

## Guidelines for reading / papers on *In the Shadow of Revolution*

This book is fairly hefty, and my boundless sense of fairness suggests that we should divide up the reading. Of course, if you wish to read the entire book you should by all means do so. Otherwise, you should elect to join one of the two reading groups below. The numbers listed refer to the numbers of the texts in the book itself. Thus #1 is the text by Ekaterina Olitskaia, #22 is the one by Lidia Libedinskaia, and so on. I have been scrupulous in ensuring that the reading for the two groups is almost exactly equal, so there is no need to do any calculations that will save you 2 pages of reading at the most. Once you choose your group, the best idea would be to mark the required readings in your book, to prevent screw-ups.

### GROUP A:

	by text #	by pp.
<b>Part I</b>	1, 6-7, 9-10	33-48, 111-117, 123-165
<b>Part II</b>	11-15	169-234
<b>Part III</b>	23-31, 33	305-366, 391-93

### GROUP B:

	by text #	by pp.
<b>Part I</b>	2-5, 8	49-110, 118-122
<b>Part II</b>	16-22	235-301
<b>Part III</b>	32, 34-36	367-390, 394-434

As regards the two introductions to the book, these are optional, though note that they may be of some use for you in assembling your papers.

The reason for writing the paper is to guarantee – to the extent that such things can be guaranteed – a decent discussion. This means that your paper absolutely must be completed prior to the discussion that day. The paper is essentially yours to construct and I thereby provide only the most general of guidelines here. The large question that you should seek to address is the following: What do these "life stories" of Russian women tell us about Russian history? But you can address this issue in a variety of ways. You could, for example, think and write about how the texts are influenced by the fact that they were written by women (as opposed to men). To what extent was there a singular women's experience in the first two decades of the Soviet Union? You might also address the methodological question concerning the strengths and limitations of the kinds of sources that the book provided. In what specific ways are the texts illuminating, and what are their limitations for giving a full and accurate picture of the Soviet Union in its first two decades? You could also identify some common theme that you see running through several (not necessarily all) of the texts you have read, and then elaborate on what that can tell us about Russian history in this period. The key thing will to identify a

question, problem or issue that you seek to address and to use concrete evidence from the text to support your assertions and contentions.

It is probably impossible in such a short paper of three pages to address anywhere close to all the texts you have read. But you should address at least a few (3-4 at a minimum) in your paper, since otherwise I will be compelled to conclude that your reading was rather limited. The paper itself should be right around three pages and certainly no more than four. Attempts to mislead me about the length of paper with weird margins, etc., will be treated with the contempt that they deserve.

As concerns citation, since all references will come from the one book, simply use a parenthetical form of citation using the author and page, for example: (Olitskaia, 35). There is no need to use the annoying abbreviation "p." or "pg." If you should wish to cite some external source, then I enjoin you to use a footnote, where you may cite that source properly in full. If you use a source from the required readings of the course, you should just use parentheses – e.g., (Bushkovitch, 129).

**What's the Point?** The point of this exercise is above all to create the foundation for a good discussion. But there are two other goals. First, the exercise compels students to read primary sources – that is, accounts written by people who lived through the events described – to draw analytical conclusions about what it was like to live in the first two decades of the USSR. Second, the exercise requires that students read a substantial number of texts and draw meaningful conclusions about common themes. The idea here is to be able to identify and to frame a question or issue that merits more careful consideration.