The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Revolution Comes to Moscow

By The Moscow Times

November 06, 2017



One of the many images of the unknown Revolution of 1917/Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center

Although Russia is not marking the centenary of 1917 Revolution as widely as might be expected, it doesn't mean that the event is slipping by unnoticed. In Moscow there are a number of museum exhibitions that reveal never-before-seen artifacts from the revolutionary era, as well as the art that the Revolution inspired both then and now. For diehard historians, there will even be a military march across Red Square. And for armchair revolutionaries, there are some excellent online and television resources.

Art and Revolution

The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts has an extraordinary show of works by the leading international contemporary artist of Chinese origin, Cai Guo-Qiang. The exhibition is called "October" and is devoted to the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. All the works have been created especially for the Moscow exhibition, including a large-scale installation in front of the museum entitled "Autumn" — a heap of prams donated by Moscow residents with birch trees growing from them, which is meant to evoke a scene from

the film “Battleship Potemkin” by Sergei Eisenstein. You can also see his gunpowder paintings and massive installation incorporated into the museum’s architecture. For more information, see the museum site.

Jewish History and October Revolution

"Freedom for All? The History of One People in the Years of Revolution" is a joint project of the Museum of Jewish History in Russia and the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center that considers the cultural, political and religious aspects of the Jewish community in Russia during the years of Revolution and Civil War. The exhibition features paintings, including by Marc Chagall, Robert Falk, Issachar Ber Ryback and El Lissitzky; photographs; books; as well as theater and political posters and leaflets gathered from various museums, archives and private collections — much for the first time. You can read letters or listen to old voice recordings of Lev Trotsky, Mark Chagall, Vera Inber, and Vassily Shulgin. You can find out more on the
museum site.

1917: The Code of the Revolution

The Museum of Contemporary Russian History has been running a fascinating exhibition of artifacts from the real Revolution, such as search lights from the battleship Aurora and notes scribbled by Lenin himself. The show contains about 1,500 objects, from placards to uniforms and personal effects of the main participants. The show is due to close on Nov. 12, but if you can’t catch it in person, you can find it online
here.

Project 1917

If you haven’t been following the 1917 Revolution as it unfolded, you can start today with some binge reading. Created by author Mikhail Zygar and developed with a group of social-media savvy editors, the project presents diary entries, excerpts from letters and books of dozens – perhaps hundreds – of participants and witnesses to the 1917 Revolution as something like Facebook posts. The posts are illustrated with photographs and film footage from those months, as well as special reports by newscasters who “tell the news” of 1917 using the graphics and television news tropes of 2017. In Russian and English with a smart phone app, it is essential revolutionary reading. Tune in for “live blogging” of the revolution as it happens here.

Hurtling into the Abyss

TASS has digitalized its entire collection of materials from the 1917 revolutionary period and added photographs and other materials from a wide variety of museum and archival sources, both in Russia and abroad. This is not in English, but if your Russian is up for it, it is another way to fall down the rabbit hole of the Revolution, reading dispatches from the last tsar or clicking to read a roughly printed flyer declaring that the “first chains have fallen off” political prisoners. Check it out
here.

Red Square Demonstration

Depending on whom you read, the huge demonstration to be held on Red Square Tuesday is either a victory march for the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and foreign guests to honor the triumph of the 1917 Revolution, or it is an event marking the 76th anniversary of the famous Nov. 7 parade in 1941 that culminated with the soldiers marching off to war with Nazi Germany and has nothing whatsoever to do with the events of 1917. In any case, there will be 5,000 military men and women on Red Square, most likely a great number of red banners, and all of the center of the city will be closed to traffic from about 3 p.m. on. For more information about street closings, see the city site.

Trotsky

If you want to see "the Revolution as never filmed before" and like television series with "action, passion and energy" — and if you don't mind if the Revolution is highly fictionalized, tune in for "Trotsky" on Channel One. It begins Monday at 9:35 p.m. and continues through Wednesday. The actors are topnotch and the sets look richly executed, from red and black steam locomotives flying through snow to Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico. The kitsch factor, however, may also be high. For more information in Russian see the channel site. Spolier alert: It doesn't end well for Trotsky.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/11/06/revolution-comes-to-moscow-a59487