

Russia's Student Press, 1901-1917



This collection includes sources on:

- Everyday life of students in Moscow, St Petersburg and provincial cities
- Political extremes among students
- World War I
- Women Students
- Russian Students Abroad



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Russia's Student Press

In the early twentieth century, Russia's student community – or *studenchestvo* – was a highly visible and often controversial force in Russian political and social life. Until now, one of the most important sources on this lively period in higher education – the student press – has been largely inaccessible to Western scholars. Students participated in the development of political parties ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right; the Christian renaissance; the spread of national and nationalist movements; the workers' movement; literary, cultural, artistic, and intellectual currents; debates on women's rights and legalized prostitution, as well as on anti-Semitism and the rights of Jews; and, of course, the highly contentious disputes over the political and academic roles of higher education in Russia. Consequently, this collection represents an essential source for scholars researching the history and culture of Russia during the fascinating twilight of its imperial period.

Russia's Student Press

Perhaps best known for their radical politics, students had held a series of nationwide strikes and protests between 1899 and 1904, and in the autumn of 1905 they turned the universities into crucial sites of revolutionary activism. Although with the rise of mass movements and political parties, students could no longer claim to be agents of revolution, the *studenchestvo* remained one of the most politically active and socially engaged groups in Russian society, despite the attempts by the government to suppress such activism. At this time, both the number of students and the range of higher educational institutions expanded radically, thus meeting and feeding the growing demand for trained specialists – teachers, lawyers, agronomists, engineers, doctors. New opportunities also developed for women and minorities, especially Jewish men and women, as legal restrictions on access to higher education began to be rolled back. Between 1905 and 1917, therefore, the world of higher education formed a microcosm of Russia's educated society.

With the collapse of censorship during the revolutionary years (1905-06) and the relative freedom of the press in the subsequent years, students published scores of newspapers and journals as well as volumes of collected articles. While the newspapers were usually short-lived, often due to external political pressure, these sources provide unique access to the heterogeneous world of the university, including academic and scholarly currents as well as the activities of the hundreds of student groups that proliferated in this period. Taken as a whole, this collection offers a cross-section of Russia's student press, including publications from both capital and provincial cities, and from



Ilya Repin – *Student-nihilist* (1883)

both the extreme left and the extreme right. Because the titles of publications are repetitive, they have been grouped into a series of overlapping sections so as to highlight particular thematic issues.

Provincial and Capital Worlds

The student press provides a new and largely untapped source for urban history, both of the two capital cities – St. Petersburg and Moscow – and of provincial cities. Universities and other institutions of higher education were important cultural and political landmarks in Russia's cities, sites not just for learning but also for social interaction and political conflict. Indeed, students participated in the everyday life of their cities, often living in poor areas, frequenting theaters and other forms of entertainment, and sometimes becoming active with local workers. All of the publications in the collection have consequently been organized according to place of publication: St. Petersburg, Moscow, and provincial cities. Most important among the provincial cities are those in Ukraine, especially Odessa,

Kiev, and Kharkov. There is also a distinct section of serials published by Russians studying abroad.

Politics in the Academy

Since the 1860s, students had possessed the reputation for political radicalism, and these currents remained highly important after 1905. In addition to two national strike movements (1908, 1911), progressive students continued to comment on and participate in national politics, whether leading a movement against the death penalty in 1910 (in commemoration of Lev Tolstoy) or protesting the Beilis case in 1913 (the prosecution of a Jewish man accused of the ritual murder of a Christian child). Less well known but extremely important was the rise of a conservative movement, which included both moderate and extreme nationalist, anti-Semitic groups. The student press thus provides a vital source on Russia's political life – both inside and outside the Academy, including the development of organizations and ideologies ranging from the far left to the far right. Many of the collection's titles have been organized into two sections according to their general political perspectives, namely left of center and right of center.

World War I

World War I currently forms one of the most important and active topics of historical research, and the student press provides a largely untapped source. These publications illuminate, firstly, debates about patriotism, nationalism, and nationalist currents (including anti-Semitism and anti-German sentiment); secondly, the specific activities of Russia's students in the war effort (charitable work, war industries, the military); thirdly, the social and economic world of Russia's home-front, including the transformation of the

universities and the influx of female students; and, fourthly, the political run-up to the revolution of 1917.

Particular Groups

The collection includes three sections focused on specific groups, namely Christian, Jewish, and female students. Though only one title was explicitly Christian in orientation, this newspaper was extremely long-lived and provided a lively forum for discussion and debate. Jewish students produced a variety of newspapers and collections, many of which were long-lived, and they discussed diverse issues, including current events, anti-Semitism, relations with non-Jewish students and political movements, and the conflict between Zionism and socialism. Finally, some titles were produced either solely by

female students or by students at co-educational institutions. This section also contains two surveys of female students in St. Petersburg. It should be noted, however, that almost all general student publications contained numerous contributions by female and Jewish students and discussed issues relevant to these groups.

Questionnaires and Surveys

In Russia, the early twentieth century witnessed a vogue for conducting statistical surveys, and these formed an important precursor of later attempts under the Soviets to gauge the behavior and values of target groups. Many of the surveys focused on students, and these sources provide important information on students' social, economic, sexual, and political lives, including particular

groups such as Jewish and female students. In addition, they will be of interest to scholars working on the history of the social sciences and statistics.

Critical Collections

These publications represent some of the most interesting titles in the collection, in part because publishing a volume or series of volumes was easier than producing a newspaper under the pressures of censorship. Most of these titles, which span the political spectrum, include literary works, commentary on artistic and literary currents, whether the social role of literature or modernism in the arts, and contributions to all the major political and social issues of the era. Almost all titles include numerous pieces written by female students.

General information

Scope	82 titles
Number of fiche	349
Size of fiche	105 x 48 mm.
Film Type	Positive Silver Halide
Reduction ratio	Varies depending on the original
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers on every fiche indicating the author, abbreviated title, place and date of printing of each item
External finding aids	Bibliographic records for all titles ordered are supplied in MARC21 format with the microfiches



Student of St. Petersburg university



Molodaia Rus'. *studencheskii sbornik*. Petrograd, 1916.



Studencheskii *sbornik* Petrograd, 1915.



Studencheskii *al'manakh*. Kiev, 1910-

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