

# Approaches to Pedagogy

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# Aims

1. To introduce a range of pedagogical approaches
2. To demonstrate possibilities for teaching research-informed lessons
3. To illustrate a range of potential re(sources) available to teachers



# **1. Unpicking ‘Ordinary People’**

# **2. Narratives of Polarisation**

# **3. ‘Feeling’ a Revolution?**

# 'Ordinary People'

Historians have typically focused on three social groups in the Revolution.

- Workers
- Soldiers
- Peasants

But who are these, exactly?



# Beyond ‘Ordinary’



Historian, Yanni  
Kotsonis, writing  
in 2011

“The issue [of ‘ordinary people’] becomes ticklish as soon as one thinks about it – and one should – because **‘ordinary’ is neither historical nor precise**. Saddled with the concept of ordinary, we risk losing sight of the category’s usefulness: to show that **the people we term ordinary are in fact extraordinary** when viewed through the right lens and with creative imagination on the part of the historian.”

# Who were ‘ordinary’ people?

Look at the pictures on the cards in front of you.

Can you sort these people into groups, based on who they appear to be?

- Workers?
- Soldiers?
- Peasants?
- Others?



# What does the revolution mean to me?

Turn over your cards.

Take a few minutes to read the information about each group.

Do different groups have anything in common?

- Aims
- Actions
- Enemies

Sort them into categories.



# 'Ordinary People'

What do you notice about the 'ordinary people' of Russia's revolution?

Why are many historians questioning the old categories of peasants, workers, soldiers?

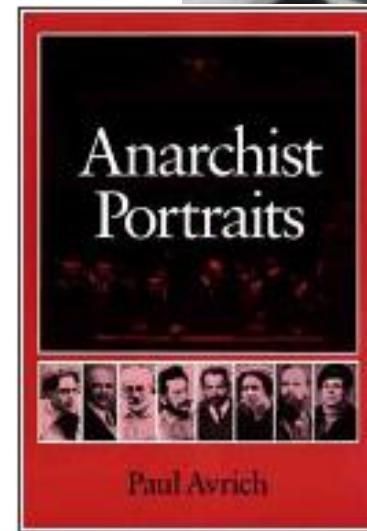
Why might it have been difficult for Russian society to unite behind a political programme in 1917?

# Political Polarisation

Advantages of biography:

1. **Relatability** (and novelty) of personal experiences
2. **Interconnectivity** with wider context
3. **Narrative structure**

**Anatoly Zhelezniakov,**  
anarchist



# Anatoly and the Anarchists: A Revolutionary Love Story

Identify any causes of polarisation you can find.

1. What are the most important moments of polarisation?
2. Who are the main groups/people driving polarisation?

1 When revolution broke out, Anatoly Zhelezniakov celebrated like everyone else. A sailor  
2 and anarchist at the Kronstadt naval base, he looked forward to the end of not just the  
3 Tsar, but also capitalism and all government. Yet Zhelezniakov was quickly frustrated. He  
4 opposed the liberal Provisional Government and, although more enthusiastic about the  
5 soviets, he hated the moderate leadership of the Petrograd Soviet.



6 Though few in number, Zhelezniakov and his fellow anarchists quickly made a nuisance of  
7 themselves. They seized the villa of a former Tsarist minister, Peter Durnovo, in nearby  
8 Petrograd and turned it into their headquarters. While the anarchists at the Durnovo Villa  
9 were still just a tiny fringe, the revolution was already radicalising. In April, the Bolshevik  
10 leader, Vladimir Lenin, returned to Russia and announced workers should replace the  
11 Provisional Government with a government of soviets. Moderate socialists and even some  
12 Bolsheviks were appalled – some called Lenin an anarchist (which he was not). But real  
13 anarchists, like Zhelezniakov, were excited by the idea of that soviets could take over.

14 Zhelezniakov's suspicions of the Provisional Government were being confirmed. On 20 April  
15 1917, the liberal Foreign Minister Pavel Miliukov was revealed to have written to Russia's  
16 Allies in the war promising Russia would continue fighting until they had defeated Germany  
17 and seized more land for Russia. Now not just Zhelezniakov, but thousands of other workers,  
18 soldiers, and sailors in Petrograd poured onto the streets, protesting against the 'Miliukov  
19 note'.

20 The Provisional Government survived – just – after socialists from the Petrograd Soviet agreed  
21 to become ministers. Pavel Miliukov resigned in disgrace. For a brief moment, it seemed the  
22 Provisional Government might gain support. Workers might have hoped that Menshevik  
23 ministers might improve their working conditions. Peasants might have hoped that Socialist  
24 Revolutionary ministers might give them land. Soldiers might have hoped for a socialist-led  
25 end to the war.

# What can Zhelezniakov's story tell us about polarisation?

Bolsheviks

Localities

Fringe radicals

War

Liberal mistakes

Labour

“Dual power”

Counter-  
Revolution

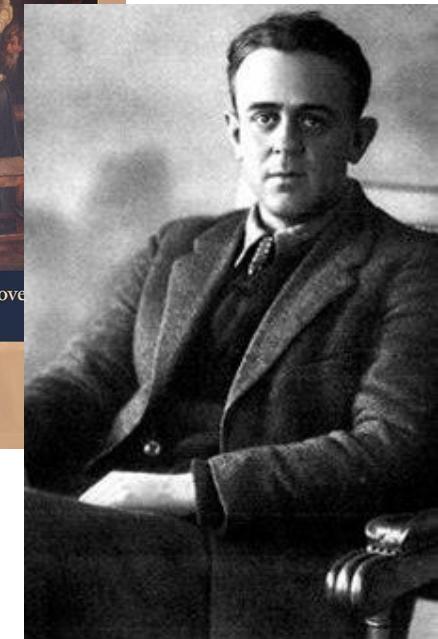
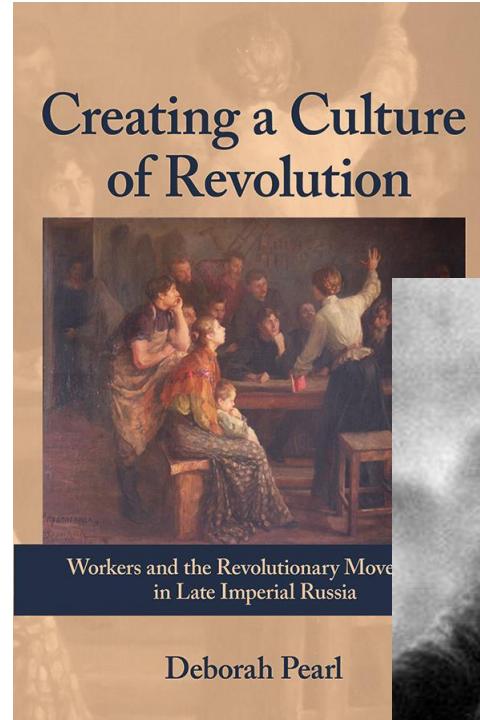


# Song and Emotion

Advantages and hazards of emotions:

- revolutions are **emotional**
- emotions are **difficult to capture**
- **empathy** is (im)possible?

Importance of appropriate source base (e.g participant memoirs and their sources of inspiration).



# **John Reed, Ten Days that Shook the World (1919)**

Suddenly, by common impulse, we found ourselves on our feet, mumbling together into the smooth lifting unison of the **Internationale**. A grizzled old soldier was sobbing like a child. Alexandra Kollontai rapidly winked the tears back. The immense sound rolled through the hall, burst windows and doors and seared into the quiet sky. "The war is ended! The war is ended!" said a young workman near me, his face shining. And when it was over, as we stood there in a kind of awkward hush, some one in the back of the room shouted, "Comrades! Let us remember those who have died for liberty!" So we began to sing the Funeral March [**"You Fell a Victim"**], that slow, melancholy and yet triumphant chant, so Russian and so moving. The Internationale is an alien air, after all. The Funeral March seemed the very soul of those dark masses whose delegates sat in this hall, building from their obscure visions a new Russia—and perhaps more.

# **Which song?**

Listen to the two songs.

Which is “The Internationale”? Which “You Fell a Victim”?

**Now read the lyrics in English. What messages do the songs try to convey? How does their music help them do this?**