much healthier nutriment."[118] Hippius had

[114] Ibidem, 207.
[115] "Приходят, кроме того, всякие евреи и еврейки, тип один, обычный, - тип нашего Гржебина: тот же аферизм, нажива на чужой петле. Гржебин даже любопытный индивидуум. Прирожденный паразит и мародер интеллигентской среды." Ibidem, 215.
[116] "Стыдно сказать, за сколько он покупал меня и Мережковского. Стыдно не нам, конечно. Люди с петлей на шее уже таких вещей не стыдятся." Ibidem, 217.
[117] Hippius often did not write down people's full names in her diary in order to protect them from the Bolsheviks.
[118] "Наша затхлая каша и водянистый суп [...], правдо, пища более здоровая." Ibidem, 211.

already written that she detested the soup *wobla*; this suggests that this expression served as a rationalisation in an outward inferiority that she was better than Gorky.

Hippius and The Common People

Almedingen did not see a fundamental difference in how she and others coped with the revolutionary challenges. On some level she understood people who did everything for bread.[119] Hippius gave the impression that ordinary citizens (other than her intellectual friends) only cared about their own material agenda in terms of food, and not about the bigger political questions of the day.[120] They were active in the private sphere and passive in the political sphere as opposed to how the idealist Hippius saw herself. The 'cultureless masses' did not consider the future in determining their actions.[121] At the same time, it has already been noted that Hippius blamed everyone who took possessions away from her. It appears that the suppressed materialism of an alleged idealist surfaced.

Hippius specifically mentioned the 'invalids' in a house across Hippius's apartment who pretend to be unable to work and mainly spend their day relaxing, playing music, and flirting with the opposite sex. She observed the same idleness in 'children of proletarians' who lived in a run-down house in her street. They were apparently involved in programmes organised by the Bolsheviks in the Tauride Park. In Hippius's view the children were poor victims of the Bolshevik takeover. "This whole generation of Russians is mentally and physically wrecked. Happy are those who do not survive."[122] Two children of the age of seven and eight were allegedly detained; children would merely get a plate full of water at canteens, and would fight about the few available cakes. Hippius also told a rumour: the Bolsheviks created mixed schools of boys and girls to indoctrinate both with their ideology. Apparently, fourth-grade pupils were pregnant: "In this regard the red kids enjoy full 'freedom.'"[123] Thus again Hippius's opinion that ordinary people were passive victims of the Bolshevik regime becomes apparent.

[119] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 134.
[120] Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 196-198.
[121] Ibidem, 246.
[122] "Это целое поколение русское, погибшее, духовно и телесно. Счастье для тех, кто не выживет." Ibidem, 238.
[123] "В 'этом' красным детям дается полная 'свобода.'" Ibidem, 239.

Coping in the Worst Moments

Both Almedingen and Hippius had to deal with personal crises during the revolution. As for Almedingen, in a way she was already prepared for material shortages. In 1909, when Edith was still a child, her mother had to sell their furniture, in order to pay a bill. Then Edith learned an important lesson: "That moment a resolve was born in me never again to get attached to any inanimate things."[124] Indeed later when poverty became a serious threat to Almedingen and her mother, she framed her pre-revolutionary lack positively. Almedingen said that - because they had no material wealth - nobody could steal it or would search their apartment, and that she found this to be an advantage vis-à-vis more affluent people.[125] Also, when the food shortage hit them, they "drank water, imagining it to be tea, and also pretended that we had no use for food."[126]

At one point Almedingen was desperate, because she had a hard time finding any job at all and thought she might starve soon. Almedingen said she could do all kinds of work, because "I wanted to live with all the passion in me, and it looked as though nobody else wanted me to go on".[127] After a bit of lamenting and weeping Almedingen went on to use her imagination again when looking at the structures of snow outside her window:

> "I lulled myself into thinking that I was staring at the east window of some great cathedral: Salisbury, Rheims, Chartres, Louvain, Cologne, Strassbourg, Milan, Canterbury, Durham, Toledo, Burgos… The mere names were singing, dancing, painting in my mind. They crept away and danced nearer again, a glittering garland of names, weaving a curious mood in which neither envy, nor regret, nor yet self-pity had any room allotted to them, but only a strange inarticulate conviction that all the sculptured, graven loveliness and my own tiny squalid life in a dusty room [...] were in the same world, and that world was made by one God."[128]

Almedingen did not go on to pray, but in spite of the horrors she saw beauty and was grateful for it. Evidently she made her life as meaningful and magical. Although at that point Almedingen had no idea that she could possibly escape from the horrors of revolutionary Russia, she already visualised that possibility. By seeing all the European cathedrals in her inner eye, Almedingen kept the hope alive that once she would see them in reality. A few months later Almedingen undertook the long bureaucratic process for getting the permission to leave, though the only possibility for getting that permission was to indicate to leave

[124] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 64.
[125] Ibidem, 136.
[126] Ibidem, 133.
[127] Ibidem, 172.
[128] Ibidem, 173.

temporarily. The process involved regular visits to the Smolny Institute where the Petrograd Communist Party was housed. Almedingen also had to take the train to Moscow. She managed to talk to the Assistant Commissar who helped her getting the permit to leave. Immediately before entering her ship to leave Petrograd, the infamous secret police Cheka asked her questions throughout the night.[129] Thus it was an extraordinary effort until Almedingen could finally escape in 1922. Her hope and positive mindset seem to have profoundly helped her in reaching this end.

Thus Hartley rightly stated that *Tomorrow Will Come* shows the victory of 'spirit over suffering'. Tomarova's view that Almedingen's positive attitude towards Western Europe was accompanied by an anti-Russian bias can be refuted. Almedingen did not blame Russians or any group for her misery.

Hippius grew increasingly desperate during the last couple of weeks before her departure from Russia towards the end of 1919. Hippius said that she wrote her *Grey Notebook* (her last diary in Petrograd) "like in a delirium" ("*polubredovy*").[130] They had almost nothing to eat anymore and the heating did not work, the room temperature was between plus four and minus two Degrees Celsius. Indeed 'delirium' is quite accurate. Hippius took short notes like "preparations for the tomb: the depth of the cold; the depth of the darkness; the depth of the silence."[131] She felt unable to express what she thought and felt alienated.

> "Yes, it is slavery. A physical aborticice of the spirit, of thinking, every personality, all characteristics which distinguish the human from an animal. The destruction, the breakdown of the whole culture. Plenty of dead bodies of white negroes. [...] What does it, if I am out-and-down and hungry, and shake from the cold? What does it with me? Is this suffering? I don't think about it anymore. These trifles are easy to tolerate, they are just terrible for the weak, spoilt Europeans. But not for us. There is more terrible horror. The blunt fear to lose human contenance."[132]

As Hippius saw herself in the role to guide Russian culture to a better future, the Bolshevik reign equated a destruction of it. Arrogance towards the Europeans becomes apparent as well.

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[129] Ibidem, 306.
[130] Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 254.
[131] "Приготовление к могиле: глубина холода; глубина тьмы; глубина тишины." Ibidem, 255.
[132] "Да, рабство. Физическое убиение духа, всякой личности, всего, что отличает человека от животного. Разрушение, обвал всей культуры. Бесчисленные тела белых негров. [...] Да что мне, что я оборванная, голодная, дрожащая от холода? Что - мне? Это ли страдание? Да я уж и не думаю об этом. Такой вздор, легко переносимый, страшный для слабых, избалованных европейцев. Не для нас. Есть ужас ужаснейший. Тупой ужас потери лица человеческого." Ibidem, 264.

This negative attitude surfaced several times in her *Grey Notebook*. Hippius was severely disappointed to see European countries ending their intervention in the Civil War.

Overall the accounts in Hippius's *Grey Notebook* are quite dark, and she seemed to be hopeless. When comparing Edith Almedingen's and Zinaida Hippius's accounts it becomes apparent that despite her material situation, Almedingen had a comparably hopeful and positive attitude towards her environment; a privileged Hippius complained about her situation. It is true that the form of the primary source also might have played a role: When writing the autobiography years after the events, Almedingen could mention that she still had some kind of hope, but Hippius did not compose any planned narrative when writing her diary, it was spontaneous. Hippius wrote in a note after having already finished her diary that she did not have the vigour to mention the hope of fleeing Petrograd.[133]

However there are more examples in the examined primary sources where the discrepancy between objective circumstances and attitude surfaced. An especially grave case was Madame X.[134] She was a distant yet wealthy acquaintance at the Xénia Institute, and once when Almedingen was homeless she remembered Madame X and was offered a room in Madame X's 12 room apartment. In the apartment Madame X used to live by herself (which is curious considering the severe shortage of accommodation). "Nobody dared trouble her, she said; they were all afraid of her because they knew she could harm them once they began interfering with her."[135] Such delusions of grandeur were accompanied with a sense of paranoia. Madame X sometimes felt that the devil himself was present in one or another room of her apartment. She then made Almedingen help her move all the heavy furniture outside, in order to get rid of the devil. Almedingen could not refuse as she was dependent on Madame X's good will to live with her.[136] Madame X also wanted Edith to get involved in another 'business' of hers: To dribble poison into Bolshevik officials' tea when submitting seemingly important requests at their offices. Almedingen got around killing officials, and later found out that the substance used by Madame X was not even poisonous.[137]

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[133] Ibidem, 279.
[134] It is not entirely clear where this peculiar name originated or whether Almedingen used it only for her book, for instance in order to protect 'Madame X's' relatives from the Stalinist purges which were in full swing when Almedingen wrote *Tomorrow Will Come*.
[135] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 164.
[136] Ibidem, 175.
[137] Ibidem, 167-168.

Madame X's case shows that material privilege did not automatically translate into more productive coping with the revolutionary shortages. On the contrary, Madame X's actions resulted in unnecessary effort and was destructive for self and others. In the end the self-destructive coping of Madame X culminated in her death, although it is not entirely clear whether it was suicide or a mere accident.

4. The Social Dimension of Everyday Life

For a 'normal' daily life for most people social contacts in the form of family, friendships, or spouses are essential. We have seen that for 'revolutionised' people it was central to take action in order to be at least fed, have a room and work. In the struggle for scarce resources it may be argued that people became more 'egotistical', i.e. centered around their personal interests. How then did people more specifically cope with the revolution in social terms? What happened to previous relationships?

Context: Almedingen's and Hippius's Social Background

From her childhood on, Almedingen's relationship with her aristocratic relatives in St. Petersburg had been ambivalent. The particularly rich would not prefer to be in contact with her because of her poverty. Others were more open to the curious child. Her uncle Alexis was editor of the magazine *Rodnik.* This involved being in contact with outstanding individuals. Allegedly the young Edith was invited to her uncle's and was seated on writer Lev Tolstoy's knee and told him that she enjoyed reading stories.[138]

Growing up without a father, a particularly close relationship between mother and daughter emerged. Most of Edith's siblings were a lot older than her and had already moved out of home. Those to whom she had close ties passed away already before the revolution: One of her little brother Gay's friends boisterously walked on a freezed up canal in spring. The ice broke, and Gay saved his friend, but was too exhausted to leave the icy water. And her brother Cyril died at the front in World War I.[139]

As a child Almedingen preferred to walk through St. Petersburg or read instead of meeting people from her age, also because she had a bad experience with socialisation. Once little Edith attended a birthday tea with fellow children organised by her mother's landlord. To Edith's severe frustration she had to leave the party soon after her arrival because her mother had not paid rent for a few months.[140] Thus Almedingen had been quite isolated already before the revolution. However it is also true that Almedingen also liked being for herself.

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[138] Almedingen, *My St. Petersburg*, 18; Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 47-48.
[139] Almedingen, *My St. Petersburg*, 18-19; Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 40-41; 94.
[140] Ibidem, 46.

In Hippius's and Merezhkovsky's apartment St. Petersburg's Intelligentsia regularly gathered. The social environment of the two was mostly made up of other poets and creatives; their acquaintances included not only other Symbolists such as Andrey Bely and Alexandr Blok, but also writers and intellectuals such as Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, and Vladimir Korolenko.[141] The 'Religious-Philosophical Society' discussed questions of faith with members of the Orthodox Church. Hippius was an active participant in these meetings. Yet as literary scholar Ronald E. Peterson pointed out, the First World War and its shortages were not conducive to the success of these gatherings and the Symbolist movement as a whole. The war questioned Symbolist's focus on aesthetics. Of course individual authors including Hippius continued to publish. Hippius's play 'The Green Ring' about idealism of the youth premiered in 1915. However Symbolists as a group were barely visible anymore. Hippius was socially less integrated than before the war.[142]

Focus on Self-Interest

Many people Almedingen observed thought they deserved more food than others. Almedingen's successor as house commandant thought he was eligible for the double amount of rations. In the end he was punished for it.[143] Almedingen worked for a couple of weeks as a typist for the merchant Stepan. He ran a 'prescription store' which sold food to patients suffering from an acute illness. After a complex bureaucratic procedure they could receive a prescription and hand it in at the local shop which was protected by watchmen around the clock.

> "Of course, he stole from the store. They all did. Some doctors plied a successful trade in issuing prescriptions; no price could have been considered too high for soap or chocolate, and there was no other way of obtaining them - unless people belonged to the privileged Party circle."[144]

Stepan extracted goods by declaring them as 'lost in delivery'. Ultimately however, he was caught and all the goods from his store were seized. Stepan's wife Agafia defended her husband by saying: "A thief they call him, and is there one honest man among them, I ask you?"[145]

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[141] Pachmuss, *Intellectual Profile*, 6.
[142] Peterson, *Russian Symbolism*, 185-187.
[143] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 248.
[144] Ibidem, 179.
[145] Ibidem, 183.

Historians know that the highest ranks of the Bolsheviks enjoyed more luxuries than ordinary people. From what Almedingen described, equality among ordinary people appears to be practically replaced by the law of the jungle. Someone more able to gather food would have more than others. If questioned people would willingly apply double standards, arguing that everyone misconducted in some respect. Thus if people interpreted and coped with the revolution in different ways, some of those mechanisms were more productive than others.

Another instance of 'selfish' behaviour is revealed in a gossip about 'Grannie', the woman with whom Almedingen had to share the kitchen. Grannie allegedly found bodies of two starved children and took away their clothes in order to make money out of them. Grannie appeared to be very happy about this incident.[146] It is not clear whether this woman really succumbed to such actions which ordinarily would be judged as an immoral desecration of the dead, but if it is true it suggests that people coped with a situation of bare need people by scaling down their moral standards.

Hippius also reported rumours related to a social retreat, insisting that they came from a trustworthy source. According to Hippius the Cheka, the notorious Bolshevik organisation which violently fought everything it thought to be counterrevolutionary, said it gave shot bodies to the animals of the zoological gardens. The Chinese executioners apparently used their job to serve their own interests. "The Chinese steal during the executions and during the transport of the dead bodies to the zoological garden. They don't deliver all dead bodies; they defraud the younger in order to sell them as beef."[147]

Although it is probably a natural way of primary witnesses to engage with historical reality, it is still revealing that both Almedingen and Hippius observed selfish and morally questionable actions only in others, and not in themselves. A self-bias and double standards seemed to be at work here, just as in the individuals who transgressed moral limits.

The Revolution and Social Contacts

This section deals with Almedingen's and Hippius's personal social environment during war and revolution. For Hippius, the central turning point in the social realm was at the October Revolution. She did not only have an abundance of information about politics before the

[146] Ibidem, 215.
[147] "[...] при убивании, как и при отправке трупов зверям, китайцы мародерничают. Не все трупы отдают, а какой помоложе - утаивают и продают под видом телятины." Gippius, *Dnevniki*, 260.

revolution, but she was also surrounded by many politicians and intellectuals with similar views. After October it was impossible to be in contact with "old, dear friends" because one could not overcome the long distances in Petrograd and because the telephone would function only occasionally.[148] Even if friends living far away in Petrograd could not be met, acquaintances would still come to visit her in 1918 and 1919, considering the entries in her diary. In that sense Hippius was not as bad off as others. And she still lived together with her husband, and was very grateful for the neighbour intellectual Y.Y. who helped her, Merezhkovsky and many others around him. He was voluntarily active in the house committee.[149] In Hippius's view Y.Y. acted highly altruistic and idealistic. Hippius and Y.Y. shared political views, they were both against the Bolsheviks.

Hippius mentioned people whom she knew died from illnesses. She did not note how she coped with it, and her closest people were still alive. Almedingen also saw the social sphere deteriorating already after the February Revolution:

> "The Vassily Island became a closed-in universe. It teemed with half-starved, frightened ragged men and women. They were shadows. Mother alone was real. All the social links were snapped by the ubiquitous frenzy; relations and friends, even if still living in St. Petersburg, were distant, themselves absorbed in the ever-growing task of keeping themselves away from the brink of a hungry death."[150]

Almedingen saw that the struggle for survival kept people so busy that they did not have the capacity to engage in friendships and the like. From this view social contacts were a victim of the consequences of the revolution. And even though Almedingen had been a loner already before the revolution, in the spring of 1919 she even lost her only real connection, her mother.[151]

When her brothers died, Edith still had time to grieve. The two were buried in coffins, and she could leave school for a couple of days. However when her mother passed Almedingen did not mention any funeral. It is unlikely that any ceremony took place, as the cemeteries and priests simply would not have had enough capacity, considering the hundreds of people who died from hunger and illnesses everyday. And there was no time for private mourning, as Almedingen had to somehow manage to find new accommodation as quickly as

[148] Ibidem, 207.
[149] Ibidem, 190.
[150] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 132.
[151] Ibidem, 144.

possible. After her mother's death, Almedingen did not mention her again in *Tomorrow Will Come*.

It must have been difficult enough to lose the person who "had been everything to me."[152] Almedingen must have felt very lonely. The circumstances dictated that there was not even time to process this traumatic event. Attending ceremonies at funerals and taking the time to reflect on the relationship with the beloved person serve an important psychological function, that is, to process the traumatic event. The alternative for processing is suppressing, and this is exactly what Almedingen must have done. At several painful occasions mentioned in *Tomorrow Will Come* Almedingen was actively encouraged by others to 'never look back'.

A couple of months after her mother's death, Almedingen became friends with Esther whom she supported when Esther lost her job. Even for the more sporadic acquaintances Almedingen appears very selflessly, even in a neurotic sense. While still living with a mentally unstable Madame X, Almedingen employer's wife Agafia sent Edith to get her rations. While hurrying to fulfil her task, Almedingen did not pay attention to her surroundings and got hit by a horse cart. Despite her serious injury, when waking up in the hospital Almedingen felt the urge to take care of Madame X and Agafia because it "touched my sense of honour".[153] As is apparent from this and other episodes in her autobiography, Almedingen did not take her own health very seriously. She seems to be obsessed with helping others and by doing so forgot herself. The reviewer L. P. Hartley rightly found that the "pity more often implied than expressed, that she feels for others is seldom extended to herself."[154]

Cooperation Among Strangers

This section moves further away from cooperation between friends and acquaintances to that of strangers. After Maxim Gorky pleaded other countries to save Russians from starvation in 1921, the American Relief Administration (ARA) was initiated. Hippius's diaries in Petrograd ended already in 1919 and she did not mention it. Almedingen did work for the ARA and its British counterpart, the British Relief Mission. The ARA was initiated by then secretary of commerce and later President Herbert Hoover. The political scientist Benjamin Weissman

[152] Ibidem, 136.
[153] Ibidem, 187.
[154] Hartley, 'Literary Lounger', 438.

suggested that Hoover sought to enhance American economic and political influence in Soviet Russia.[155] For some time Almedingen was borrowed from the ARA to the British Relief Mission and worked as a translator for Dr. Farrar. Farrar tirelessly visited hospitals and areas where people suffered the most from hunger and typhus. "A gesture, a touch, a look, above all that smile of his, all those worked their way into their hearts."[156] Eventually Farrar caught typhus and died soon thereafter. In Almedingen's view Farrar and the other relief workers were "human nature at its best".[157] Almedingen was grateful for the lives which these organisations saved.

Almedingen saw cooperation among locals in Petrograd as well. People waiting in the bread line had a 'rigid sense of honour' when it came to keeping order in the queue: "You simply marked your place by a couple of human landmarks, you wandered up and down at your leisure, you even absconded for a time, but your place was there when you came back." [158] The key here seems to be that the individuals in the line encountered each other regularly because they always received food from the same depository. Being lose acquaintances must have prevented them from tricking each other.

Almedingen also mentioned a specific event in a queue. She waited in a queue for her ration when a blind woman begged her to guide her home. It took longer than expected, and when hurrying back to the queue the depot had already run out of bread. Almedingen was angry, but instead met Zosia, a Polish woman whom Almedingen had been kind to at the hospital, her then workplace. Zosia offered Almedingen not only dinner, but also a room in her apartment at the time when Edith had to sleep at the hospital. Almedingen did not have to pay for the room and received scarce warm clothes.[159] This story sounds too good to be true and is perhaps slightly exaggerated in how the events follow each other for the sake of making the autobiography more interesting. Still, if any of this is remotely accurate, it shows that Almedingen did not only have a comparably hopeful attitude towards negative objective

[155] For an overview of the ARA's work in Russia, see Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia. 1921−1923* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press 1974). For a different perspective on the ARA, see Alexis Babine, *A Russian Civil War Diary : Alexis Babine in Saratov, 1917-1922,* edited by Donald J. Raleigh (Durham et al.: Duke University Press 1988) xvii. The school inspector Alexis Babine was outraged that ARA employees in the provincial town of Saratov would trade food for sexual favours.
[156] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 268.
[157] Ibidem, 273.
[158] Ibidem, 149.
[159] Ibidem, 156.

circumstances, but that her treating people around herself well in turn provoked positive reactions.

Collective Survival at the University

While much in Petrograd changed in the revolutionary days, many institutions continued to operate throughout the time. Almedingen was admitted to Petrograd University in 1916, but did not engage in her studies. After some hesitation Edith went to the university. The studies were conducted under harsh conditions, the students often studied in unheated rooms and did not have a real breakfast. Almedingen described the social situation and dynamics between the sexes at her university.

> "Of warm, intimate feelings we had none to show. Our individual experience of life in the raw [...] had been such that all the fierce and lovely crimsons of youth had to be put under lock and key, as a crude measure of self-defence against all further tarnishing. In a sense none of us were quite alive, and how could we be? Our reticences were almost cloister-bred, our sense of distance well-nigh fetichistic."[160]

Again we can see the suppression of feelings, like in the case when Almedingen's mother passed away. In this case the suppression shows up in the unwillingness (or inability) to engage in intimate relationships. Interestingly in Almedingen's view it was almost inevitable to close down emotionally; she made it appear to be totally 'natural', as if there was no other choice. Thus Almedingen had to carry less responsibility for her actions.

On the one hand it is understandable that Petrograd University kept going in times of war and revolution. For the Bolsheviks universities were a vital place to implement their political agenda. As Almedingen mentioned, at Petrograd University 'worker departments' were established which she called 'second university'. Indeed from September 1919 on, all institutions of higher educated were obliged to establish such departments, where labourers could complete courses at the same time as working in the factory.[161] Also, at a 'third university' students were educated in foreign languages and cultures so that they could spread the revolution around the world. Almedingen taught medieval history at the 'third', also because the ration cards for lecturers at that university provided them with a somewhat better supply with food.[162]

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[160] Ibidem, 201.
[161] Daly and Trofimov, *Revolution*, 172.
[162] Almedingen, *Tomorrow Will Come*, 230.

On the other hand it is remarkable that the collective routines of university life continued. Almedingen studied history at the 'first' university which was not a priority for the new authorities. In times of chaos and shortages, the study of history might have been considered irrelevant. Yet Almedingen gives clues why "[w]e've carried on - in spite of everything"[163], as she was greeted by an administrator at the entrance door. To Almedingen, it was first and foremost the "the selfless effort of those who guided our studies"[164] which was decisive in maintaining university life.

There are indeed other primary accounts which point into a similar direction. Of particular interest in this regard is a memoir by Vladimir Ziornov, physics scholar and rector of the University of Saratov from 1918 until 1921 which was published as document 77 'Travails of a Provincial University, 1918' in chapter three of *Russia in War and Revolution, 1914-1922: a documentary history* (2009), edited by the historians Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov.

In 1918 Ziornov and his colleagues from the University Council had to deal with the lack of heating oil in Saratov:

> "When I reported that there was no firewood in the city either, the members of the Council said that they would go into the forest themselves and that it would be possible to mobilize all the students and that firewood could therefore be procured without outside assistance."[165]

Although the extent of this activity turned out to be rather small, it is revealing that several professors actually gathered timber in forests in the vicinity of Saratov. A year later the university was in possession of heating oil, but it ran out of it too quickly. Earlier a director of the local oil authority and musician had asked Ziornov to lend him a particular score by the composer Alexander Borodin but Ziornov said he was not in possession of it. Now the time had come to give away the score, and the director happily gave Ziornov oil for the remaining winter. Ziornov encountered more issues, not only with the acquisition of oil, but with financing the university in general. Soviet Rubles did only arrive very irregularly, but the university managed to endure financial hardships. Using alcohol as an alternative payment was a successful strategy. Alcohol could be acquired from the local alcohol agency, *Raispirit*.

[163] Ibidem, 195.
[164] Ibidem, 201.
[165] Vladimir Ziornov, 'Travails of a Provincial University, 1918,' in *Russia in War and Revolution, 1914-1922: a documentary history,* edited by Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov (Indianapolis: Hackett 2009) 172.

"All the departments, including philology and law, resorted to all kinds of pretexts so as to order alcohol. For example, this pretext: alcohol is required for cleaning book covers [...]."[166]

As a result of this effort, the university programs in their entirety kept going throughout war and revolution. This continuity was supported by the fact that Saratov just like Petrograd remained under Bolshevik control during the Civil War.[167] Still, just because the authorities did not change, Petrograd and Saratov were of course still hit by shortages which could have easily led to the suspension of university programs. Ziornov's memoir shows that Russians did not only care for their personal survival. The professors could as well have collected firewood for their private homes. Of course, collective and individual survival were tied together: If the university had to shut down, the professors would have been unable to keep their position. Still it is doubtful that an academic career in war and revolution provided them with much material benefits as compared to other professions. The professors were not obliged to work passionately and creatively for their organisation, the university. All means were used for this goal, even if one had to personally sacrifice for the greater good such as Ziornov who gave away his dear quartett.

This suggests that groups worked collectively to maintain their existence, whether consciously or subconsciously. Thus the way in which people coped with revolutionary circumstances often resulted in more order. From this perspective, the 'revolutionised' people's power is revealed. Even if they did not participate in the political events of the Russian Revolution, their collective actions kept Russian everyday life from completely falling apart.

[166] Ibidem, 173.
[167] For an insightful study of revolutionary Saratov, see Donald J. Raleigh, *Revolution on the Volga: 1917 in Saratov* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1986).

Conclusion

This study examined daily life in revolutionary Petrograd through the eyes of Edith Almedingen and Zinaida Hippius with a special focus on how 'revolutionised' people coped with the challenges.

Even though most inhabitants of Petrograd were not actively involved in the revolutionary upheavals, the political factor influenced people's everyday reality. Political rumours often caused panic in ordinary people, although Almedingen was deliberately unaware of politics in order to avoid trouble. Hippius had to rely on rumours after the October Revolution which helped her cope with the uncertainty. Ten-year-old nobly born Zinaida Shakhovskaya was politically unaware. The first excitement about the disruption of their boring everyday routine at her school soon transformed into sadness that the Tsarist autocracy was lost. When confronted with the revolutionary changes and their implications for everyday life, Shakhovskaya, just like Hippius and Almedingen, coped by resisting the change in one way or another. This suggests that even if the 'revolutionised' people did not openly speak their minds about politics, in a subtle way their outlook on political change worked against the Bolsheviks.

The political chaos spilled over into people's private lives. While Hippius rarely mentioned work in her diary, Almedingen was often forced to look for new jobs, because the job market was far from stable. Unlike Hippius, Almedingen was sometimes confronted with sudden homelessness. Moreover, from the beginning, Almedingen had to be more creative when it came to the search for food, as Hippius was in the fortunate position of being able to sell many of her possessions for food. Almedingen had no grand strategy for successfully managing adverse circumstances. She coped with problems as soon as they appeared. Yet she did not complain much about her desperate situation, but used her imagination and framing in order to create hope. Despite her obvious privilege, Hippius was truly desperate and blamed others for her problems. Also, Hippius wrote much about the, in her view, objectionable tendency of simple people to merely care about eating and avoid politics. Hippius saw these groups and their daily lives as gullible victims of the Bolshevik political revolution.

The struggle to meet basic needs seriously affected interpersonal relations. Both Hippius and Almedingen noticed that people crossed moral limits in order to gain advantages in the fight over scarce resources. Both Almedingen and Hippius found that the revolutionary shortages seriously impaired social relations. While Hippius complained that she was unable

to meet friends, Almedingen coped with her mother's death with suppression. Almedingen observed much more cooperation than Hippius: Almedingen was thankful for the British and American famine relief programs. She witnessed fairness in people who stood in bread queues, and her university professors made personal sacrifices to keep their institutions running. The latter was confirmed by Vladimir Ziornov's account about university life in revolutionary Saratov. This suggests that in many cases people not involved in revolutionary politics helped to generate some order in chaos.

Taken together, Hippius, Almedingen, and the persons they observed used a broad array of strategies. Regardless of the concrete coping mechanisms, everything boiled down to personal and collective survival. And in this sense both Almedingen and Hippius were indeed successful, as both of them could escape Petrograd. The comparison between the two suggests that 'objective' circumstances such as social background and possessions did not fully determine people's inner attitude and how well people coped with challenges. This is not to suggest that the only thing that mattered to maintain personal order in revolutionary disorder was to think positively. Certainly an individual's success in the struggle for survival often stems from material advantages or simply luck. Still, it is striking how the women's inner attitude towards their surrounding seemed to have shaped Almedingen's and Hippius's reality immediately. Hippius moaned about politics, saw most people as enemies or victims who either wanted to betray her or were simply passive; and Hippius did not notice much kindness towards her and others. Almedingen attempted to understand others and acted highly altruistic at times, and she also received positive responses from her environment. Thus the comparison between Almedingen and Hippius suggests a reversal of German philosopher Karl Marx's famous epistemological dictum: For Marx, 'being determines consciousness' was one of the pillars of understanding societal forces. Pointedly, for Almedingen and Hippius, 'consciousness determined being'. Their consciousness in terms of their outlook on outward reality shaped, among other forces, their actual situation.

Feedback Into The Academic Debate

This study contributes to the study of daily life during the Russian Revolution by addressing many questioned which were raised in the academic debate. Aksenov rightly pointed to how traumatic the revolutionary days were for the population. By switching the perspective, this study examined personal trauma more closely and found that there was no other way to

handle the circumstances than to suppress or to adopt neurotic behaviour. From this perspective, new 'losers' of the Russian Revolution become apparent. While political history investigated how the Tsarist White Army lost the Civil War against the Reds, ordinary people were losers of the revolutionary upheavals psychologically. Their wounds would become part of the Soviet collective consciousness for many years to come.

In this view suffering was an almost inevitable outcome of the revolution; however people did not accept all suffering without actions. Murray Frame et al. found that high culture did not cease to exist in revolutionary Russia. Indeed, Zinaida Hippius continued to write poems and keep diaries, this being a way to express her emotions and escape from her harsh reality. And while Edith Almedingen's study of history might be considered equally 'useless' in the face of starvation, she and her fellow students passionately pursued their studies. Historians should not underestimate this engagement, as it was an important coping mechanism.

While this study confirmed Fitzpatrick's finding that in times of shortages people got creative in finding solutions to their problems, coping was also to some extent paradoxical. Both imagination and creativity, and mechanicalness and reactivity were present. While recognising that these poles are not mutually exclusive, to understand this, Lüdtke's scheme of "grey areas of 'neither/nor' actions and choices" is a useful lense. People coped neither clearly creatively nor clearly reactively. They muddled through to survive.

Hasegawa studied crime in revolutionary Petrograd and found a breakdown of daily life. It was facilitated by mob justice committed by common people. There is no doubt that the revolution was very disruptive for any kind of routines, and crime was not particularly supportive to societal order. This study indeed showed that people often did not refrain from criminality, in order to save themselves from starvation. Yet at the same time, people's actions also resulted in more order, as they cooperated and kept their organisations running. Thus 'ordinary' people in revolutionary Petrograd were also a constructive force, and hence should not be omitted in writing the history of the Russian Revolution.

Meaning of The Outcomes

On the whole, this research suggests that historians should take the agency of ordinary people more seriously. Switching the perspective and focusing on everyday topics is a useful instrument in order to recognise that those individuals were not necessarily determined a

certain fate, but had the ability to act and react in myriad ways. Everyday history 'democratises' the meaning of the Russian Revolution even more so than social history has done. Social history considers workers, soldiers, and peasants as participants in the revolutionary events. This study recognised more actors, each of whom was not only an object of history but interpreted the revolution and contributed to the eventual outcome.

It was beyond the scope of this study to use more primary sources. Such an endeavour would be fruitful for future research. There are plenty of everyday contents within primary sources which have already been analysed from the perspectives of political and social history. While recognising the limited source base of this thesis, still lessons in the bigger picture can be drawn. Historian Mark Day noted in *The Philosophy of History* that "to study any thinker more distant than a couple of hundred years is not only to be cast into a world that is to some extent alien, but is also to be made aware of features of our own thought that we would otherwise not explicitly recognize."[168]

In 2017 historians and the public celebrated the centenary of the Russian Revolution. The witnesses of the revolution are of course not as far away as those thinkers mentioned by Mark Day. Still it is difficult to empathize with Hippius's and Almedingen's everyday issues exactly because their world appears to be strange for the Western twenty-first century observer. It is completely outside of our daily experience to be powerless in a complete breakdown of transport in the city, to live in unheated buildings in the cold winter, or to not know when one will have one's next proper meal. We do not know how modern people would cope with such circumstances if they happened; yet a significant question necessarily arises: What would people's survival instinct (which is deeply ingrained into our thoughts) lead them to be capable of? Just like in Petrograd in the throes of war and revolution, would even the most 'civilised' individuals kill for food?

Irrespective of whether one has to struggle for survival, Almedingen's way of engaging with her environment appears to be most productive. Regardless of her 'objectively' negative circumstances, she was hopeful, helpful to others, and grateful for the kindness she received. If more humans adopted Almedingen's consciousness, the world would look much brighter.

[168] Mark Day, *The Philosophy of History : an Introduction* (London et al.: Continuum 2008) 11.

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