Stories from Mayakovskaya Metro Station

The Production/Consumption of Stalinist Monumental Space, 1938

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Abstract

Mayakovskaya Metro station was opened to the general public on September 11, 1938. The underground platform was built by architect Aleksey Dushkin. It features a 35-mosaic cycle, designed by painter Aleksandr Deineka, as well as stainless steel and semi-precious stone ornamentation. In addition to being an integral part of Moscow's transport infrastructure, the site participated in Stalinist mass propaganda.

Focusing on Mayakovskaya station, this study aims to establish theoretical tools in order to analyse Socialist Realist public art and monumental spaces constructed in a one-party state, under central planning. Borrowing from the field of cultural studies, it endeavours to sketch modes of interaction between Soviet public art and society, the production and consumption of Stalinist monumental space during 1938. Sophisticated conceptions of bodies, space, time, and the nature of representation are developed in order to fulfil these goals.

Stories from Mayakovskaya also maps out possible interpretations of the representations existing in the station, following popular discourses available during the year the site was inaugurated. It places the Metro station and the iconography it contains in the context of the first two Five-Year Plans and the General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow. Finally, in proposing alternative stories, this thesis seeks to demonstrate the failure of the totalitarian model for the analysis of inter-war Stalinist art and material culture.

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Explanatory Notes

Because of the wide range of sources and the problem of transliteration, there are some discrepancies in the spelling of names and words from the Russian in this study. In footnotes and the bibliography, works consulted in Russian are transliterated according to the Library of Congress guidelines. However, when books were consulted in translated form (English or French), spelling might follow a different transliteration system. This is why, for example, Vladimir Sysoev also appears as Vladimir Sissoïev, Maiakovskii as Mayakovsky. The name Aleksandr is also spelled Alexandre and Alexander.

In order to make reading easier for the general reader, all diacritical marks have been dropped in the text. I have used the familiar Anglicisation of names for well-known figures like Trotsky, Mayakovsky and El Lissitzky. The mainstream spelling of proper nouns often differs from that recommended by the Library of Congress. Following this general simplifying trend, the letter 'y' replaces the common 'ii' ending of names, 'ya' and 'yu' replace 'ia' and 'iu' respectively.

Because of the specific nature of this work, I saw no reason to burden the reader with a proliferation of indecipherable institutional names and acronyms in the texts. These have been kept to a strict minimum. The metric system has been used throughout this study, since Soviet statistics, quantities and records were measured according to this model. The imperial system was preserved in American and British quotes.

Introduction

From army-doctors and agronomists, I heard words completely different than from the 'art gallery' public, of whom I know 90%, and whom I disagree with by that same percentage.
Aleksandr Deineka[1]

The fabric of self-identity - individual, ethnic, or national - is woven in time and space, history and geography, memory and place.
Victor Burgin[2]

This culture is never indifferent; it accumulates.
André Gide[3]

Mayakovskaya Metro station opened its doors to the public at seven o'clock on the morning of May 15, 1938. The inauguration of this vaulted station of the Gorky Radius (part of the second phase of the Metro project)[4] had been announced months in advance. Crowds gathered for the event; the inauguration of this 'underground palace'[5] was a significant social event in the Moscow calendar. It was further 'indexical'[6] proof that the promised communist life was emerging in the empirical world. Aleksey Dushkin,[7] the architect of the station, described the event in his diary:

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[1] Aleksandr Deineka 'Iz Avtobiograficheskogo Ocherka' (1946), Vladimir Sysoev, *Aleksandr Deineka*, tome 2, Leningrad: Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo, 1989, p. 30. Most articles published by Aleksandr Deineka were reproduced in this book. This source will be used throughout this study, rather than the original journal sources.

[2] Victor Burgin, *In/different Space: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p. 190.

[3] André Gide, *Retour de l'URSS*, Paris: Gallimard, 1936, p. 51.

[4] See Appendix One for a chronology of the Moscow Metro.

[5] The idea of the Metro platforms as underground palaces is discussed throughout William K. Wolf, *Russia's Revolutionary Underground; The Construction of the Moscow Subway, 1931-1935*, diss., Ohio State University, 1994.

[6] The notion of the index is borrowed from Rosalind Krauss. 'As distinct symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referent. They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify.' Krauss places in this category of material traces footprints, medical symptoms and performative utterances. Rosalind Krauss, 'Notes on the Index: Part 1,' *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1985, p. 198.

[7] See Appendix Two for a chronology of Aleksey Dushkin. Architects of the first phase had been chosen through a lenghty competition. In order to accelerate the process, commissions for the second phase were given directly to successful architects of the first line. Dushkin, who had been awarded the *Diplôme d'honneur*' at the Paris World Fair in 1937 for the Dvorets Sovetov station (now Kropotkinskaya), was asked to design Ploshchad Revolutsii. The Commission for Mayakovskaya was later given to Dushkin by the Metro Committee, dissatisfied with the project initiated by Samuil Kavets for Moscow's deepest station.

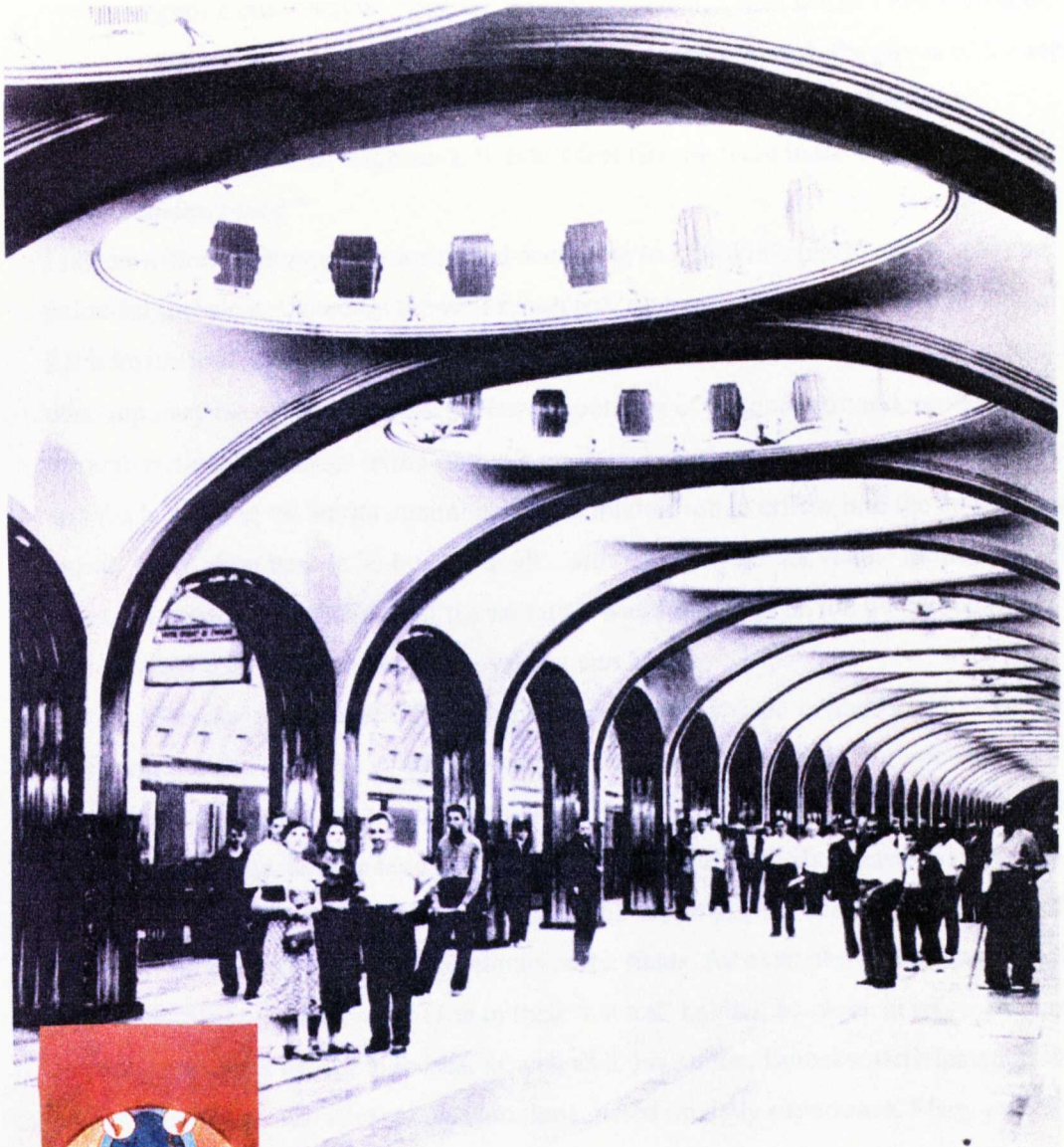

Fig. 1. First passengers in Mayakovskaya, September 11, 1938.

Fig. 2. Thirty-second mosaic.

> At the opening of the station, there was incredible enthusiasm. For a few days already, thousands of people had congregated by the entrance. At all times there was a crowd, constantly humming with happy voices. It was very loud, and fighting one's way through the crowd was a feat. There weren't enough Metro rulebooks for everyone... When the first train approached, the gleam of the metal surprised everybody. The soft light flowing from the cupolas filled the atmosphere with brightness. It didn't feel like we were in the depths of Moscow's underground.[8]

Lodged within each cupola, constructed according to Dushkin's plans, was a bold and colourful mosaic designed by the well-respected 'monumentalist' Aleksandr Deineka.[9] Each image in the 'One Day in the Soviet Land' over-head series represents an aspect of contemporary Soviet life, as if seen from the position of the underground passenger, through fictional openings in the station's ceiling. Aeroplanes flying, athletes jumping, and the harvesting on Soviet communal farms might even overflow into the underground world. The station houses 35 images in all...although only 33 are visible to the station's users. The concealment of part of the narrative was contingent on the likelihood that a second (planned) entrance to Mayakovskaya was built.

Deineka's oval works do not rely on iconography fixed in tradition. Indeed, part of the argument developed in this work focuses on the fact that images conferring unambiguous meaning were still scarce in the Soviet 1930s. Furthermore, aside from their recent introduction into the field of visual arts, many of the motifs offered to the viewers in Mayakovskaya, had had a very short history in the empirical world. The presence of planes in the sky and harvesting combines in the fields, for example, still evoked surprise and ambivalent emotions when seen in their 'natural' habitat, let alone in representation. Drawing on events available to him, as well as to his public, Deineka participated in the elaboration of new significant configurations, based on daily experience. Many artists in the thirties travelled throughout the newly formed country in order to document the emerging Soviet life.[10] Deineka borrowed from his own work as a state-sponsored illustrator and propagandist to create the 'One Day in the Soviet Land' narrative. There is

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[8] Dushkin quoted by B. Barkhin, 'O Tvorchestve A. Dushkina,' *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 5 (1985), p. 98.

[9] See Appendix Three for a chronology of Aleksandr Deineka.

[10] This refers to artists' brigades and *komandirovki* (creative trips) of the first two Five-Year Plans. Artists were intended to gather current images, to be used as part of the industrialisation and collectivisation campaigns. Several hundred artists of different aesthetic orientations were dispatched on these state-sponsored trips to 'observe' and 'reflect' the results of the Plans. See Jane Friedman 'Khudozhniki, na Kolkhozy! The Soviet Artists' Brigades and Collectivisation (1929-1933),' address, American

indeed something akin to the 'news clip' in the station: technological progress, record setting, contemporary heroes, etc. Some of the configurations imagined by Deineka later became the privileged symbols of Soviet life and Socialist Realist art.

Deineka's dynamic images of Soviet life caught in flight do not only speak about Soviet people; they speak *to* the viewer. Socialist Realist art was meant to educate the population with regards to the (Stalinist version of) history and goals of the Revolution. Art and material culture were meant to help the social, as well as the economical, development of individual workers and of the country as a whole. They were not conceived as simple reflections of the economic structure;[11] they contributed to the growth of a socialist identity, education, literacy, and general proficiency in the emerging conditions of Soviet living. As Joseph Stalin noted: 'the Moscow Metro is a school, one of the best schools we have – which every day, every hour, every minute, teaches us the power of socialism.'[12] In this sense, there might not have been such a gaping abyss between art and life or text and context, during this period.

The station performs potent assaults on the user's senses. This is not simply an effect of synaesthesia, but also a response to the intrinsic nature of Stalinist monumental space, which is experienced with the entire body. The cobalt and crimson glass pieces in the mosaics, the cold stainless steel ribbing on the columns, the noise, the odours emanating from the pulsating and concentrated masses... All this adds up to a new underground experience. The novelty of the Metro is exalted by the structural and formal innovations built into Mayakovskaya by Dushkin.[13] The freshness of Soviet living, claiming to have distanced itself from anterior Russian life, is affirmed in the representations suspended above the Metro user's head. Deineka stamped his subjective (and I believe shared) enthusiasm for the Soviet society in construction, in both the images he created and his words: 'The role of fine arts is not only to explain the new in

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Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) annual conference, November 23, 1999.

[11] This mechanical relation between the base and the superstructure is due to a simplistic reading of Marx, deplorably disseminated in the West, as well as in the Soviet Union, during the Cold War period.

[12] Joseph Stalin, 'Metro v Deistvie,' in *Ogonek*, 17 (1935), p. 1.

[13] No architect participated more actively in the elaboration of the Moscow Metro network than Dushkin, who contributed to six equally original stations. Dimensions, materials and engineering specifications for all stations of the first and second phase of the Metro project can be found in Samuil Kravets, *Arkhitektura Moskovskogo Metropolitena*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vsesoiuznoi Akademii Arkhitektury, 1939, and I. E. Katsen, *Metro Moskvy*, Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1947.

our life, but also to show it to society. Through art one can love, feel the new, one can see better.'[14]

The subject of this study

This study centres on Mayakovskaya Metro station, and its public reception during the first year(s) of its exploitation. It does not consist of a social history of the station or of the artworks therein. It rather draws from the field of cultural studies to create a theoretical model, which endeavours to take into account the specificity of Stalinist culture, politics and economics. Each chapter examines a number of mosaics and architectural fragments within the scope of broader theoretical problems: history, the body, space, time and memory.

Since the arguments presented are theoretical rather than corpus bound, Mayakovskaya needs to be confronted with a variety of 'cultural texts,' images and discourses, as well as different types of relations to the site. This is why the documents brought into this analysis are purposely eclectic. They might relate to the station, or more specifically to the mosaics, as sources, thematic companions, context or subtext. There is indeed no visible barrier in the empirical world that organises selective consumption of information; texts, images, smells and sounds can all contribute equally and indistinguishably to the experience of a site. The human body and mind are stimulated synchronically by heterogeneous sources.

The juxtaposition of a variety of coexistent cultural texts has the advantage of generating a broader perspective on the production of a social space, such as Mayakovskaya, seen through various mental and material categories.

> Social space [...] ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and mathematicians) on the one hand, and physical space (as defined by pratico-sensory activity and the perception of 'nature') on the other. [...] social space is constituted neither by a collection of things or an aggregate of (sensory) data, nor by a void packed like a parcel with various contents, and [...] it is irreducible to a 'form' imposed upon phenomena, upon things, upon physical materiality.[15]

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[14] Deineka quoted in M. Lebedianskii, *Zhivopis' Rozhdennaia Oktiabrem*, Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986, p. 193.

[15] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, p. 27. Lefebvre's conception of the production of space underlies every aspect of this study of Mayakovskaya, a space made with the express goal to signify. It would however be wrong to apply wholesale in this context a theoretical model developed in the West for use related to late capitalist cultures. Reservations as to the application of Lefebvre's work will be expressed when appropriate to the development of the arguments.

Here, space is understood as a complex network of culturally specific signs. In order to assess how Mayakovskaya functioned within Moscow in the thirties, it is necessary to overcome the artificial borders set by academic disciplines or medium-bound studies.

The primary assumption underlying this study is that monumental space is in constant intercourse with the empirical world. This dynamic association is especially significant in the context of Socialist Realism, which is self-consciously aimed at transforming material existence, while drawing its vocabulary from every day life. The dialectical relationship between an ever-changing world and 'performative representations'[16] creates highly unstable readings of the art. Consequently, the conception of iconography as fixed conventional signs has to be discarded. Indeed, the traditional understanding of the 'icon' renders the image similar to the arbitrary mathematical sign. What interests mathematics is the pure relation between mathematical signs within a system already legitimised. However, what concerns monumental space in the Stalinist thirties is a continuous generative process in the interaction of producers, users and images. Furthermore, the broad network within which early Stalinist signs evolved had not, during the period in question, acquired broad legitimacy. A conception of monumental space and Socialist Realist images, which emphasises process rather than system, function rather than convention, therefore underlies this study.

The second assumption presented in this work is that the empirical world is both entirely artificial and entirely real. This notion is based on the 1929 theoretical work by the Soviet semiotician V. N. Voloshinov, as developed in his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*:

> Any ideological product is not only itself part of reality (natural or social) just as is any physical body, any instrument of production, or any product for consumption, it also, in contradiction to these other phenomena, reflects and refracts another reality outside itself. Everything ideological possesses *meaning*: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. In other words, it is a *sign*. [17]

Constructed space and art are made up entirely of signs. No natural fibre composes them. The same notion applies to all constitutive elements of a society's superstructure: law, science, economy, philosophy, etc. Yet, contrary to what Voloshinov implies, there are no 'natural objects,' which simply equate themselves. Even categories that might seem untouched by ideology, such as the physical body, the elements, and simple work tools,

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[16] As performative utterances, meant to effect an action by being spoken or written, these images were designed to transform the viewer and its relation to the world.
[17] V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 9.

also signify outside themselves, within a context. Both processes of production and consumption transform all matter into signs.

One further assumption regards the viewer (or the user) of monumental spaces. Users are 'socially organised.' Therefore, when they consume signs, they make use of this consumption... this transformation, according to cultural and personal directions. Experience might take an individual aspect. This is because the individual consciousness assimilates the experience as its own. But experience is, in fact, the result of social interaction. It is constructed by differentiation and accumulation of signs available within a specific context.

This does not imply that an analysis of this type could rely on concepts such as 'the spirit of the times,' 'the spirit of the people,' or 'common experience.' A whole society might use a sign, an image or a site. But different groups within society will produce their own analysis of these representations. Therefore, differently oriented interpretations coexist for every sign. They depend on various consumer needs, objectives, interpretative tools, etc. This implies that meaning put into a representation by the artist will always be 'supplemented' by a surplus of meaning in the viewer's mind. Yet, different versions of an image are not to be understood as antithetical; the concept of the 'supplement'[18] permits a departure from binary oppositions. It allows the observation of difference as a multi-phased process of transformation by addition. In this sense, representation becomes the grounds for struggle between groups within a society.

> In actual fact, each living ideological sign has two faces, like Janus. Any current curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to many people as the greatest lie. This inner dialectic quality of the sign comes out fully in the open in times of social crises or revolutionary change.[19]

When a group achieves hegemony over all other groups, the dialectical quality of the ideological sign is hidden under what Roland Barthes had termed 'myth'.[20] This means that signs appear to be natural, or free from ideology. What makes this study particularly exciting is that it is set in a period of revolutionary change, when semiotic activity is at its peak, and when (if one agrees with Voloshinov) myth can therefore not exist.

This study represents an attempt to reflect on the aforementioned questions and a number of other related issues. These problematics have rarely been pulled together in

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[18] The supplement is not an element that is simply tacked on, but rather an addition, which commands a new interpretation of the transformed object, which it supplements. This notion is developed in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

[19] Voloshinov, p. 23. I would argue that the sign is pluri-faced, like an international clock, rather than two-faced.

[20] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Paris: Seuil, 1970.

scholarship to address the art and culture of the Stalinist period. Within this work, it should appear clear that Soviet inter-war culture, its system of production based on central planning, and the overtly propagandistic function of its cultural production demand the (art) historian to ask broad ranging questions in order to conduct an analysis of the period.

Why Mayakovskaya?

Socialist Realism is most often described as an over determined genre. Its propagandistic nature has indeed led to an understanding of Stalinist art within the fiction of pure, unmediated communication. However, its conditions of reception seem to be among the most difficult to control. This is due to two factors. First, the particularly transitional nature of the Soviet Union in the thirties, plagued by a variety of political, economical, demographical and representational crises, rendered a homogenous 'world view' impossible. Second, most Socialist Realist art was designed as public art. This means that interpretations were not limited by institutions, or notions of taste. Indeed, most viewers were 'unspoiled' by the discourse of art history. Soviet monumental art always unfolded onto the empirical world, unrestricted by the walls of the museum, or the gaze of the 'art gallery' public.

Socialist Realism never represented a given, but rather belonged to the experience of expectation, promise or dream. Its discourse was that of a wish; it inaugurated a 'new world,' but never reported faithfully what 'was.' It revealed an unattainable, yet necessary ideal, which fed on interest and pure desire, which could only appear materially in the sign. Its meaning was therefore always dependent on the genesis of the art and the pragmatic conditions of its perception by individuals. This issue, which may concern all art, becomes paradigmatic in the analysis of Socialist Realist monumental spaces, such as Mayakovskaya. In the station, consumption was guided not only by ideals and desire, but also by the user's destination, the length of the time spent in the space, the number of other users present, and so on.

In the Stalinist regime, monumental art was art *par excellence*. This quality was made obvious by the extravagant resources devoted to public spaces, and by the discourse surrounding them. In the thirties, the role of monumental art exceeded aesthetic programmes. It played a primary role in the formation of a Soviet culture and the legitimisation of the social, political and economic goals of the regime.

> Our Moscow Metro is wonderful, especially because it is not simply made of marble, - no, it is not simply made of granite, - no, it is not simply made of metal, - no, it is not simply made of concrete, - no!

> In each piece of marble, metal or concrete, in each step of the escalator, breathes the new soul of humanity, our socialist work, our blood, our work, our struggle for a new human being, for socialist society.[21]

Indeed, within Soviet monumental art, the Moscow Metro was monumental art *par excellence*. The *Metropoliten*, as it was officially known, was constructed as 'the principal means to resolve the problem of fast and cheap mass transportation.'[22] It was also meant to provide Moscow with concrete, material examples of what life within full-blown communism would be like. No expenses were spared to fulfil these goals. Rare materials were imported from various parts of the Soviet Union, new technologies in excavating and building were tested, and the regime's most prised architects and artists were mobilised for the Metro projects. In terms of numbers of people involved, the Metro was the largest project undertaken in the USSR. In fact, in 1934, the workforce had reached 75,000 people, not including voluntary workers. Different ethnic groups living on the territory of the Soviet Union participated. For example, in 1934, in shaft 12 of the digging project of the first line of the Metro, 23 nationalities were represented.[23]

Within the Metro network, Mayakovskaya is one of the most exceptional. The station was declared a 'world heritage monument' by UNESCO in 1939, after a model of the site was awarded a gold medal at the World Fair held in New York.[24] Soviet writers and users alike have often described it as the most beautiful Metro station in Moscow.

Mayakovskaya was chosen as the focal point of this study because it represents what Henri Lefebvre has termed the 'typical exception.'[25] The station's sober and streamlined architectural forms are almost completely opposed to the baroque, over-ornamented style that is now understood as Socialist Realist architecture. The functional parts of the construction (the escalator, the lamps, and even the protective rails) exhibit

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[21] Lazar Kaganovich, quoted in Kravets, p. 3. Kaganovich was the regime's Commissar of transport and infrastructure during the thirties. In this quality, he was the Soviet official most involved in the Metro project.

[22] From the Central Committee plenary session of July 1931, quoted in E. Reznichenko (ed.), *Dni i Gody Metrostroia: 50-Letiiu Metrostroia Posviashchaetsia*, Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1981, p. 409.

[23] Yuri Shutovsky, *Moscow Metro: The Underground Dream*, http://forevermore.com/metro.

[24] A full height, three-dimensional model of Mayakovskaya station was built for the Soviet Pavilion at the 1939 New York World Fair. A set of mirrors created the illusion of the total length of the station. The *trompe-l'oeil* station has been destroyed.

[25] Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la Vie Quotidienne*, tome 2, Paris: L'Arche, 1961, p. 61. For Lefebvre, 'everyday life' does not find form in the banal, but rather in what he terms the 'typical exception,' the motifs which excite the imagination of the broad population.

Fig. 3. Map of the Moscow *Metropoliten*, first and second phases, 1935

Fig. 4. A/B *Metropoliten* car, 1935

influences of Constructivist design. Similarly, the iconography present within the architectural frame differs from that visible in other monumental spaces produced during the period.

It has been noted that the second phase of the Metro is characterised by the experimental nature of the sites, rather than uniformity.[26] Mayakovskaya, nevertheless, fully participated in the elaboration of architectural and representational signs within this period. As a monumental space, it comprised of signs from different spheres: architecture, visual arts, and even poetry, in allusion to the renowned Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. Mayakovskaya represents a much more important moment in the synthesis of the arts, which was a characteristic of Soviet monumental art, than any other consideration of style.

Another answer to 'why Mayakovskaya?' can be found within the period, which generated this Metro station. One of the problems historians face when writing about Stalinist culture is that they are confronted with objects, which have been crafted within ideological and material modes of production that are not his/her own. The relationship of the object to the public, the institutions, the mechanisms of production, and the notion of the commodity, therefore have to be treated with rigorous scepticism. What makes this period particularly complex is the succession of rapid and radical historical breaks, which have periodically transformed the relations within society, the production of objects and signs, thus leaving little time for adaptation by the public, and legitimisation by the institutions.

Some of these breaks, possibly experienced in the lifetime of a Soviet citizen alive in the thirties, are the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the 1905 Revolution, the 1917 February Revolution (a bourgeois revolution which resulted in Aleksandr Kerensky's transitional government), the Bolshevik Revolution in October of the same year, the 1919-1921 civil war, the implementation in 1924 of the New Economic Policy (NEP) during which capitalist activities were reintroduced, the beginning of the Five-Year Plans in 1928 (a shift which signifies the beginning of Soviet autarky and rapid industrial growth within a planned economy),[27] and the 1936 constitution (which revoked many rights given to the population in the years following the October Revolution). This last shift corresponds to what Nicholas Timasheff has successfully termed the 'Great Retreat.'[28]

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[26] V. Lavrov, 'Arkhitektura Moskovskogo Metropolitena,' *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 9 (1938), p. 8.
[27] See Michael R. Dohan, 'The Economic Origins of Soviet Autarky 1927/28-1934,' *Slavic Review*, 4 (1976), pp. 603-635.
[28] Nicholas Timasheff, *The Great Retreat*, New York: Arno, 1972.

> During the period of the First Five-Year Plan the face of our country greatly changed. But the whole life of our country underwent still greater change during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37). One sixth of the globe, from the North Pole to the torrid steppes of Turkmenia, from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, a new socialist system was built, a new life was created, a life without exploitation or oppression, without capitalists or landlords, without merchants or *kulaks*.'[29]

Because of this perpetual instability, the year 1938, when Mayakovskaya greeted its first users, is considered to be part of a broader revolutionary moment. This means that the process of overthrowing and replacing the former political, economical and ideological systems had not yet found any solution. A state of legitimisation was never reached during the many disparate years between 1917 and 1946; in this most peculiar context, ideology merely provided a sketchy guide for future action. As Sheila Fitzpatrick has observed, the double problem of instability and lack of consensus exceeded the economical and the political:

> This society is impossible to analyse adequately in purely static terms because of the exceptional social and geographical mobility of the population. Tens of millions of peasants moved to town and became workers in the 1930s. A large segment of the old working class moved into white-collar and managerial occupations. Private traders and businessmen were forced out of their old occupations and had to find new ones; 'kulaks' were deported from the villages and resettled in distant regions, where many became workers [...]'[30]

Even if certain social categories from the previous regime were erased, individuals from these groups remained active participants in Soviet society. Even though peasants, merchants and artisans became proletarian, they still went about their everyday life with memories of their former identities and practices, which challenged the homogeneity desired by the Soviet government and implied in Western scholarship.

There are several inherited Cold War biases, which all too often determine the conclusions of scholarly work on the Soviet Union. Discussing this problem, Stephen Cohen notes that:

> It is generally characteristic of our scholarship on Soviet history to explain social and political development after 1917 almost exclusively by the nature of the party

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[29] V. V. Shestakov (ed.) *A Short History of the USSR*, Moscow: Co-operative publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1938, p. 238. *Kulaks* were land-owning peasants who employed labour to exploit their land. They were considered the capitalist entrepreneurs of the country side.

[30] Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'New Perspectives on Stalinism,' *The Russian Review*, 45 (1986), p. 365.

> regime and its aggression upon a passive, victimised society. Authentic interaction between party-state and society is ignored.[31]

The paradigms, which induced this phenomenon, are presently in crisis, due to the work of revisionist historians (such as Robert W. Davies, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Lewis Siegelbaum, and several others) and those introducing issues of ideological practice and representation to the debate (Svetlana Boym, Jean-Louis Cohen, Boris Groys, Hans Günther, Régine Robin, Vladislav Todorov, etc.). Their work has challenged the totalitarian model, and has contributed to a broader understanding of the interaction between state and society, particularly during that of the Soviet thirties, as mediated by several layers of (perhaps incoherent) representational practices, which prevented what the present reader might consider 'ordinary life.'[32]

In order to achieve the goal of introducing the indeterminacy of everyday life into the historical frame, it is indispensable to confront the bleak reality of the difficult material conditions experienced throughout the thirties, with the utopian vision, dream, possibility and fertility of that period. Mikhail Ryklin, with perspicacity, pointed out that 'this culture unconditionally took the side of symbolic exchange, substituting the problematic of the production of commodities by the production of total communication as its ultimate product.'[33] In this context, dates and statistics are incomplete tools, without the supplement of memory, desire, fear or ideology.

A further answer to the question at hand rests on the kind of representations found in Mayakovskaya. The images themselves indicate a constant interplay between the empirical world and representation. *Trompe-l'oeil* is abundantly used in the cycle of mosaics: 'Go down into the Metro, raise your head, citizen, and you will see the sky [...]'[34] Furthermore, every mosaic is cropped by its oval frame. Total vision is frustrated as bits of bodies, objects and context remain indeterminate. These optical strategies hint to a desired indexical quality in Deineka's work. They force the user to draw from his/her own mental representations of the rapidly changing empirical world, in order to complete the fragmentary images.

Did the users of 1938 really see, or create, the links I will propose throughout this study? This is obviously a rhetorical question. While it is difficult to answer yes, it is

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[31] Stephen F. Cohen, 'Stalin's Terror as Social History,' *The Russian Review*, 45 (1986), p. 375.

[32] I am hoping that this work will complement that of researchers who have been interested in the breaking down of language and iconography, from the point of view of social history and sociology. Some of these authors include Caryl Emerson, Aleksandr Levin, Susan Reid and George Urban).

[33] Mikhail K. Ryklin, 'Bodies of Terror: Theses Toward a Logic of Violence,' *New Literary Review*, 24 (1993), p. 56.

[34] Deineka, 'Khudozhniki v Metro'(1938), in Sysoev, p. 141.

impossible to give a definite no. Neither does it matter. There are several social and individual stories, which coexist and circulate throughout Mayakovskaya station, which have not been sorted out yet. The present work is an attempt to engage in this process.

While the users of the station imposed their interpretations onto the station's walls and ceilings, the Metro conversely left its imprint in their minds. Indeed, users never simply wandered within the construction; they became part of the space. In all certainty, the space of Mayakovskaya Metro station, such as it is, cannot exist without users.

Users further circulated the signs acquired in the Metro throughout the city and employed them in their everyday activities. The experience of the Metro served as yet another point of reference beneficial in the decoding of the Soviet world. Mental snapshots of Deineka's mosaics and Dushkin's architectural structure, as well as postage stamps, guide books, maps, posters, floats and installations for socialist holidays and physical culture parades are all representations brought about by the Metro, and have all contributed to the accumulation of meaning necessary in the creation of a genuine Soviet culture.

On the structure of this study

The cycle of mosaics accenting the ceiling of the station serves as the backbone of this study, which could be described as a 'close-reading' of Mayakovskaya through individual stories. These stories refer to a mode of production of the users' identity, and of the material world.

> People understand and remember their lives in terms of stories. These stories make sense out of the scattered data of ordinary life, providing a context, imposing a pattern that shows where one has come from and where one is going.[35]

The chapters are organised following a narrative order, which corresponds to the circadian light variations depicted in 'One Day in the Soviet Land.' The progression from the first mosaic to the blind wall, which seals the space of the underground platform, mimics the trajectory path of a fictional user walking from one extremity of the station to the other, stopping under each image and reflecting upon it. This is, of course, an unlikely journey. Indeed, the average user boards the train before reaching the end of the platform,

[35] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism; Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 8.

Fig. 5. May Day 1935, '*Metropoliten*' display in Moscow

Fig. 6. Ten-kopeck postage stamp featuring Mayakovskaya station, 1938

Fig. 7. May Day 1935, 'Metro workers' display in Moscow

changes direction and observes the aesthetic features of the site selectively. The numbers affixed to each mosaic in this study simply reflect my own need to organise the space in order to discuss it coherently. Consequently, my 'dawn' could by substituted by 'sunset' if another narrative order was adopted.

Chapter One. Morning; Exit from History. Chapter One considers the Stalinist discourse of achieved socialism and the transitional nature of Soviet society in the thirties. The three first mosaics are examined in relation to several historical and conceptual breaks, which received mass media coverage during that period.

Chapter Two. Day; The New One's Body. In this section, different conceptions of the body and physical beauty coexisting in the thirties are examined. Mosaics four to twelve are discussed in relation to the notion that bodies are transformed through discourse, as well as variations in the material conditions of life. This chapter is based on the underlying assumption that the world is always experienced through the socially constructed body.

Chapter Three. Night; Soviet Space. The third chapter is concerned with the production of space, as a category simultaneously 'perceived,' 'conceived' and 'lived.' Mayakovskaya is considered within the broader discourses associated with the 1935 General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and the Socialist Realist ambition of performing a synthesis of art and architecture. Spatial practices simulated by the spaces represented in mosaics 13 to 22, or triggered by the architectural structure of Mayakovskaya, are also discussed.

Chapter Four. Dawn; Rational-Charismatic Time. Different modes of experiencing time and representing it are described in this chapter. Special attention is reserved for the Stalinist time-management policies of the thirties. Mosaics 23 to 31 are considered with regards to coexisting conceptual clocks. This chapter rests on the assumption that time is relative, and is as malleable as space.

Chapter Five. Morning; Causing memory. This, the last chapter, examines how praxis and memory organised the individual experience of the Soviet world. Problems of falsification of memory and legitimisation are addressed within mosaics 32 and 33. The last two mosaics of the cycle, currently hidden behind a wall, are also alluded to.

Every chapter is divided into a series of short sections, each concentrating either on a historical or a theoretical problem; or focusing on a single mosaic. The analysis of individual mosaics will be succinct to avoid redundancies when visual strategies are repeated from one mosaic to the next. The reading of the images will concentrate more closely on their narrative possibilities; eventually, the story-telling aspect of this study should become predominant. An imaginary user of Mayakovskaya Metro station also makes her appearance from time to time. This user is always referred to in the feminine.

This convention has been adopted in order to avoid a useless proliferation of pronouns, but above all because the most provocative readings of the subway emerge from the feminine point of view. It is my contention that women were more affected than men by the Revolution and the successive ideological alterations, which took place during Stalin's rule.

Her presence in the station is necessary. 'The essential subject is only ever a fiction, but *it is a fiction with real political effects.*'[36] The user's obstinate appearance exemplifies the subjective/cultural nature of the consumption of space. It also highlights the daily proximity and interaction of ordinary people and Stalinist space, as the ideal material incarnation of ideology. Furthermore, it registers the obsessive materiality of Mayakovskaya: its textures, its sounds, its smells, and so on. Constant reference to the user and the specific narrativity of the text aim to reconnect the experience of art, of the space, to subjectivity and to the physical world. It also sets out to avoid forms of writing that would encourage a monolithic reading of Mayakovskaya, that would fall back into the totalitarian definition of Socialist Realism.

Finally, it must be stressed that there is more to the user's wanderings in the subway, than the engineers and the builders of the *Metropoliten* could take credit for. This study intends to touch upon some of the ideological aporias, historical contradictions, performative anachronisms, knots in thought and digressions, which served as the basis for the production and the consumption of Stalinist monumental space, and therefore, of the Stalinist world.

[36] Burgin, p. 17.

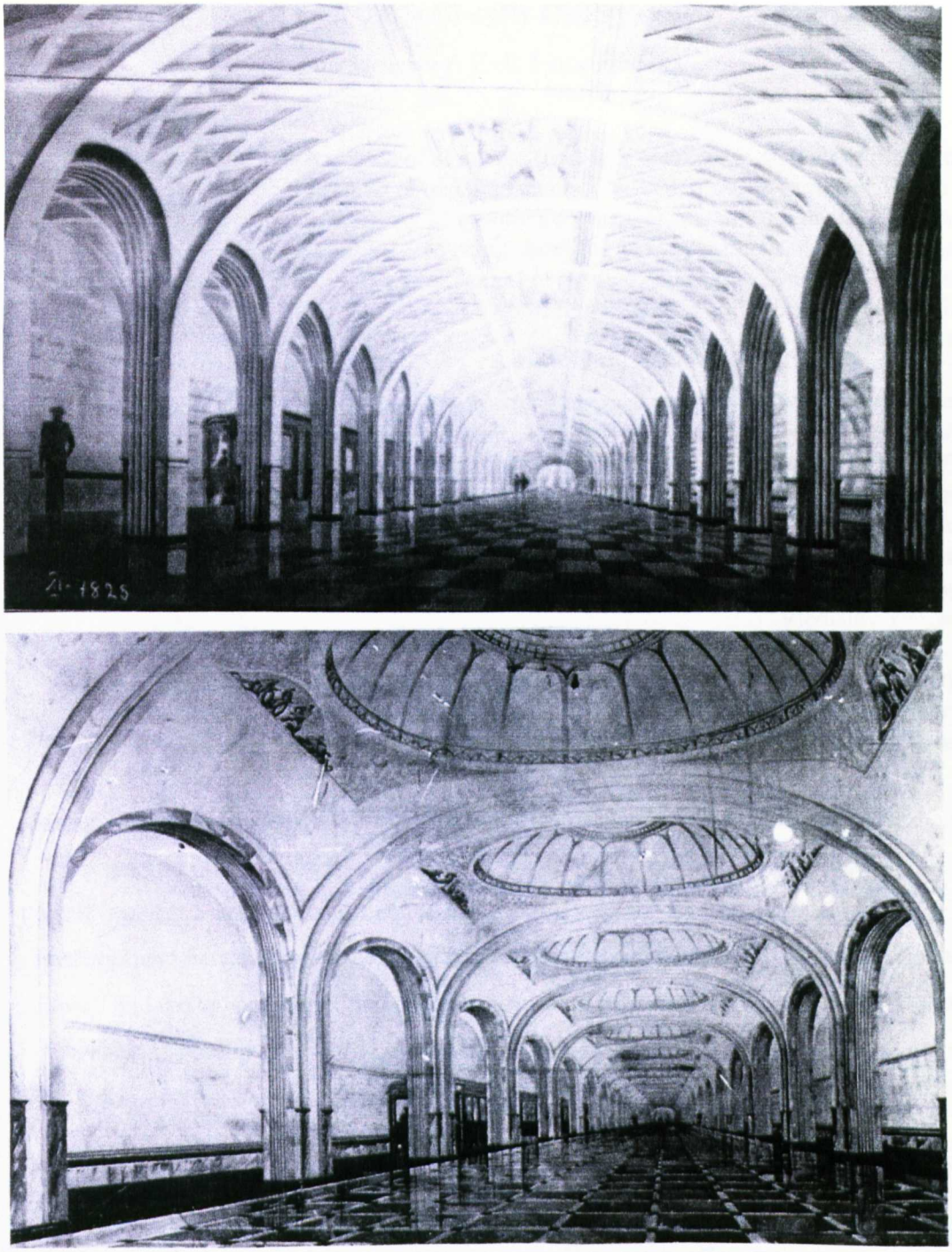

Fig. 8-9. Aleksey Dushkin, sketches for Mayakovskaya, 1937

Chapter One

Morning; Exit from History

> A degree of slowness (that is, a certain speed, but not too much), a degree of distance, but not too much, and a degree of liberation (an energy of rupture and change), but not too much, are needed to bring about the kind of condensation or significant crystallisation of events we call history, the kind of coherent unfolding of causes and effects we call reality.
> Jean Baudrillard[1]

> When communism set foot in the world, it moulded a physiognomic space of its own. It unfolded a grand monumental exterior fortified with the gross faces of the teachers and stuffed with aphorisms of the doctrine. Although justified by science, pre-planned and pre-rationalised, communism had to be enforced by allegorical devices - images, visions, ceremonies and monuments.
> Vladislav Todorov[2]

> There is only one socialist country in the world. That country is our country.
> V. V. Shestakov[3]

Imagine a group of women, all wearing colourful kerchiefs tied at the nape of their neck. They are gliding down the long wooden escalator toward Mayakovskaya's central platform. It is a journey that, because Mayakovskaya is the deepest station in Moscow's underground network, takes the user 80 seconds.[4] It could be morning, it could be rush hour,[5] and the women might meet in this same space everyday, on their way to work, or when taking their children to day-care. They might be holding the hands of young boys and girls wearing *pioner* uniforms.[6] They might be laughing at this very moment,

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[1] Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 1.
[2] Vladislav Todorov, *Red Square, Black Square: Organon for Revolutionary Imagination*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 4-5.
[3] Shestakov, p. 235.
[4] The station was built 34 meters deep under the city. In 1938 it was the deepest station in the Moscow Metro network. No escalator existed in Russia until the Revolution. The ones in the Metro roll at a speed of 0,7-0,8 meters/second. Katsen, *Metro Moskvy*, pp. 123 and 130.
[5] The Metro functioned from 7:00 to 1:00. During maximum morning peak (8:00 to 9:00), approximately 10% of daily trips were made. A less important evening peak took place between 18:00 and 19:00. Katsen, *Metro Moskvy*, p. 57.
[6] The *Pioner* was a youth movement founded in 1922 as a junior branch of the *Komsomol* (Comunist Youth Organisation). Its members were ten to fifteen years old. Joining the

remembering and relating the events of the previous evening. Their bodies and words testify to different trajectories that lead people into a Metro station at a certain time of the day. There are so many different human, as well as political, pasts, running through the Moscow Metro (as a paradigmatic site in the socialist city), which will never be entirely disentangled. Each stroll through the subway's corridors becomes yet another story. Indeed, repetition is not the multiplication of a single recurrence; the passage is different every time, even if it leaves traces, which ossify. In this play between history and subjectivity, a user appears both as a pragmatic and poetic being. This means that she understands the world through symbols, metaphors, and allegories,[7] as well as the harsh conditions of her material life.

It can be argued that the allegorical structure was the most useful in deciphering Stalinist official discourse and art in the 1930s. Wolfgang Holz has observed that:

> [...] the most striking strategy in Socialist Realist art is the principle of allegory – a cultural category that originates in antiquity. [...] allegory again became dominant in Socialist Realism because of the traditional affinity of allegories with ideology in general, and more particularly because of the role of Soviet art in social planning, which tended to move art away from the hallowed ideas of individual 'insight' and 'expression.'[8]

One of the most wide-ranging and pervasive allegories, characteristic of this period, is that of the 'end of history.' In the Stalinist world, the term history is used in excess. Most often it suggests the achievement of communism, and the consummation of all past narratives. The 'end of history' is not conceived in a millenarist or cataclysmic way, but morally, as the substitution of another kind of society to the 'historical society,' progressing with the proletarian revolution as a final goal. The insistent presence of this allegory engaged the Soviet citizen in the process of the creation of the Soviet Union, as it existed from the forties until its collapse in 1991. This allegory also suggests endless chains of ideas, relying on a conceptual 'break,' and unfolding in sometimes unexpected

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movement was not compulsory, yet almost all children did. The red neckerchief was used as part of their uniform.

[7] These tropes will be used throughout this study in relation to Paul de Man's interpretation. According to de Man, symbols and metaphors correspond to experience, in a more or less mediated way. Allegory corresponds to the representation of experience, and is therefore constantly displaced, deferred. See Paul de Man, 'The Rhetoric of Temporality,' *Blindness and Insight; Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, London: Methuen, 1983, pp. 187-228.

[8] Wolfgang Holz, 'Allegory and Iconography in Socialist Realist Painting,' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor (eds), *Art of the Soviets; Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917-1992*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 73.

directions, such as the notion of the 'new one,'[9] *perestroika*,[10] artificial selection,[11] etc. The 'end of history' can be conceived of in different ways: rhetorically, aesthetically and in the fabric of everyday life.

The rhetoric of a pre-communist history

Based on a simplistic reading of the writings of Marx, the end of the history appeared as an intentional rhetorical tool most pervasively around 1928, as the Soviet Union entered Stalin's First Five-Year Plan (1928-32). Indeed, Russia's short-lived capitalist phase, having 'forged the weapons that bring death to itself'[12] had expired and yielded its place to the centrally planned economy. 'Its fall and the victory of the proletariat [had been] equally inevitable.'[13] By 1931, Stalin had already proclaimed that the Soviet Union had entered socialism, a higher historical level, which implied the logical arrival of fully developed communism. At the Seventeenth Party Congress, in 1934, the second year of the Second Five-Year Plan, Stalin declared the final victory of socialism. This historical 'fact' was taught to third and fourth graders (nine and ten-year olds) in 1938:

> At the Seventeenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party held in 1934, the great Stalin, leader of the people said: 'Everyone sees that the line of the Party has conquered,' that is to say that the path of victory which the Party had mapped out was the right one. And millions of toilers in the Soviet Union and abroad repeated Stalin's words: 'The line of the party has conquered.'[14]

The historical trajectory was progressing in the predicted direction and the last step towards communism was, at that point, imminent and equally inevitable.

This notable event coincides with the assassination of one of Stalin's most important rivals, Sergey Kirov. It also marks the beginning of the purges, and of what has

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[9] Usually translated as the 'new man,' the term n*ovy chelovek* is ungendered in Russian.
[10] Literally 'reconstruction,' the term, which is now associated with the Gorbachev reforms, was associated with the material as well as ideological (re) construction of the country during the first two Five-Year Plans.
[11] Term coined by Leon Trotsky. It signifies a new phase in human development motivated by humans themselves, and not by nature or 'natural selection.'
[12] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party,' *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, New York: Anchor Books, 1959, p. 55.
[13] Marx and Engels, p. 61.
[14] Shestakov, p. 243. This was the official textbook used in the Soviet Union in 1938. 'In order to secure the most suitable textbook of history of the USSR for the third and fourth classes, a competition was offered by a Government commission. None was considered worthy of the First Prize, but forty-six books or manuscripts were submitted, and one by V. V. Shestakov entitled *A Brief Course of History of the USSR* was awarded the Second Prize on 22 August 1937. This book was immediately published in 4,000,000 copies, and subsequently was recommended for higher classes, the fifth, the sixth and seventh.' 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 16 (1937-1938), p. 472.

been irremediably coined as the 'great retreat,' a term which signifies the return to conservative, and even reactionary values and institutional structures. As terror set in, the rights granted to Soviet citizens by the Bolsheviks, during those years that immediately followed the Revolution, were revoked.[15] Meanwhile, the achievement of socialism was confirmed once and for all, in 1936, by the publication of the Constitution of the USSR, in which the first article reads as follows: 'The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics *is* a socialist state of workers and peasants.'[16] This self-congratulatory statement, guaranteed by lines borrowed from the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, announced a rhetorical exit from history.

One could argue, as Marshall Berman has, that a dialectical conception of the world can never allow an end to history.[17] Even communism would eventually have to be replaced dialectically by another historical antithesis. This cynical comment on Marxist thought negates that, in Marx's view, a post-Revolutionary history would emerge organically from communism. But in Stalinist discourse, this 'new world' is not simply an outgrowth of the previous one; it arises in a parallel dimension.

The allegory of the 'end of history,' and its implied 'new world,' had another practical application. It could serve to reduce the past to a monolithic block: pre-communism (as pre-history). Former knowledge, conceptual tools and historical data could therefore be manipulated straightforwardly. Homogenising a pre-communist history in thought and language permitted a strategic liberty from the past. It served as a distancing mechanism. Turning Marxism on its head, while legitimising the Stalinist regime in expanses of quotations borrowed from the complete works of Marx and Engels, the country's ideologues used this rhetorical 'end of history' to justify to a heterogeneous population any significant ideological break with the precarious order of things brought about by the NEP.[18] More importantly, the allegory veiled a rupture within the goals of the Revolution. This process mirrored the Moscow trials and the

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[15] For example, rights given to the population by the Bolsheviks in 1920, such as the right to abortion, to divorce, to homosexual relations, etc., were all revoked in 1935 and 1936. Specific cases will be discussed later.

[16] Central Executive Committee of the USSR, *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Moscow: Co-operative Publishing House of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1936, p. 9. Emphasis added.

[17] Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts In the Air: The Experience of Modernity*, London: Verso, 1983.

[18] The NEP (New Economic Policy) was instigated by Lenin in 1921 to accelerate Russia's reconstruction after the civil war. This measure permitted private ownership of small industries and certain free market practices. In 1928, the NEP was replaced by Stalin's First Five-Year Plan. About the economic development in this period, see R. W. Davies, Mark Harrison and S. G. Wheatcroft (eds), *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union 1913-1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

elimination of the original revolutionaries, Lenin's comrades in arms. This disinformation was carried out by rewriting history in textbooks, films, paintings and other representational devices.[19]

During the first Five-Year Plan, and within a matter of just a few years, industry in the Soviet cities was brought up to a technical standard that was said to rival that of the West.[20] This quantifiable progress was mainly attributed to central planning. The countryside underwent a massive, and bloody, collectivisation process, which amounted to 94% of Soviet fields having been nationalised by the end of the Plan.[21] Literacy campaigns and technical education became vital, shifting from an ideal of social and cultural equality, to the imperative producing of a work force possessing the necessary technical skills to run machinery. Education was no longer a right but, for many workers, a requirement for survival in their new circumstances. Movement in the social, technological and political fields was rapid enough to become visible to the 'average' Soviet citizen. Judging from testimonies from the period, people could barely keep up.[22]

In order to sustain motivation levels, the population was constantly rewarded for breaking new grounds. Indeed, individual workers, as well as collectives, were awarded medals and titles for exemplary achievement. In some cases, whole cities were awarded the 'Order of Lenin' for above-normal production. The reinforcement strategy announced to citizens that only a new breed of people, in a new socialist society, might have achieved feats such as the completion of the first Five-Year Plans. For example, Shestakov writes about the First Five-Year Plan, which was completed in an astounding four years: 'Only the workers and peasants of the USSR, who were liberated from the exploitation of the capitalists, could build up such a mighty industry and mighty agriculture in so short a time.'[23]

The Soviet bureaucracy understood the importance of words and images to convince the population, and to transform the material world. In fact, most Bolsheviks

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[19] The aforementioned textbook by Shestakov contributed to the disinformation by featuring Stalin at the centre of every event of importance, sometimes as Lenin's prime collaborator, sometimes as his muse. In the book, the purges and repression are justified by various manipulations of history.

[20] Charts demonstrating the Soviet Union's progress against the West abound in popular media. See, for example, *USSR in Construction*, vol. 9-12, 1937, n. p. The fact that these achievements might have been embellished is of little consequence for this study.

[21] On July 1, 1935. Timasheff, p. 452.

[22] Several sources testify to the unsettling transformations in different social and technological fields. See L. Kovalev (ed.), *Moskva*, Moscow: Rabochaia Moskva, 1935, and Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya and Thomas Lahusen (eds), *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, New York: New Press, 1995. This is also the focus of Sheila Fitzpatrick's latest book, *Everyday Stalinism*.

[23] Shestakov, p. 239.

had been professional journalists before and during the Revolution. Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin's persuasive words had convinced hundreds to organise and join the ranks of the revolutionaries. Stalin himself had been one of the first editors of *Pravda* in 1912.[24] Soviet officials were specialists in the use of slogans and aphorism, such as the 'end of history.' They appreciated the full potential of words, in a historical moment when a rapidly changing reality left very little to hold on to, except language, images and a few other signs.

It would be interesting to explore how the words of Stalin became 'classic' in the mid-thirties, and were soon cited on all occasions. The extract from Shestakov's history book (quoted earlier) alludes to this phenomenon; Stalin's good words were repeated by 'millions of toilers in the Soviet Union and abroad.'[25] From then on, publications of any nature included a number of reproduced fragments of the leader's speech. In this vein, an *anekdot*[26] of that period preserves the flavour of this historical moment, which privileged reiteration: 'Upon entrance to the 1934 All Union Literary Congress, a man is asked: are you a writer or a reader? Neither; I'm a quoter.'

If Stalin became a classic in this parallel world where words were rewritten, ideas re-thought and every scientific discipline justified in ideological terms, it can be argued that rhetoric had permeated all aspects of life in a way unknown before. Aside from being more pervasive than before, the rhetoric was based not in tradition, but in a past so near that it could still be called the present. Yet, the public engaging with this centrally planned rhetoric was relatively new to this linguistic territory. Indeed, large-scale literacy and mass media were still in their infancy, in spite of gigantic improvement in these fields.[27] This public was nevertheless constantly invited into the meaning-making process through proto-focus-groups, worker-agitationist circles, and factory or school-based newspapers. [28]

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[24] *Pravda* (literally 'truth') was the official Party newspaper from 1912 to 1991.
[25] Shestakov, p. 243.
[26] Russian for humorous story, joke.
[27] Roughly 40% of the population ten years and older were estimated to be literate in 1914. The 1939 census shows 81% of functional literacy. Timasheff, p. 455.
[28] For example, a Central Committee Resolution in 1931 addressed the issue of reception directly and created propaganda poster review committees in the city and the countryside. See Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 111.

The end of art?

How could Socialist Realism have put an end to art when the left wing of the Avant-Garde[29] had already done away with it in 1921, at the 5x5=25 exhibition.[30] The idea of an exit from the 'history of art'[31] might be more appropriate to analyse the phenomenon at hand. It is, however, important to keep in mind that the term 'exit' always implies a new direction, the passage into new space, rather than extinction.

The theory of Socialist Realism emerged officially at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in August of 1934.[32] Andrey Zhdanov set the epithet forth in these terms:

> Comrade Stalin has called our writers 'engineers of the human souls.' What does this mean? What obligations does this title impose on us? First of all, it means that we must know life so as to depict it truthfully in our works of art, and not depict it scholastically, lifelessly, or merely as 'objective reality;' we must depict reality in its revolutionary development. In this respect, truth and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction must be combined with the task of the ideological transformation and education of the working people in the spirit of Socialism. This method of artistic literature and literary criticism is what we call Socialist Realism...[33]

The prescription was vague enough to accommodate an unlimited variety of styles and concepts from eager artists. Zhdanov was, however, more concrete with regards to what he expected from history: a history that could be used for the 'transformation and education of the working people in the spirit of socialism.' A history concerned only with the future was to be (re-) created through art. In other words, artists were asked to produce instruments of knowledge based on the 'virtual' material conditions of a

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[29] This term comprehends a variety of heterogeneous groups and aesthetic tendencies coexisting in roughly the first quarter of the twentieth century.

[30] Three almost square paintings by Aleksandr Rodchenko, entitled 'Red Monochrome,' 'Yellow Monochrome' and 'Blue Monochrome' were shown in the exhibition. They evoked the last frontier in easel painting, reached by Soviet artists. The theme of the 'end of art' was discussed in the 5x5=25 exhibition catalogue. See John Milner (ed.), *5x5=25: Russian Avant-Garde Exhibition, Moscow, 1921: A Catalogue in Facsimile*, East Sussex, Artists Bookworks, 1992.

[31] An exit from the 'history of art' drawn up by art historians in the capitalist countries of the West.

[32] Socialist Realism was accepted as a doctrine in 1934. Evidence however shows that the term and its possible significance(s) were debated at least four years earlier.

[33] Zhdanov, 'From Andrei Zhdanov's speech' in John Bowlt (ed.), *Russian Art of the Avant Garde: Theory and Criticism*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1976, p. 293.

projected future, through aesthetic discourse. This conception of art, this 'method' first prescribed to writers, then to visual artists and architects, was to spread to all spheres of aesthetic activity.

Following the logic of Lenin's 1918 Plan for Monumental Propaganda,[34] art became accessible to the population by being displayed in public buildings, including work places, and workers were encouraged to visit museums. An important debate about the integration of art and architecture occupied newspaper columns and fuelled debates at the *Mosskh* (the Moscow section of the intended Union of Soviet Artists, founded in 1932). Incidentally, Aleksandr Deineka was one of the most vocal and articulate participants in the debate held at the *Mosskh,* where art was discussed and codified in a 'semiotic' manner. That is to say, in differentiation with all available modes of representation and of cognition, whether artistic or rooted in the experience of the material world. Socialist Realism in all its forms was then composed in identification with, and opposition to, precedent tendencies: Futurism, Naturalism and different creeds of realisms, such as tsarist academic art, the art of the *Peredvezhniki,*[35] French Neo-Classicism, or even Renaissance religious art, which all relied on assumptions unacceptable for Stalin's polity.[36]

In the thirties, most viewers of Socialist Realism were uninitiated in matters of visual arts. In spite of the remarkable holdings of Western and Russian art, amassed in private collections,[37] the vast majority of Soviet citizens had never accessed museums and galleries prior to the Revolution, and were fairly ignorant of new developments in the history of art. Their experience was mainly limited to icons and *lubki.*[38]

Excerpts from the speeches of Maksim Gorky and the painter Igor Grabar presented on the same occasion are also printed in Bowlt's anthology.

[34] The Plan for Monumental Propaganda recommended the colonisation of urban spaces with art works, performing the double function of educating the population and establishing a history of the Revolution. The plan, which had fallen into oblivion, in the contexts of the civil war and of the NEP, will be discussed in the third chapter of this study.

[35] Known in the West as the Wanderers, the nineteenth century critical realist movement set itself in opposition to the St. Petersburg Academy of Art.

[36] The documents are preserved at the Russian Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow (RGALI).

[37] Merchants such Pavel Tretyakov, Sergey Shchukin and Ivan Morosov opened their collections to artists for sketching and to an educated public. Tretyakov donated his collection to the city of Moscow in 1892. It now forms the basis of the Tretyakov Gallery. The collections of Shchukin and Morosov were seized after the Revolution. They can now be seen in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Ermitage in St. Petersburg.

[38] Icons (religious representations painted in oil or tempera on a wood panel) and *lubki* (popular prints, often of an educational or moral character) were not considered art, but rather object of cult or informative matter.

Because of the coincidence of new notions in aesthetics (the open debate on Socialist Realism) and of an 'unspoiled' public for art, the construction of meaning was based on the experience of the empirical world and general visual culture, rather than on traditional iconography. The transformations of every day life, as well as events taken up by the media, were encountered by Soviet citizens and took the character of signs in the public's psyche. It could be argued that new works of art functioned as neologisms since no canon available at the time could straightforwardly convey the reality that was to be expressed. These neologisms were introduced in the iconography by the artists, and simultaneously served as the only codes of reference available to a public limited by their lack of experience in reading artistic images. Suspicion towards traditional iconography was also prevalent among artists, their views conforming to the 'end of history' discourse.

The break with the aesthetic traditions set by the Avant-Garde is often attributed to a decree sent from above to an unwilling group of heroically rebellious artists. It is often equated with murder.[39] The role of the Soviet institutions during this process needs to be clarified. From 1932, the survival of formalist trends was already put into question by the dissolution of many belligerent, loosely organised artistic groups. They were brought together into a broad union, the aforementioned *Mosskh*. Yet, the end of the Avant-Garde does not seem to arise from Stalin himself, but rather from an artistic community generally hostile to formalism, which had become predominant and influential at the heart of the Union. Aside from a rather laconic speech at the 1934 Literary Congress, where he supported Zhdanov's and Gorky's vague ideas on Socialist Realism, Stalin never again spoke publicly on matters of art and culture. The Soviet press was never given the opportunity to quote their leader in matters of art.[40]

Zhdanov's speech of 1934 (quoted above) is anti-formalist only in that it does not discuss form. Writers who mentioned formalism during the aforesaid congress

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[39] While Boris Groys proposes the provocative thesis that the Avant-Garde committed suicide, most art historians agree with the murder thesis (Igor Golomshtock and John Bowlt, for example). Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. Régine Robin carefully analyses the emergence of proto-Socialist Realism in literary circles from the end of the nineteenth century through the thirties. She argues that the 1934 Congress sanctioned theories already promoted by a large number of writers and artists. See Régine Robin, *Le Réalisme Socialiste: Une Esthétique Impossible*, Paris: Payot, 1986.

[40] This is the thesis developed in E. Gromov, 'Na Strazhe Imperskogo Iskusstvo,' in E. Gromov (ed.), *Stranitsy Otechestvennoi Khudozhestvennoi Kultury 30-e Gody*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Institut Iskustvoznaniia, 1995, pp. 25-54.

remained vague as to concrete characteristic defining the stylistic aberration.[41] Soon after the Congress, review boards were set up to evaluate the merit of art works produced for, and financed by, the State. It is clear that the artists commissioned had no precise parameters to act on. A work could be rejected on all sorts of grounds. Most often, the artist was asked to alter his/her work and make it ideologically sound.

In *The Seven Soviet Arts*, Kurt London gives an account of the April 1935 revision session by the *Vsekokhudozhnik* of Solomon Nikritin's work 'Old and New.'[42] The theme of the work was the multidimensional Stalinist break with the pre-communist world. A statue of Venus and an old man, whose feeble figure seemed to vanish into the paint, represented the past. The 'new world' was epitomised by two muscular youths, an attractive man holding a ball shrouding the crotch of an athletic looking woman. Incidentally, the young models used by Nikritin were Metro builders. The committee judging the work was formed by artists and critics, amongst who sat Aleksandr Deineka, Aleksandr Gerasimov and Sergey Grigorev. The unfortunate Nikritin saw his work rejected on account of pornography, formalism, fascism and counter-revolutionary character. He, himself, was personally disgraced and attacked as an opponent of the regime. This is interesting because Deineka led the accusation of pornography against a painting that showed nudity in the form of a classical sculpture. However, Deineka himself produced a number of nudes, and erotically suggestive paintings, which were approved by the *Vsekokhudozhnik* in the months that followed.[43] It is therefore difficult to accept that the content or the motifs used to express it were straightforwardly objectionable.

The question of degree in formalism is obviously very difficult to judge, but in the present writer's opinion, Solomon Nikritin's work was no more formalistic than the mosaics by Deineka, which are displayed on Mayakovskaya's ceiling. Could this simply mean that Nikritin was not convincing when defending his work to the Committee? It often seems that a convincing rhetoric of adherence to the break with all histories of art and total devotion to a new (art) world were more determinant than the actual painted result. Deineka had undeniably mastered this art, Nikritin had not.

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[41] It is also difficult to imagine how notions of literary formalism could transfer directly to visual production, except in the extreme cases of non-sensical poetry and non-representational art.

[42] The *Vsekokhudozhnik* (All-Union Committee of Visual Artists) was the institution in charge of the administration of arts commissions. 'Old and New' (location unknown) is reproduced in black and white in Kurt London, *The Seven Soviet Arts*, London: Faber and Faber, 1937, p. 219.

[43] 'Lunchbreak in the Donbass' (1935) and a number scenes containing nude men and women stretching, exercising or bathing.

Contrary to what is generally implied, a law against formalism never existed.[44] Documents pointing to such were never found in the Soviet archives. However, a vast journalistic campaign led by artists and critics was waged against formalism and 'vulgar naturalism' in the specialised, as well as in the general press. The extremely lively debate was lead by personalities such as Maksim Gorky, independently from governmental institutions. The discussion offered two main arguments against formalism: the masses did not understand it; and that within the smoke screen of forms, one could most easily hide 'enemy' content. It was definitely implied that the works should be figurative, but there were no parameters set as to what degree of stylisation was acceptable, or how this should be measured.

It is only with the creation of the All-Union Committee for the Arts (KDPI) in 1936 that all non-verbal art forms were grouped under an umbrella organisation in order to be administered according to a coherent Party line. This was a consequence of the criticism that, in spite of grouping all painters into one union in 1932, there had been many debates over the future of state-sponsored art, but no obvious direction. After one more year of fumbling through theory and ideology, official repression of 'deviant' visual artists appeared in 1937, orchestrated by Platon Kerzhentsev, president of the KDPI, and former *Proletkultist*.[45] More efficiently than anyone before him, Kerzhentsev managed to codify and enforce his own vision of proletarian culture, inspired by Russian and Western masters of critical realism.

Later in 1937, Kerzhentsev proposed in a letter to Stalin and Molotov that Avant-Garde art works needed to be withdrawn from the rooms of the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the Russian Museum of Leningrad, where they had been on display since the Revolution, as examples of early Bolshevik art. This request was followed by an appeal to the *Politburo* to fund exhibits of critical realism. This was the first time that style was clearly prescribed by an official. A list of art works to be removed was provided.[46] It included Constructivist works by Vladimir Tatlin and Suprematist works by Kasimir Malevich. Once the resolution to remove the art from view (but not destroy it) was accepted by the *Politburo*, Kerzhentsev sent a decisive letter-manifesto to

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[44] Grigorii Faiman, 'Liudi i Polozheniia; K Shestidesiatel'nuiu Diskussii o Formalizme v Iskusstve,' *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, March 27, 1996, mentioned in Leonid Maksimenkov, *Sumbur Vmesto Musiki: Stalinskaia Kulturnaia Revolutsiia 1936-1938*, Moscow: Iuridicheskaia Kniga, 1997, p. 3.

[45] Founded in 1906, the *Proletkult* was devoted to the formation of an exclusively proletarian culture. It was dissolved in 1921. For a history of the movement, see Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: the Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

[46] The list is reproduced in Maksimenkov, p. 229.

Pravda, citing examples of artists to be imitated: Surikov, Repin and Rembrandt. The aesthetic debate was henceforth closed. During the 1938 'thaw,' Kerzhentsev was dismissed, ironically for having supported formalism in the past.

In terms of architecture, the Socialist Realist canon was established through projects selected in public competition. In the 1930s, one of the projects commanding the most prestige was the construction of the Moscow Metro. Its critical success was so great that most of the architects who had contributed to the first phase were asked to work on the second one. This was the case with Aleksey Dushkin, who designed Mayakovskaya for the second line, after the success of Dvorets Sovetov, which was inaugurated in 1935.[47] The First Congress of Soviet Architects in 1937 confirmed Socialist Realism as 'the method of Soviet architecture.' Lazar Kaganovich set the architects to the task to achieve what had already been accomplished in the first line of the Metro. He remained as vague as Zhdanov had been, when giving directive to writers in 1934. 'The proletariat does not just want buildings. It does not simply want to live comfortably. It wants its buildings to be beautiful. And it wants its housing, its architecture, its towns to be more beautiful than in any other countries of America or Europe.'[48] In other words, job well done!

The year 1937 was decisive in the formation of what is now recognised as Socialist Realism in the visual arts. This means that concrete rules were finally being set for producers of art. From these vague rules, a style emerged after sufficient experimentation had generated a number of conventions.[49] The first mounds of dirt loosened from Triumfalny Square (now Mayakovsky Square) for the erection of Mayakovskaya, were also removed in 1937, which marks the period when Deineka was commissioned to create the mosaics for the station ceiling. Like many other works produced during that period, and sponsored by the State, Mayakovskaya was created in a context of general aesthetic confusion.

From his Mexican exile, Trotsky spiritedly opposed the loss of aesthetic liberty caused by the Kerzhentsev removal of works from museums and the singling out of

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[47] Dvorets Sovetov (Palace of the Soviets) is now known as Kropotkinskaya. Dushkin also designed Ploshchad Revolutsii (Revolution Square) on the second line and was later employed for subsequent metro projects

[48] Kaganovich, *Arkhitekturnaia Gazeta*, June 16, 1937, quoted by Catherine Cooke, 'Socialist Realist Architecture: Theory and Practice,' in Cullerne Bown and Taylor (eds), p. 99.

[49] The Stalin prize, awarded to Socialist Realist artists from 1939, contributed to the formation of a canon. Up to 200,000 rubles were awarded yearly for outstanding achievements in the arts, sciences and techniques. The Stalin prize was the Soviet counterpart of the Nobel prize.

artists to be emulated.[50] Although he condemned all Soviet art produced during that period, without having laid eyes on it, his argument was of some value. Trotsky argued that in living through a series of upheavals and ideological shifts, the proletariat had not yet had the opportunity to form a purely proletarian identity and culture. There had not been enough time. There therefore could be no proletarian art at this point in history. Trotsky believed that the rhetoric of the end, in the form of a purely proletarian culture, was simply forcing its way into the aesthetic sphere to instil a false proletarian cultural consciousness rooted in bourgeois values.

Boris Groys has shifted the problem of establishing a Socialist Realist style towards a thought provoking direction, when discussing the aesthetisation of politics in the thirties. Groys has argued that if some artists were persecuted, it had to be because the discourse of art intervened in the territory of politics. This means that the regime saw potential danger in the ideas produced by artists and intellectuals. About the Party's intrusion at the 1934 Writers' Congress, Groys noted: 'It is of course irrelevant to object here that Voroshilov or Kaganovich or Stalin himself were not experts on literature or art, for they were in reality creating the only permitted work of art - socialism.' [51] This means that society as a whole was acquiring a style...that of socialism.

Aesthetic objects became overtly political, as the vast arena of political discourse became aesthetic, a space of representation. One could argue that the choice of images (visual, linguistic or conceptual) most often intended to represent the future in a way that would appeal to future audiences and create a unified imaginary for unborn generations, is where the most provocative break with history emerged. To paraphrase Marx's concluding thesis on Feurbach, the artists had thus far only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, was to change it! This of course doesn't mean that artists had become useless, but that their role had embarked upon a radically different course. It also poses the question of a whole society behaving as creator of a world-*oeuvre*.

The constructed character of this world is illustrated in David King's recent book dedicated to photographic images and works of art modified by 'Stalin's school of falsification.'[52] Agreeably, Trotsky provided his readers with several examples of historical fabrications, such as Stalin's overblown role during the civil war, which is another recurrent theme in the press of the thirties.[53] The most poignant examples of

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[50] See Leon Trotsky, *Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art*, New York: Pathfinder, 1970.
[51] Groys, pp. 35-36.
[52] David King, *The Commissar Vanishes*, Edinburgh: Cannongate Books, 1998.
[53] Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?*, London: New Park Publications, 1967.

falsification are linked to the purges, during which local heroes, who had distinguished themselves in the Revolution or during the civil war, confessed to crimes they did not commit. Crude errors crept up in the falsification process. For example, one of the defendants in the August 1936 show trial confessed to having received, in 1932, instructions to commit terrorist acts. The mandate had admittedly been accepted from Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, at the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen. However, the only hotel of this name in the Danish city had been demolished in 1917.[54]

But even in the instances when the quality of Stalinist forgeries was better controlled, the strategy of falsification and obliteration was virtually a failure in the short term; it obstinately left traces in the memory of those targeted by the fabrication. Testifying to this, Victor Serge, who left the USSR in 1936, certified that in spite of the trials and accusations of sabotage, men such as Trotsky, Rykov, Bukharin still merited credit in their country. [55] Indeed, in such a space of representation, there is always a gap between the aesthetic world and the lived one. Stalin's refusal to distinguish between experience and representation could only bear fruit with the passing of generations, when memory and history had both been blurred.

It must be mentioned that in a country ruled by central planning, the aesthetisation of all aspects of life, as a fully-fledged propaganda machine, implied a coherent web of discourse and the repetition in different media of the same tenets. However, the signifying possibility of all media is limited by form. Art, statistics, science, and literature will never signify exactly the same thing, even when all are directed toward the same goal. They simultaneously contribute to meta-narratives, and complexify one another. The result in Soviet Russia was the intense use of auto-reflexive devices and planned intertextuality. Paintings depicted Stalin holding the official newspaper *Pravda*; *Pravda* described paintings in which street agitation posters cluttered the background; in turn, these posters referred to popular novels; and this went on and on. Reinforcement of a centrally planned proletarian culture was the admitted goal of this interplay, from which the user wove meaning. This conscious process of sign making might be unique in the history of art. It demonstrates how iconography and meaning can be fabricated self-consciously in a relatively short amount of time, in a climate of distrust of all pre-existing codes.

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[54] Robert Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia. 1934-1941*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 25.
[55] Victor Serge, *From Lenin to Stalin*, New York: Monad Press, 1973, p. 92.

Life has become better; life has become merrier!

According to official data, since the days of the Tsars, the production of sugar had doubled. Paper production had quadrupled. The production of electrical power had increased twentyfold. Twenty-five times more leather shoes were assembled in factories every year. The list goes on and on. Yes, life had become better; life had become merrier![56] Evidently, in the first instance, the everyday implications of the historical break manifested themselves in the production of objects and space. Indicators of progress, such as production statistics, became entangled in the rhetoric of the 'end of history' and were aestheticised in Stalin's space of representation. The distinction usually set between the 'lived,' the rhetorical, and the aesthetic was fading away.

Along with Leningrad,[57] the city of Moscow, the showcase city of the socialist world, was probably the region in the USSR where changes in everyday life were the most dramatic. The rapid growth of Moscow in the thirties relied on the insertion of millions of rural Russians, Ukrainians and other members of the recently formed Union into the new Soviet capital. The population of Moscow increased from 300,000 inhabitants in 1888 to 2.7 million in 1931, rising almost another million within the next four years, reaching 3.6 million.[58] By 1938, vaguely informed of the new version of Stalinist ideology and speech, Moscow's heterogeneous population had to decipher meaning using its previously acquired knowledge, as well as its approximate understanding of recently created Stalinist codes, which were being revealed at a incredible pace. Along with this, an entire country's infrastructure and a variety of goods had to be produced to satisfy at least the basic needs of an increasingly urbanised population.

Upward social mobility was extreme. Some of the highest ranked bureaucrats had been peasants or workers a few years before; Kaganovich was a former leather worker, Kirov had been a metal worker, and Stalin, a former seminarist, was the son of a cobbler. Life was arguably better for large sections of the population, considering the general level of peasant and proletarian life under serfdom and in the earliest days of the industrial revolution. It must also be considered that popular hope seemed to increase

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[56] Timasheff, p. 453. The indexes for the years 1913 and 1938 in Timasheff's Table of Industrial Production have been used. Comparing 1938 to 1918 (data unavailable) or 1920 (available) would have given extraordinary results, since production was slowed considerably during the Revolution and the civil war. Sugar production, for example would have increased seventeenfold since 1920.

[57] Formerly St. Petersburg, then Petrograd (1914-24), the city was renamed Leningrad in January 1924, just a few days after Lenin's death. Many cities, streets, and other places were renamed in the twenties and thirties, acquiring a somewhat different identity.

[58] Kovalev, pp. 76 and 142.

since people had been given proof that their material condition could change rapidly. If laments from intellectuals such as Osip and Nadezhda Mandelshtam, Vladimir Nabokov, or even Mikhail Bakhtin, have to be taken into account as genuine, they nevertheless need to be contextualised. These writers originated from the minority of important land-owning families who were dispossessed of their capital and social status during the Revolution.

In a matter of a few years, Soviet industry and Soviet workers were confronted with an industrial revolution that was only achieved over many generations throughout the rest of Europe. Radical acclimatisation was required of the population in order to pass from one system (of production, and beliefs) to the other. In the words of the agronomist Ivan Michurin, 'I have survived two tsars, and for over 16 years now I have been working under a socialist system. I have entered another world, one diametrically opposed to the former. An abyss separates these two worlds.'[59]

Evidence of the importance of this break is found both in the gestures and tasks of everyday life, and the technical fetishism of the thirties. A more pervasive use of technology implied new ways of working; new possibilities as well as new dangers. The Soviet government saw fit to educate its population by means of culture: literary fiction, documentaries and visual propaganda dealt with the new conditions of life. This was one of the roles of Socialist Realism. In fact, in the twenties and thirties, Aleksandr Deineka, Vladimir Mayakovsky and several others were often employed by Rosta, the state propaganda agency, to create posters educating workers about safety issues in the factory and hygiene matters related to life in an urban centre.[60] The generation gap was immensely enlarged during this period. Children were urban and modern creatures, while their parents still had a foot in their old peasant or pre-Revolutionary lifestyle. This phenomenon comes through in the writings of immigrants, who relate the difficulty of the sudden need to adapt to everyday uses of technology, which are unknown in their country of origin.[61] This metaphor of the 'displaced' hints to how the Revolution

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[59] Ivan Michurin, *Selected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1949, p. 12.

[60] About Rosta see Stephen White, 'The Art of the Political Poster,' in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (eds), *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 157. See also Mayakovsky's propaganda posters production in David Elliott (ed.), *Mayakovsky, Twenty Years of Work: An Exhibition from the State Museum of Literature, Moscow*, Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1982. For Deineka's public information work, see Vladimir Sysoev, and G. L. Demosfenova, *Zhurnal'naia Grafika Deineki*, Moscow: Sovetskii Khudozhnik, 1979.

[61] See the excellent autobiography by Eva Hofman, *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*, London: Minerva, 1997.

transformed most Soviet citizens into foreigners in their own country, a now unfamiliar environment.

The industrial revolution provided artists of that period with an iconography made up of objects that just did not exist before, or that would have gone unrecognised by most viewers just a few years, or even months previously, and that had rapidly inundated the media. These objects, aeroplanes, radios, tools and machines of all kinds, were soon fetishised. The centralised media fuelled the technological fascination. This process of fetishisation and diffusion of images rendered objects recognisable to people who still had not had access to the products of the new times. Evidence of the enthusiasm for certain objects can be found in their omnipresence in representations of the Stalinist world. The harvesting-combine, for example, regularly manifested itself in technological journals, women's and children's magazines, in paintings, at the heart of fiction, etc. This machine, which also made an appearance on Mayakovskaya's ceilings (eighth mosaic), embodied the spirit of the new era, even at a time when most Soviet citizens had never laid eyes on one.

Between 1936 and 1938, the average worker's wage was increased in connection with the Stakhanov movement.[62] When Stalin stated that 'Life has become better, life has become merrier!' what he really meant was that there were significant indexes that showed the material improvement of everyday life. But it seems that the amelioration was not sufficient to eliminate complaint. [63] Housing had somewhat improved although the fight for decent living quarters was far from being over. As more processed comestibles were produced the population in the urban centres became more dependent than ever on state food distributors, and more vulnerable to delays or deficits. The employment market dramatically benefited as it went from over-supply to the point where lateness or absenteeism from the work place were severely punishable offences due to the desperate shortage of workers. However, while demand for a work force was great, the desire to live in Moscow seems to have also been important. Access to the city was restricted by work and residence permits. The best workers from the periphery were

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[62] Most often described as a hero-building trend, stakhanovism was a reward scheme for workers exceeding the quotas set by the state. See Lewis Siegelbaum, *Stakahanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[63] Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 35.

selected to work in Moscow, as model citizens in the showcase city. Resistance could be removed with similar ease.[64]

While bodies were easily transported from one site to another, minds and memories couldn't be. An analysis of the situation simply based on the political and the 'official discourse' (the ideology promoted by the State) fails to cover the Soviet experience of the thirties. Any kind of social consensus presupposes a collective unconsciousness, and socially inherited codes based on a long ideological tradition, anchored in a relative material continuity. But a succession of revolutions in Russia, and then the Soviet Union, started in 1861 when serfdom was abolished. It was followed by the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, then by the NEP period (1921-28) and finally by Stalin's Five-Year Plans, inaugurated in 1928. These social and political shifts had broken the ideological and material historical line. All these events had contributed to shake up previous world-views, while preventing the Soviet population from establishing a coherent image of the world, better suited to the new conditions of every day life. This is to say that during this period a sign, an object or any other material manifestation of lived relations and ideology could still mean very different things to different people. The speed of adaptation of the population to a new material and ideological environment varied. Indeed, every day life (the site of inherited habits, values, superstition, religion, etc.) dragged behind the new possibilities given by technology and by new conceptual tools, which were now more accessible because of mass media and increased literacy, expressed in rhetoric, propaganda, art, science, etc.

Condense your Thoughts into a Slogan [65]

In the years following the Bolshevik Revolution, codes in all spheres progressively collapsed. The rhythm of everyday life was disturbed by the Soviet propaganda machine, which forced the population to face up to a new, and therefore opaque,[66] state ideology. This opacity is the quality of any radical discontinuity. But perceptions of reality always lag behind the progress in other spheres. This presses the coexistence of lifestyles, value systems and discourse into one single space. Therefore, appropriation of both space and body are tactical in the revolutionary project; they can be effected to a certain degree by law and decrees. Co-optation of consciousness presents a much more complex problem.

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[64] The decision to introduce a system of internal passports was taken by the *Politburo* in 1932, to clean the city of 'superfluous elements,' people who did not contribute to production, *kulaks*, criminals, prostitutes, and other 'anti-social' elements.

[65] Mayakovsky quoted in Todorov, p. 35.

[66] The word 'opaque' is used in opposition to the 'transparency' of the myth.

Be it utopia or politics, sign-making exposes conscious desires before it inserts them into a social praxis. The questions of speech, language and discourse are therefore crucial in order to understand the mechanisms of adjustment and integration of Soviet citizens into Stalinist society. In the thirties, everyday life re-emerged as an organised spectacle of signs of which the cult of the leader and of various socialist heroes is only one of many aspects. One could argue that the regime suffered from acute logorrhoea, the meaning-making disease, which may now seem in severe contrast with the climate of fear and silence associated with the purges, which reached their height between 1936 and 1938. The period, however, lacked the ideological cohesion necessary for a population to understand social codes in a unified way.

In the collection of essays entitled *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes described the mythological system as a by-product of a stable bourgeois culture. The philosopher focused on the French context. The mythological order's purpose is to maintain the cultural and political *status quo* by depoliticising relations of production and consumption in representation (language, images or other). Barthes distinguished myth from political speech, which aims at transforming society, and is produced in revolutionary moments. Disillusioned with the Soviet Union and the Stalinist system, Barthes condemned the latter as a producer of weak myths through *zhdanovshchina*, the cultural policy espoused by the Soviet Union in 1946 and enforced by Andrey Zhdanov. *Zhdanovshchina* aimed to homogenise and neutralise all cultural production through massive censorship, repression of critical discussion and imposed style and iconography. The static principles of 'zhdanovist' myths were rooted in the struggle for the creation of meaning and new relations actively waged in the period that concerns this study. The doctrine represents the second wave of a war against formalism, based on the politico-aesthetic debate, which occupied the artistic institutions, public and producers throughout the thirties and was concluded by the Kerzhentsev-led repression.[67] *Zhdanovshchina* was indeed about securing the *status quo* and would therefore enter Barthes definition of a myth-making structure. However, Barthes does not mention the 1917-1941 period, in which speech is, in my opinion, political and not mythical.

Consistent with his irreverent position, Boris Groys adopts an antithetic view of the tradition of art history and cultural studies by arguing that attempts to leave mythological thinking are the privileged site of the myth.[68] He claimed that Avant-Garde poetry, which for Barthes is myth-free, is intrinsically mythological because it depends

[67] Their artistic manifestations were reproduced from 1947 on within the Academy of Arts, closed down after the Revolution and reopened under Zhdanov with the painter Aleksandr Gerasimov as its first Soviet director.

entirely on the desire for the transformation of the world, which is the paradigmatic historical *status quo*, since history is nothing but a succession of attempts to break away from itself. Although the argument might have value on a purely philosophical level, it does not seem to correspond to the experience of myth, as a linguistic and broadly representational mechanism that renders ideology transparent, or apparently natural.

'There is only one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, wherever he links his speech to the production of things, [...] myth is impossible.'[69] Indeed, as the first part of this chapter argues, ideology, meaning and representation had not yet congealed by 1938 because of migration and ideological breaks. They were still being actively produced. In the thirties, 'the tastes of the masses and the new reality, were to be shaped together.'[70] This process, however, spread over more than a few years; it might have taken at least another generation for mythological thinking to form and set, for the *anti-physis* to become *pseudo-physis*.[71] Just like the religious canon, the Socialist Realist rule developed over an extended period. Furthermore, it is impossible that Soviet historians and artists of the thirties could have naively believed that the history they were telling was not aimed at changing everything - the present, the future and the past. They were given clear directives as to the 'performative' role of Socialist Realism, even when they remained clueless about how to engage in the form. Writers and artists must have known that their representations bore little historical concreteness. They were nevertheless of great historical importance since they would participate in shaping the understanding of both past and future.

Readers, viewers and users with any critical conscience and memory would have most likely noticed at least some discrepancies. As the following analysis of Mayakovskaya station expects to reveal, the difference between the 'natural' and the 'artificial' was not only visible, but often exacerbated in Socialist Realist representations. This is perhaps why the term 'realism' is so deceptive when it is applied to the cultural production of this period. A term like 'materialism,' denoting a conception of representation, which would liberate producers, consumers, and codes from any pretension to transcendence and mythological thinking, would perhaps be more appropriate. That all official discourse circulating during the Stalinist period was always projective, rather than mimetic or mythical, must be kept in mind. The cultural production was avowedly constructed, and assumed the role of the slogan: 'In this

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[68] Groys, p. 117. Groys based his argument on a reading of Barthes' *Mythologies*.
[69] Barthes, p. 234.
[70] Groys, p. 37.

respect, truth and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction must be combined with the task of the ideological transformation and education of the working people in the spirit of Socialism.'[72] Indeed, it is both the neological character and the aphoristic nature of the signs created within that period that have transformed the Soviet world into what it became after the war, instead of preserving the *status quo*. Was there really *one* to preserve?

All this is to say that, in the Stalinist world, it was impossible to conceive of the past as what traditionally led to the present, or of the present emerging straightforwardly from the past. The Revolution (political, industrial, economic, aesthetic, etc.) had little in common with liberal reforms, or the reorientation of the means of production or markets, such as those experienced in the West over the past 200 years. After such a significant break, constantly reinforced by the rhetoric of the 'end of history', every type of relation had to be reinvented, and was produced by the tedious process of trial and error. A sense of normalcy, which is taken for granted in more or less stable historical periods, had to be recreated. Sheila Fitzpatrick argues a similar point:

> For those who live in extraordinary times, normal life becomes a luxury. The upheavals and hardships of the 1930s disrupted normalcy, making it something Soviet citizens strove for but generally failed to achieve.[73]

Still, elements of the past remained, as perhaps random left over anachronistic bits, as if the slate has been carelessly erased in order to write a brand new history. This notion provokes a reading of the period in the form of a palimpsest, where traces of the past appear under the official discourse, albeit smudged and discontinuous.

Up to this point in chapter one, it has been argued that meaning, in the early years of Socialist Realism, was bound with the fabric of everyday life in a closer fashion than with an iconographical tradition, or a history of form and style. A strategic analysis of the material culture of this period will therefore include concurrent events, which have been aestheticised to become part of the Stalinist space of representation. In the following sections, the Metro user will descend into the station and interact with the space created by Dushkin's architectural frame and Deineka's mosaics. She will experience the site both synchronically and diachronically, and possibly recognise configurations, or find a subjective resonance in them, thereby mapping a range of possible interpretations of Mayakovskaya.

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[71] Barthes, p. 229.
[72] Zhdanov, p. 293.
[73] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 1

Fig. 10. First mosaic
Fig. 11. View of Mayakovskaya, 1938

First mosaic: War and peace

A group of Soviet women and their children step off the escalator onto the central platform of Mayakovskaya station. A brown and yellow wagon with stainless steel front lights and black trim is speeding away from them, away from the centre of town, and towards Belarus train station.[74] The year is 1938. If the comrades stretch their necks, tilting their head upward, the first image they will encounter is a blossoming apple tree branch, a fragment of nature which enters the frame of the first mosaic. Far above the fragile pink flowers, they can see two aeroplanes. One plane has barely entered the frame while the other is about to leave the users' viewing range, in the direction of the escalator. It is assumed that many more aircraft might have already passed, or could soon invade their restricted range of vision. The dark grey planes mark their silhouette against a peaceful sky, spotted with white glittering clouds. Red stars on the wings of the aircraft reveal that these are Soviet planes.[75] They can be identified as TB-3 four engine bombers.[76] Designed by the Tupolev bureau between 1929 and 1934, they were the pride of the military and appeared publicly on countless official occasions. The plane, which opens the Mayakovskaya narrative, was a symbol of military and technological strength, and was one of the world's most advanced bombers in the thirties.[77]

The vocabulary is military and might, therefore, seem removed from every day concerns. But what if military terms were part of everyday speech in 1938? With an imminent war against fascist Germany pending, military training and military knowledge circulated in all kinds of form. Adolescents, wearing their army uniforms in the city, were omnipresent. Indeed, from the age of nineteen, men were conscripted for a five-year period of mandatory service; several women also joined the forces.[78] Hundreds of Socialist Realist war novels were printed, while varied visual representations were glued to street walls, promoting patriotic sentiments. TB-3 entered the realm of popular knowledge around 1934, when it was first exhibited in Red Square. Those who had not

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[74] The A/B wagon was used until 1946, when it was gradually replaced by the blue and silver *Strelka* (arrow).

[75] The five-pointed star appeared during the civil war as the symbol of the Red Army.

[76] Jane Friedman, who consulted with military historian and aviation expert Mark O'Neill, generously provided the identification of all planes in the Mayakovskaya station mosaic cycle. See Friedman's reading of the aviation iconography in Mayakovskaya station. Jane Friedman, 'Soviet Mastery of the Skies at the Mayakovskaya Metro Station,' *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 2 (2000), pp. 48-64.

[77] The significance of this plane will be discussed at length when it reappears over the Mayakovskyan sky (fifth mosaic) in the second chapter.

[78] For regulations regarding the mandatory military service, see *Zakonodatel'stvo ob Oborone SSSR; Sistematicheskii Sbornik Zakonov, Postanovlenii i Instruktsii*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Voennoe Izdatel'stvo Narkomata Oborony SSSR, 1930. In 1936, conscription age was lowered from 21 to 19.

made its acquaintance in the empirical world would have been familiarised with the four-engine plane by seeing photographs in *Pravda* or other newspapers and journals. On public holidays, the plane was also used to drop hundreds of parachutists into the sky. Hence, the warplane started leading a double life, as protector of the land and performer. Popular children's journals, such as *Pioner*, described it and scrutinised it for a public of young aspiring pilots. Children were inculcated that this technology was superior to that of the fascists.[79]

In a presentation about the Moscow subway, Yuri Shutovsky described this image as a symbol of peace.[80] Jane Friedman, in her article on aviation symbolism found in Mayakovskaya station, portrays this same image as a sign of the co-operation between the Red Air Force and Soviet agriculture, mainly for the welfare of the country.[81] The slight discrepancy between the two interpretations is not such a great paradox. It is in direct link with the fragmentary and fleeting nature of the representation seen through the oval opening in Mayakovskaya's ceiling.

If, as Shutovsky proposes, this is a symbol of peace, where is the iconographical tradition behind it? The intrinsic problem with neologisms is that they have not yet been included in dictionaries. This tautological statement becomes even more obvious when it refers to words; images that are not inscribed in social codes are as opaque as neologisms. One must therefore avoid the trap of reading backward from the conventions of zhdanovist Socialist Realism.

Because apple trees were not yet part of a Soviet iconographical tradition in the 30s, nor were they fixed in pre-Revolutionary traditions (religious or academic, for example) their analysis as iconic signs would mislead the viewer at first glance. Other mechanisms of interpretation must, therefore, come into play. Any historically bound context imagined by the user to frame this image can fall into the realm of the possible. Everything outside the oval frame can consequently be brought to the centre of the representation in the guise of the supplement. Within such a slim iconographical tradition, an image without history, like a neologism, could almost be defined *ad eternam*. Shutovsky and Friedman's interpretations are useful since they link the images to the official discourse of that period, but the supplement is hiding beyond the oval frame, and needs to be brought to the reading of the station as a central feature of Soviet experience in the material world.

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[79] *Pioner*, 3 (1937) n. p. The Soviet TB-3 was often compared with the Messerschmidt introduced by Germany in 1938, during the Spanish Civil War.
[80] Yuri Shutovsky, 'The Moscow Metro: Underground Paradise,' address, The Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, May 14, 1993.
[81] Friedman, 'Soviet Mastery,' p. 57.

Indeed, the obstacle posed by the frame is that it masks what is attached to the apple tree. It hides the experience of people who are constructing their lives around the tree. This notion is important since Socialist Realism was always about people, since it aimed at creating new social relationships. From the fragment revealed in the mosaic, the user can reconstruct some kind of appendage. She can create an environment for the branch (in a city park, a garden, a collective orchard, etc.), and for the planes (Where are they going to, or coming from? Are they in military formation? How many are there?). The user is forced into this contextualising process by the architectural frame, the oval niche cropping the image. The lack of context permits the introduction of many narratives. These are the direct consequences of the accumulation of histories in one site, and in each person's memories. This demonstrates, in Derrida's words, 'the power of exteriority as constitutive of interiority.'[82]

The process of interacting with the image can be mapped as follows: the scene is first interpreted as per the official narrative, as a symbol of peace and military power. This is a rhetorical stage, where the allegory of the 'end of history' finds support in the image of technology that will permit the Soviet Union to defend its borders. The defeat of the Japonic-Russian war or the massacres incurred in WWI would never again be repeated. Having understood that imperialist wars were feudal and futile, the Soviet Union relinquished the political goals of the former regime and its defence techniques. If the Soviet Union were drawn into a situation where it were to fight again, it would be either an ideological battle or a defensive one, but not imperialistic offensiveness. Stalin had stated' We are in favour of peace, and will defend that cause of peace. But we fear no threats, and are ready to respond with blows to the blows of warmongers.'[83] A new era of security had been embarked upon. This reading was probably expected from the users in the subway.

At second or third glance (or maybe even at first glance), the user might, however, reinterpret the image of peace as a metaphor for a strategic juxtaposition of countryside and aircraft technology. This can be a happy union, as suggested by Friedman, but it can also denote the surreal image of massive bombers circling villages, dumping propaganda leaflets in the peasants' gardens,[84] or Red Army troops menacing to

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[82] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 313. Derrida defines the supplement as a surplus of information, which sets out to complete, but gives birth to another term in the process.
[83] Inscription in the Soviet Pavilion interior, Paris World Fair, 1937.
[84] The propaganda squadrons, which served in mass campaigns, such as public health and literacy campaigns, were equipped with loud speakers, photolabs, movie projectors, printing presses, etc. They could turn out some 8,000 leaflets an hour and dump them onto the fields to be read by peasants. Agitators would often be parachuted into remote areas with the printed material.

parachute down near the apple orchard and brutally round the peasants into collectivisation. The image having not yet been codified in a grand book of iconography, or inscribed in an iconographical tradition recognisable by the public, might be interpreted according to various historical occurrences of juxtaposed bombers and apple trees. Since history had been repeatedly and very recently re-written to fit the narrative of a revised Party line, a certain awareness of manipulation and distrust of official writing, and sign-making, could have already set in. Therefore, the strategic juxtaposition of planes and a fruit tree, because of its iconographic immaturity and consequent lack of translucency, might hold a number of additional significances.

In the gap between the official discourse and the actual experience of the world, made up of images, many stories can be told. The order of narration is not important; there is no need here to try to analyse the process in psychological or even structural terms. Material signs, such as the planes, the branch, the juxtaposition of the planes and the branch, interact with the material signs which colonise the viewer's own memory. The order of their intercourse is of no concern. However, it is indispensable to consider the possibility of a multitude of associations as pregnant with meaning. A range of possible stories can emerge while the user meanders about Mayakovskaya. This is not to say that Mayakovskaya's mosaics hold no intrinsic meaning, but rather that the material signs, which constitute this meaning, might strike up different signifying relationships with different life experiences.

The metaphor of the palimpsest, alluded to earlier in this chapter, is useful at this point. Under the official rhetoric of non-aggression, of which the user was allegedly aware, a variety of images of the TB-3, or similar planes involved in peacetime activities such as festivals, demonstrations, propaganda, or cargo, will peer through. This happens in spite of all efforts by the consolidated mass media. Indeed, the interpretation of signs is the site where totalitarian discourse theories breakdown or, at the very least, many contradictions and heterochronic discourses destabilise the totalitarian model.

Because of the centrally planned communication network, most Muscovites had been exposed to the broad lines of official discourse, even considering rapid and cataclysmic urban growth, or counting the several millions of people uprooted from their natural habitat. Yet, their age, sex, social origin, education and political beliefs modified the reading of the work in the last instance, and definitely where subtleties were concerned. Alternative interpretations were dictated by a person's memory, or by more sophisticated mechanisms, such as synaesthetia, which was a popular theme in vulgarised science at the time. The sight of apple trees in bloom, for example, might have triggered a pleasant olfactory sensation; it might have then evoke other sensations related to a

bucolic upbringing in a pre-Revolutionary estate. This smell could also be contrasted with the stench of fuel and factories. As a matter of fact, knowledge is produced by images in the viewer's mind, triggering associations and reflecting back onto the representation in order to interact with it. The context created can vary tremendously according to the viewer's history and subjective experience in the world. For example, the concept of war and peace would have meant something very different to someone who had live through WWI and the civil war, than to a child aspiring to become a pilot, or to the mother of a young pilot sent to fight in Spain. This was significant in an environment where the population was neither homogenous nor experienced in the 'art' of reading artistic images.

The allegory of the 'end of history' points to a world defining itself around the notion that imperialist wars would never again be necessary. Thus, TB-3 served only an ostentatious role. But the user's physical point of view in the station did not permit her to know if the two planes represented were part of a flight exhibition, or if combat was about to take place. In fact, her position and the changeability of the Moscow sky did not allow her to guess which way the wind might have blown next. If the sky can turn suddenly, so can its content. The presence of bombers in the sky can shift from a symbol of security to its opposite. This idea perhaps justified the necessity of the Soviet Union's technological war arsenal. Doesn't the assurance of defence signify at some level the threat of war? This objection is not a perverse refusal to play along with the official narrative. There are worlds materially present in the station that simply did not coincide with the narrative. These were rooted in the users' memories and bodies.

Contrarily, Derrida proposed that: 'To be what it is, writing must [...] be capable of functioning in the radical absence of every empirically determined receiver in general.'[85] This statement on the 'death of the reader,' if applied to public art or to propaganda art, reveals the absurdity of the traditional readings of Socialist Realism in the 1930s to be a monist art form. Public art and propaganda art are only desirable and possible in intercourse with a large public. This is why this exploration of the Mayakovskaya Metro station needs to be led by users. They attach this viewing onto a concrete, even if imaginary, experience.

For the analysis of Soviet public art in the thirties, the fiction of transcendence between viewer and producer, or of direct correspondence between a sign and a signified, is implausible. In a situation where myth had not yet developed, opacity ruled. This contradicts views of direct correspondence between ideology and representation in

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[85] Jacques Derrida, 'Signature, Event, Context,' *Limited Inc.*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, p. 8.

totalitarian art. It also restricts the effective use of metaphors, such as the metaphor of movement (of the aeroplanes or trains, for example) signifying the movement forward toward communism.[86] The Metro system, as a whole, was often interpreted in accordance to the same trope, which straightforwardly unites the Soviet transport infrastructure to an ideal of runaway progress. However, the use of metaphors to explore a complex work of art, such as Mayakovskaya, is much less suggestive, than the use of the allegory, which privileges the gaps and the process of deferral, within which many narratives can develop. Allegory possesses a self-conscious non-correspondence; the non-linearity of the allegory also prevents the reliance on binary oppositions. Consequently, the user is not confronted by a choice between reading either war or peace in the work; other terms appear by slippage of the two first terms. It is in this space between war and peace that the 'lived' occurs.

Could it then be thought that, to give way to both pessimistic and optimistic supplemental interpretations, the common link between different interpretations is a new use of the sky? If the sky is the modernised site of war and of the preservation of peace, then technology, not men and women, becomes the determinant in a potential conflict. A new economy of war and peace based on technology is thus created. Finding its legitimacy in fear, this is the new structure of warfare, which degenerated into the cold war and the arms race.

This concept of peace as war has dictated the understanding of Socialist Realism for decades. But Socialist Realism is more concerned with performative communication than with retrospective knowledge. This begs the question: why do contemporary art historians need the Stalinist public to have understood peace in this image? Answers to this question can only be found in an analysis of the period that generated such historiography, i.e. Soviet Russia after the destalinisation process and the West involved in the Cold War.

Second mosaic: The fall of gravity

The 1935 special parachuting issue of *USSR in Construction* opens on a well-known photograph by Aleksandr Rodchenko, usually referred to as 'Jump.'[87] The representation features a man wearing a dark bathing suit, back arched, arms extended, suspended in the sky, seemingly flying. The subject matter of the image is betrayed by tiny spectators, sitting by the water down below, observing the off-centre body of the diver. The text at

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[86] This is the interpretation of the aviation imagery proposed in A. I. Morozov, *Konets Utopii: Iz Istorii Iskusstvo 1930kh godov*, Moscow: Galart, 1995, p. 88.
[87] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n. p.

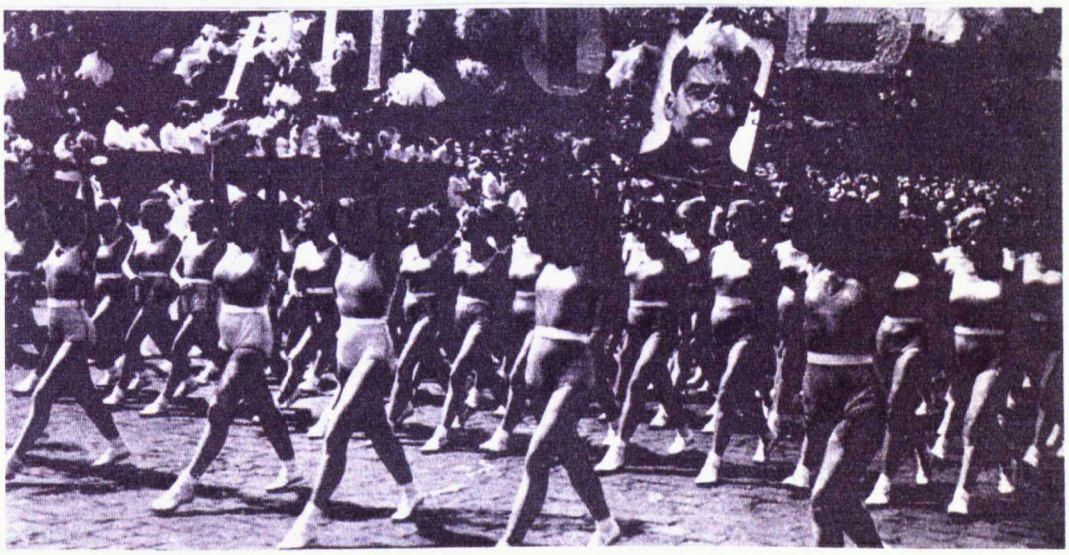

Fig. 12. Second mosaic
Fig. 13. May Day 1935, physical culture parade on Red Square, Moscow

the top of the page reads as follows: 'No other sky in the world has more sky pedestrians!' The rest of the issue is entirely devoted to parachuting, civilian and military. There is no explanation as to the presence of the diver, except perhaps that he too is a sky pedestrian.

The second mosaic in Mayakovskaya shows two women flying against a celestial background without showing the slightest hint of altitude sickness. The image is an obvious citation of Rodchenko's diver caught in the air, his feet having irremediably left the diving board. In this case, however, water is not in sight. The young women are simply gliding. The bather in the foreground (or in the absence of ground - forespace) has pushed her arms to her sides and has arched her back, so as not to break the harmony of the oval frame of the mosaic, which her body echoes. The bather further in space stretches her arms as wings. Her body registers the central axis of the mosaic. The direction is obvious, as in a Muybridge photographic sequence; the first body will soon exit the frame, to be replaced by the second one, which will have by then adopted a more restrained position. In a second, both bodies will leave the frame. Or will they?

If women in the Metro are suspended in mid-air, does this mean the user has flown into utopia? Into science fiction? Quite the contrary. The image is an example of self-conscious topical discourse, a prescriptive form of discourse associated with political talk, while utopia is, by definition, a closed system set in another space, or in a non-space. Utopia permits the distance that depoliticises the present moment. Opposed to topical discourse, overtly strategic and political, utopia generally disengages its public by ultimately denying it access to the world represented.[88]

Utopian writing and science fiction had been immensely popular with the Russian public in the years that preceded and followed the Revolution. The books of foreign writers, such as H. G. Wells, were available in Russian translation, and they were widely read. Upon invitation by Lenin, Wells even visited Moscow in 1919.[89] The interest in the genre of science-fiction can be linked to the concurrent popularity of vulgarised scientific works, for example the scientific-spiritual works on the fourth dimension by the mathematician Nikolay Lobachevsky, or the masses of simplified descriptions of Einstein's theory of relativity by Russian scientists.

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[88] See Louis Marin, 'Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present,' *Critical Inquiry*, 19 (1993), pp. 397-420.

[89] Herbert G. Wells, *Russia in the Shadows*, London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1920.

One of the most famous Russian science fiction novels was published in 1908 by Aleksandr Bogdanov.[90] The Russian public greeted *The Red Star* with enthusiasm. The novel depicts a Martian society socially and technologically superior to humanity. When Martians decide to take a terrestrial back to their planet, they 'naturally' conclude that only a Marxist revolutionary worker has any hope of understanding their world. One of the first experiences related by the narrator of the story is that of his own loss of gravity, while travelling in the Martian starship. The Marxist utopia, described on low-gravity Mars, conforms to the standard Marxist-Leninist text: shorter workdays, unlimited access to material goods and participation in leisure and culture of the mind and body. In this advanced State, the sexes have converged through the degenderisation of social functions.

Another important example, although less widely known by the proletarian public, was the Futurist opera by Aleksey Kruchenykh, *Victory over the Sun.*[91] Although the play was not a vast success, it expressed some of the popular concerns of that period. The heroes of *Victory over the Sun* conquered nature and subjected it to human rule. This was symbolised by the slaying of the sun, humanity's age-old enemy. The victory over nature was epitomised by the abolition of gravity.

But as it has already been observed, the Soviet Union under Stalin was in rupture with, or retreat from, Lenin's Bolshevik State, in which such ideas flourished. Under Stalin, dreaming about a fantastic future shifted from a worthy activity to a social crime. Science fiction was repressed in 1931 after a few years of pressure emanating from the proletarian writers' movement, and only reappeared in 1957 with Ivan Efimov's *Andromeda's Mists.*[92] Yet, it can be argued that the immense popularity of the early science-fiction novels caused them to be remembered.

In contrast with the cyborg (ungendered being/machine), the Stalinist version of the new one was re-sexualised and hardened through sports and constructive labour. Its

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[90] Bogdanov was the leader of the aforementioned *Proletkult*, and one of its most important theorists. See Alexander Bogdanov, *The Red Star: The First Bolshevik Utopia*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1984.

[91] Aleksei Kruchenykh, *Pobeda nad Solntsem*, Moscow: Vena, 1993. The play was first presented in 1913, and featured costumes and scenic designs by Kasimir Malevich representing a metallic, robotlike, ungendered 'new one.' El Lissitzky designed costumes and set for a subsequent representation in 1922.

[92] This was mainly the result of a few years of pressure emanating from the Proletarian Writers Movement (RAPP). Science fiction was replaced by 'scientific fiction,' a genre which exalted scientific and technological progress, yet never proposed worlds where higher forms of civilisation had been achieved. However, classical science fiction (Aleksey Tolstoy's *Aelita*, for example) were still recommended as children's literature in the late thirties. See the annotated bibliography entitled 'What Schoolchildren Should Read': S. Bogomolova, *Shto Chitat' Shkol'nikam*, Moscow: Mogiz, 1938.

body was fetishised by sometimes compulsory participation in sport activities organised around the factory, and by youth parades on a variety of newly consecrated Soviet holidays. The body was to be moulded to an ideal efficiency. Under the institutional network of Stalin's period, sports events and art depended on the same umbrella organisation, Kerzhentsev's KDPI. The 'new one' had to be created and shown off as a spectacle, as model to be imitated. The body was the privileged site of aesthetic and political transformations in Socialist Realism. This is why the body, which had been eclipsed from much of the Avant-Garde art, occupied such a central position in representation in the thirties.

To what degree could the women in the station recognise themselves in the askew representations of the one hovering above? The lean bodies, the fit arms and muscular legs, the small breasts, the short hair sported by the divers are all in contradiction with most images of womanhood presented during the period spanning from the Revolution to the First Five-Year Plan.[93] Their revealing outfit is also uncanny in the context of a monumental space. Indeed, skimpily clad bodies, even by the late thirties, rarely appeared in the visual arts. Women workers in Socialist Realist representation often discarded their skirts for more practical trousers or overalls, but they rarely revealed their thighs or their shoulders. Noteworthy exceptions are the women depicted by Aleksandr Samokhvalov, famous for his female Metro builders series and representations of female athletes. Deineka also painted a number of athletic nudes.

If they were rare in the visual arts, these types of images appeared more often in the aestheticised city space, in physical culture parades, where young men and women proudly showed off their beautiful liberated bodies, while performing gymnastic stunts. Older generations as well as less desirable body types were excluded from participation in the parades. The flaunting of bodies in these events, documented in photographs and film, seems daring. The staged pirouettes, human pyramids and air-born gymnastic stunts are also remarkable. This type of ideologically motivated displays, unseen a few years previously, implied that in the 'new world,' young bodies were free from gravity as well as from a certain degree of bourgeois prudishness. In this context, desire for the body in representation, also needed to define itself through a new vocabulary. Desirability, sexual or mimical, was thereafter (according to the official narrative) the attribute of an active figure. This offers a radical departure from traditional representation of women as the passive objects of visual pleasure.

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[93] In *Iconography of Power*, Victoria Bonnell examines the transformation of the female body in Soviet visual representations.

Dissemination of pornography and erotic material was outlawed in 1935 and entailed a five-year sentence.[94] Therefore, in the Stalinist space of representation, Deineka's weightless divers could not 'officially' exhibit any erotic features. But to say that the image did not arouse any sexual emotions, even in the sense of identification or rejection, would be holding a cynical and puritan view of the user.

These bodies escape from every tradition of painting and refer directly to parades and the occasional documentary photograph. Yet, the colour red, one of the only conventions that has been part of Soviet art since the revolution, makes a formal appearance in this image. The colour red was also important in pre-Revolutionary religious art; backgrounds of icons were painted red before they were covered with gold leaf or sheets of metal and precious stones. Often the red background (signifying heaven or spiritual space) appeared unveiled. But the presence of red in the mosaic does not consist in a case of iconographical adaptation, but rather another rupture in meaning.

In the first mosaic, red stars were depicted on the wings of the aircraft. Red stars were the conventional symbol of the Soviet Air Force. Deineka used them as a descriptive detail. However, in the second mosaic, the colour red is central to the representation, yet inessential. It is the colour of the bathing suits. To be more precise, the woman in the forespace wears a dark red suit, which appears black in the front, but sparks out in sharp red wedges where the sun hits the diver's back. The second bathing suit is of an orange-red colour, outlined by black trimmings. The colour red appears often in representations of the time, not because of an actual predominance of red in the environment, but because of its new symbolic meaning. Even though much of the textiles produced in the thirties in Soviet factories sported patterns that showed red as a predominant colour, in different shades of socialism, there is no evidence that red was a fashionable trend in swim wear.[95]

Are the divers like the new woman? Are the divers like communism? Are they like pilots or parachutists? Any such metaphor tends to fall flat. This is a futile way to interrogate the images. The divers are possible inhabitants of the 'new world.' The 'new world' is the condition of their being; they constitute, with their actions, dress and body types, women who would have been impossible to represent until recently. This model of a possible female type could have made some users quite uncomfortable, since it implied a negative judgement on formerly desirable visions of womanhood. The new woman, as represented by Deineka, could have triggered different emotions in the user: desire,

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[94] This can be linked to the aforementioned Solomon Nikritin episode.

[95] On Soviet textile, fashion and costume design, see Tatiana Strizhenova, *Soviet Costume and Textile 1917-1945*, Paris: Flammarion, 1991.

identification, but also resentment and shock at the displayed flesh. It could also have been seen as a parody.

It seems easier to identify with works of art displaying human beings, rather than with representations of machines or geometrical configurations. Images, such as the divers, seem to refer directly to human nature. But the human nature depicted here is different from the one incarnated by the viewer. In the rhetorical sphere, a new kind of person had emerged, an augmented human being. It was not a cyborg, an organic construct of human and machine, but a person who had been able to transform herself through the sheer act of will, and, of course, the proper ideological guidance.

'The atmosphere in which we live weighs upon everyone with a 20,000-pound force, but do you feel it?'[96] This quote by Marx about the pre-Revolutionary world can be set in contrast with the situation in Stalin's socialist state, conceivable through the allegory of the 'end of history,' acceleration of everyday life, technology, communication, rights acquired and then lost, etc. In the thirties, the weight placed on proletarian shoulders by capitalism had been removed. Simultaneously, life had acquired new velocity. Every cultural, political, economical or historical fact is endowed with kinetic forces. It seems that the oppression of the proletariat had been lifted to some degree, while the movement of urban life had considerably speeded up. This centrifugal movement virtually abolished gravity and sent bodies flying. Stalin might have been right: there was no more need for science fiction. Everyday life had grown fantastic.

Third mosaic: Artificial selection

Two apple tree branches are set against a smooth blue sky. They penetrate the oval frame at opposite sides, and leave the centre of the image open. The ripe yellow and red fruit weigh heavily on the branches and seem enormous next to the smaller dark green leaves. As in the two previous mosaics, the composition in this representation is not centred. The accidental or 'natural' framing illustrates what Roland Barthes calls the 'effect of the real.' It also creates a dynamic composition. This is extraordinary, since most Socialist Realist paintings were constructed in the organised manner often used in historical painting; the pyramidal structure or frieze, staple of academic art and of the work of the *Peredvezhniki*. The dynamic structure of Deineka's representations is a residual aspect of Avant-Garde posters and Constructivist book designs. Such visually challenging work was still circulating, and even produced in the thirties. One of the most notable examples of 'late Constructivism' is the oversized illustrated journal *USSR in Construction,*

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[96] Marx, 'Speech at the Anniversary of the *People's Paper*,' in Robert C. Tucker (ed.) *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Norton, 1978, pp. 577-578.

Fig. 14. Third mosaic
Fig. 15. Harvesting cherries on a collective farm, 1930s

published in Russian and several foreign languages. The dynamic effect of the image is intensified by another phenomenon. On the surface of the mosaic, the smalto pieces visible from the user's point of view create subtle oscillations. The visual texture of the image mimics the wind rustling through the leaves, rather than attracting the eye to its own materiality.

This is not the same tree as the one represented in the first image. Apart from a change in scale, the fruition cycle of the tree is at a different stage. There is no reason why one should take the title of the cycle, One Day in the Soviet Land, too literally, imposing a seasonal coherence on the work. On the other hand, the sheer geographical dimension of the Union and the variety of apple strains fully permit different varieties to blossom while others are already bearing fruit. It could, therefore, be supposed that the whole cycle occurs in a continuous twenty-four hour period, but in different sites. Jane Friedman notes that the mosaics are always set in the same location, rather than the same place: the sky.[97] Focusing on direction (upwards) instead of location can further refine this insight. It is the direction of the viewer's gaze, and the virtual direction that one has to assume in order to access the 'reality' suggested in the mosaics. This trope is exemplified in Serafima Ryangina's painting 'Higher and Higher' (1934), which seems to equate height and socio-political development. This is one of the most important *clichés* of that period, just as the previously mentioned metaphor of speed as progress. This is a motif that will be used again and again by later Socialist Realist artists and will become part of the canon.

There is no technological juxtaposition to the apple tree in the third mosaic. The fragment is solely preoccupied with the rootless branches bearing fruit. There are relatively few paintings of food in the body of works of Socialist Realism, whether included in *nature morte* or still attached the tree.[98] One possible way to look at this representation is to compare it to works such as 'Socialist Loaves' (Ilya Mashkov, 1936). 'Socialist Loaves,' as most subsequent socialist *nature morte*, represents the abundance generated by the collectivisation of Soviet land and new harvesting methods. These images insist that life has become merrier... Yet, the representation could not straightforwardly incite the viewer to gratefulness towards nature.

Indeed, there had been a period of famine in the Soviet Union in 1932-34. The government first denied the food shortage. Only in the *Pravda* article of December 5, 1935 was it admitted that there had been starvation in some of the richest agricultural regions of the USSR in 1933. The blame was put on wreckers, *kulaks* and Trotskyites.

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[97] Friedman, 'Soviet Mastery,' p. 56.

[98] With exception of wheat fields, which were omnipresent.

Nevertheless, the discrepancy between the official discourse of 1932-34, negating the famine, and 1935 was quite obvious, and couldn't have gone unnoticed. The image of abundance corresponded to the official narrative, but not to the material conditions. This space between hunger and abundance determined personal experience.

The cornucopian image on the station's ceiling appears superficially as a very straightforward representation of the abundance yielded by the Soviet land to its citizens. But after closer inspection of the various discourses on fruit bearing trees available during that time, the branches charged with plump apples inevitably deviate from the obvious symbol of gratitude towards the Soviet land. Users of the thirties, and especially their children, would most likely have identified a discourse about Ivan Michurin, the most famous Soviet agronomist. Michurin died in 1935 after having created strains of frost resistant apples, pears and berries, which could grow in the Siberian climate, a remarkable feat for any seedpod. Using his theories of scientific selection, Michurin created some three hundred varieties of fruit and vegetable hybrids bearing the names of socialist celebrities, such as the 'Pepin' apples and the 'Nadezhda Krupskaya' cherries. An apple tree called the 'Michurin' produced 'Golden Sap' apples.

Michurin was honoured by Stalin in 1934, receiving the Order of Lenin from the Leader himself. His hometown was then renamed Michurinsk. In a letter addressed to Stalin, published in *Izvestia* on September 20, 1934, Michurin ardently expressed that only in the Soviet system had scientists been granted the means to perform such a giant leap into a revolutionary world of scientific research:

> And myself, a lone experimenter unrecognised and ridiculed by the official savants and bureaucrats of the tsarist Department of Agriculture, the Soviet system and the Party which you lead have made the director and organiser of experiments with hundreds of thousands of plants.[99]

The scientist thereafter became a symbol of collaboration between science and the state, only possible outside the capitalist system. Not being content with the condition of humanity, the Soviet scientist bore the obligation to take control over nature for the benefit of all. Before his death, Michurin had written a number of appeals to Soviet children to continue his work, and develop 'materialist' science in all possible ways. History books and children's stories carry, along with his memory, the still famous quote: 'We cannot expect charity from nature; our task is to take our bounty from her.[100] Indeed, Michurin's reputation and his engineered 'Golden Sap' are still famous today

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[99] Michurin, p. 14. The book contains sketches of the hybrids by the author.

mostly through children's novels, such as *Timur and his Squad* (1938) by Arkady Gaidar.[101]

In the thirties, a new kind of primeval curiosity was instilled in the population through cheap scientific magazines, often fully illustrated, as well as trough mainstream papers and journals. This somehow replaced the popular science fiction market. The red and yellow apples in Mayakovskaya could therefore quite easily be recognised by a non-specialist public. But school children had little choice in their competence to identify the *Bellefleur-Kitaika* apple, featured in the third mosaic. Indeed, botany was an important subject in Soviet schools, and Michurin, along with his hybrids, was at the core of the botany *curriculum*. For example, question 1(b) of the summer 1937 oral botany test (class 6):

> What are the contributions to botany of Linnaeus (explain his main shortcoming), Darwin, Michurin?
> Where and when did each live?[102]

If Darwin was honoured by the regime for having seized the origin of humanity from the grasp of religion and giving it back to nature, Michurin snatched evolution from nature and gave it to humanity. From natural selection, the Soviet Union had entered an era of 'artificial selection.'[103] After conquering history through discourse, matter had also been mastered. Children were presumably especially proficient in this knowledge since they had been exposed to it from day one. For young children in the late thirties, the discourse of artificial selection was familiar. It was part of the 'natural' order of things. For the very young, it might have already lost the quality of wonder, and simply become nature.

An *anekdot* from the period paraphrased Michurin: 'We cannot expect charity from nature after what we've done to her.' This testifies to a certain uneasiness towards scientific progress. This is the same mixture of fascination and fear experienced today with regards to experiments on human or vegetal genes. Indeed, in spite of progress in fruit engineering, many less resistant experimental crops perished throughout the thirties, and new diseases appeared in older strains.

Somewhere between the lost paradise of Chekov's orchards and futuristic ideas about synthetic food and biological engineering, nature had been redefined. Obviously,

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[100] V. Lebedev, 'Michurin's dream' (1950), in James Von Geldern and Richard Stites (eds), *Mass culture in Soviet Russia : tales, poems, songs, movies, plays, and folklore, 1917-1953*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 453-455.
[101] A fragment of the book is reproduced in Von Geldern and Stites, pp. 303-314. A movie about the agronomist was also made by Aleksandr Dovshenko in 1948.
[102] Deana Levin, *Children in Soviet Russia*, London: Faber and Faber, 1942, p. 159.
[103] The term is here understood in its scientific sense, as well as in its social significance, as defined by Trotsky.

the problem of context discussed around the first apple tree still applies in the third mosaic. The relationship of the user to the tree and to nature varies in relation to her history. For example, one can easily see superstitions and religion coming into the play of meaning, as a supplement. Michurin remembered the pre-Revolutionary clergy threatening him: 'Don't commit blasphemy! Don't turn God's garden into a brothel!'[104]

One has to admit that such views must have survived. The Revolution did not erase traces of magical thinking, in spite of the vulgarisation of scientific knowledge and atheistic propaganda. Indeed, the Soviet experience was rooted in contradictory matter. On the one hand, Soviet citizens had embarked onto a new industrial, economical, social, political, and legal path unexplored by any other society in history. Accounts indicate that large segments of the population were conscious of this vanguard position, and drew pride and hope from this. The official Party line tried to reinforce these sentiments. On the other hand, the country still had to deal with ignorance, poverty, and difficult material conditions.

There is a whole allegorical realm relating the new regime to nature. It will be partly explored throughout the following discussion of Mayakovskaya. At this point, suffice it to say that if fruits were engineered and women could fly like aeroplanes, then the relationship between nature and culture had to be rethought. In the thirties, a precarious contract with nature was drafted, which seemed to grant humanity the upper hand. Traditional notions of an all-powerful, sometimes vengeful, and sometimes unruly, yet glorious, Mother Nature nevertheless persisted.

[104] Michurin, p. XVII.

Chapter Two

Day; The 'New One's' Body

> Reading the classical philosophers does not help, since we do not know how *our* own body is arranged in relation to their texts. We read them, so to speak, with the unjustifiable presumption of cultural continuity.
> Mikhail Ryklin[1]

> It is said that Mayakovsky used to sleep on a stone instead of a pillow in order to train his body and his dreams to acquire the features of the future human corporeality.
> Vladislav Todorov[2]

> We, the communists, are people of a special make. We are made of a special material.
> Joseph Stalin[3]

I imagine them pointing to the images above. Stepping off the escalator they hadn't been able to halt; their bodies had been pushed along by the living mass pouring over onto the platform. But now movement among the passengers is freer. Bodies graze each other and disappear behind other bodies. The children, still scared of being carried away, clasp their arms onto the women's skirts and thus restrain their movement. Despite the crowd, the air is fresher down here than above ground,[4] where dusty Gorky Street, one of the oldest streets in Moscow, is being enlarged, re-routed and its houses moved on rails to other sites or rebuilt in monumental proportions.

Throughout the first chapter, the relationship between the allegorical system produced by the Stalinist sign-making machine and the user of the Metro functioning in the empirical world was outlined. It was argued that a gap insistently found itself between the world in representation and the representational space. Indeed, the necessarily optimistic component of Socialist Realism was constantly being deferred, while the contradictions in the empirical world, the purges, the material progress, the legal gains and losses, always haunted the images. As signs present in the public's consciousness, they asserted their

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[1] Ryklin, p. 70.
[2] Todorov, p. 42
[3] Quoted by Todorov, p. 42.
[4] The air in the station is kept clean and at constant temperature by a powerful air conditioning system, which changes the air eight to nine times a day. It is kept at an even temperature of 20 degrees Celsius during the summer, and between 12 and 14 degrees in the winter. Ventilation is located in the cupolae. Katsen, *Metro Moskvy,* p. 122.

Fig. 16. Front cover of the humoristic journal *Krokodil*, 1 (1935)

presence in contributing to an alternative understanding of the iconography. This supplemental information was uninvited, and most often deviated from official discourse.

A similar approach will be adopted in this chapter. The reading of Mayakovskaya station will, however, be conducted through the more specific lens of the 'body.' In the first instance, body types prominent in the popular discourses of the late thirties will be sketched. Those are 'bodies-as-sign,' they are bodies in representation, virtual bodies which do not have the benefit, or handicap, of flesh. These are the bodies in the mosaics, popular magazines, novels, and in the speeches of the leader. These bodies will then be confronted with other signs, as well as with the empirical bodies of users; those bound by a carnal envelope. The term 'empirical body' should be defined:

> By body I understand a concrete material, animate organisation of flesh, organs, veins, muscles, and skeletal structure which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and organisation only through their psychical and social inscription as the surface and raw materials of an integrated and cohesive totality.[5]

Elizabeth Grosz's body is a biological, geopolitical and social one. It should be supplemented with additional attributes: a body ingests, digests and rejects; a body is sexed; a body has an identity, in a name or as a type; a body is never simply a natural object; a body is always a sign. It can communicate by waving its limbs or by forming sounds by passing air through its vocal chords, but even without the added advantage of speech, the body itself *is* communication. Its shape, its colour, its gender, its imperfections, its body language, all hold some significance in various contexts. It also acts as supplement to everything observed by the user. In this sense, because it participates in the production of meaning within a space of representation, the body of the Mayakovskaya user defies the traditional philosophical and political asymmetry found in the mind/body split.[6]

In 1948 Aleksandr Deineka painted his own body in a self-portrait as a boxer. A physically fit body hosting a creative mind, which he self-consciously used in engineering his own material self, by training his muscles, representing his body and linking it to an optimistic discourse on bodies. This is a revealing investment of Deineka's self as the 'new one.' It relates to the notion that a new kind people has come into existence since Socialism has been rhetorically attained (see chapter one), through the process of artificial selection. This corroborated Stalin's famous statement: 'We, the

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[5] Elizabeth Grosz, 'Bodies-Cities' in Heidi J. Nasj and Steve Pile (eds), *Places Through the Body*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 43.

[6] This split might be sustainable in ontological terms, but in political terms it abstracts the relationship between mind anf flesh and justifies violence made on bodies, as human beings or in representation.

communists, are people of a special make. We are made of a special material.' Shestakov elaborated on this statement in his book:

> Only the workers and peasants of the USSR, who were liberated from the exploitation of the capitalists could build up such a mighty industry and mighty agriculture in so short a time, Solicitude for the welfare of the individual, the seven-hour day, high wages, rest homes, free technical and other education – all served to bring about an increse in the productivity and labour never witnessed before. Work ceased to be a burden. New people of a special kind arose in the Soviet Union.[7]

Once the dichotomy between nature and culture had been broken, the created body and that of its creator could therefore merge, perhaps in an act of self-delusion or most likely in a leap of faith. But what kinds of bodies were available in discourse and representation during that period? This *exposé* will limit itself to three common incarnations, which were the most prominent in the visual vocabulary of the late thirties: the Stalinist body, the Bolshevik body and the Medieval body. These types are not entirely distinct. Their diffusion through images of all sorts overlapped in time and locality. Although they aimed to present an integral image of corporeality, they rarely achieved coherence and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the values they incarnated were not inherent to themselves; they had been imposed on their form, and might have suffered from being misunderstood. In this sense, if the bodies created by Deineka for Mayakovskaya are ambiguous, the artist should not alone bear the blame. Empirical bodies were profoundly equivocal in the thirties, as anachronisms multiplied themselves. The palimpsest effect alluded to in the previous chapter therefore became the images' usual mode of existence. Yet the Stalinist discourse sought to establish the body as a stable, indivisible, one. It seems that it was understood that the slightest adding or merging of different types into one body could challenge its limit and could cause it to signify differently, unpredictably or subversively.

The Stalinist body emerged with the slogan: 'Life has become better, life has become merrier.' This incarnation became ubiquitous in the late thirties, through magazines, films, books, painting and in the speeches of the leader. It set itself against the previous idea of an ideal socialist body, defined through Bolshevik discourse by thinkers like Alexandra Kollontay and the *proletkultist* Bogdanov, and implied in Lenin's work. The boundaries of the Stalinists body were determined through the 1936 constitution, which asserted proper uses of bodies, as it mapped out accepted relationships between individuals. The Stalinist body finally gained predominance in the

rhetorical sphere when the government closed Bolshevik 'body defining institutions,' such as the *Zhenotdel*,[8] and purged its ranks of undesirable (Bolshevik) bodies.

What is here termed 'Bolshevik body' did not originate in Marxism *per se*, but in the Russian nihilist tradition. This thought current emerged within the nineteenth century intelligentsia, led by its nietzschean inclination toward self-fulfilment to question traditional notions about bodies in interpersonal relationships, as well as in 'absolute' relationships: spiritual, religious or with nature. The best known incarnation of the *nikhilistka*[9] is the character Vera Pavlovna, heroine of Nikolay Chernishevsky's novel *What is to be done?* (1861). In her search for self-fulfilment, Vera takes confident steps to insure her own education, economic independence and sexual freedom,[10] while stripping from her body some of the traditional feminine attributes. In her quest, the spirit and the body are inextricably linked, since freedom of the mind is achieved within freedom of the body in space and time. Like several other nihilists, Vera studies medical science. Biology and medical knowledge allow her to change her physical being, but also that of other women, by her practice and her example. Vera sees herself, and is seen by fellow nihilists, as equal to men. She is the prototype of the 'new one,' a term coined by Chernishevsky. Lenin had been very impressed by the novel, as were many Bolsheviks. Indeed, he borrowed the title for his 1902 pamphlet on the development of political consciousness in workers and Party organisation.[11] A painting by Nikolay Yaroshenko entitled *The Student* (1883) portrays the *nikhilistka* visual stereotype: she wears short hair and sober, dark, unembellished (un-feminine) clothing; her face is not made up; she carries books; she walks briskly, and is therefore presented as an active individual.

Since the daily concrete material circumstance of workers had to be addressed imminently in the days that followed the Revolution, issues of corporeality were crucial for the Bolsheviks. They recognised that the wave of strikes which prompted the Revolution were not simply the reification of immaterial ideals of justice and equality, but rather a reaction against starvation and the miserable working and living conditions that the proletariat was subjected to. It was indeed on International Women's Day, on

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[7] Shestakov, p. 239.

[8] Women's department of the Bolshevik Party.

[9] Russian feminine for nihilist.

[10] Sexual freedom refers to the freedom to enter and leave sexual relationships based on mutual consent and love. Neither the nihilists nor the Bolsheviks advocated promiscuity or hedonism.

[11] Lenin mentions Chernishevsky as a predecessor of Social Democrats. Vladimir Lenin, *What is to Be Done?*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 59.

February 23, 1917,[12] that women took to the streets of Petrograd and disrupted activity in the city, projecting their own bodies into the political sphere. Accompanied by their hungry children, they demanded bread, herring and decent living quarters. Questions of food and lodging were as high on the agenda as were work and reconstruction of the country. Issues directly linked to the liberation of women's bodies from their traditional subjugation to men and to the family were equally important.

Marx, Engels and Lenin had argued that Socialism could not be attained while half the Russian population was still enslaved. The first All-Union Russian Congress of Women (1918) proposed an impressive plan, which became an inextricable part of the Bolshevik programme:

> [...] to win support of women for Soviet power; to combat domestic slavery and the double standard of morality; to establish centralised and collective living accommodations in order to release wives from household drudgery; to protect woman's labour and maternity; to end prostitution; to refashion women and 'thus give communist society a *new member*.'[13]

Legal measures were therefore taken at the onset of the Soviet era. Right to abortions, free union, divorce, and legalisation of homosexuality were decreed, along with several economic and political measures, which had an important effect on female corporeality and her role in society. Resistance from the women themselves nevertheless prevented some of the new edicts to be put into practice. For example, many women opposed the legalisation of abortion and the liberalisation of divorce, afraid that the measures would allow men to 'love them and leave them.'[14] Peasant women were especially reticent to the nature of the proposed changes; rumours encouraging these fears were being spread throughout the country side, disseminating tales of communal wife-sharing; of a collective blanket under which all farmers would sleep, men and woman alike; of cutting women's hair in order to export it to capitalist countries; etc.[15] There is evidence that there was some abuse in terms of polygamy and the use of abortion as a contraceptive

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[12] International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8. This corresponds to February 23, according to the Gregorian calendar. The Soviet government adopted the Julian calendar in February 1918.

[13] Richard Stites, *The Woman's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, Bolshevism 1860-1930*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 330. Emphasis added.

[14] Régine Robin 'Stalinism and Popular Culture' in Hans Günter (ed.), *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, New York: St-Martins Press, 1990, p. 24.

[15] The fear of wife sharing is interesting because it denotes how the idea of women as property of men was engrained and coexisted in the peasants' minds with the Bolshevik abolition of private property. These examples were drawn from Bonnell, p. 108.

method during that period. One can, nevertheless, assert that women greatly benefited from their new status as fully-fledged Soviet citizens.

In order to engineer a new person, the Soviet government needed to free and transform 'woman.' As the aforementioned 1918 All-Union Russian Congress of Women programme proposed, the 'new one' could only appear through giving 'communist society a *new member*.' The body of this new member appeared gradually in art and literature as well as in material culture in general, following the diffusion of Bolshevik ideas, even before 1917. The Bolshevik body also appeared in political science fiction. In the aforementioned science fiction novel *The Red Star*, for example, Bogdanov's narrator questions his own sexuality when he believes he has fallen in love with a male Martian. Indeed, equal rights, shared participation in labour, and similar clothing had caused Martian bodies to converge after the Martian Socialist Revolution.

In Soviet Russia, clothing designed by productionists[16] such as Aleksandr Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova was unisex. In representation, as in the empirical world, working clothes became the privileged markers of the bodies' appurtenance to the new humanity. Women sporting cropped hair, baggy overalls and leather vests no longer differed so much from men. Co-ed schools with a unified curriculum for boys and girls encouraged similar dexterity and sports aptitudes for boys and girls. This educational strategy was revolutionary in itself and gave female bodies physical potential, which they had previously been denied by institutions and 'common sense.' Rhetorical equality between men and women was gained through the acquisition of legal rights and the desexualisation of the body in representation. Bolshevik representations of bodies often went to the extreme mechanisation and transformed it into a cyborg, or obliterated it altogether. Equality was more concretely achieved with the gradual, although unfortunately partial and local, disappearance of the double burden as a result of the organisation of day-care centres, cafeterias and other institutions.

The Stalinist body was elaborated in opposition to this Bolshevik body, which had been allowed so many unprecedented freedoms. It was constructed through *tipazh*. In the Soviet vocabulary, this term meant the correct rendering of a social category: the coal miner, the *kolkhozhnitsa*,[17] the *Komsomol* member,[18] the parachutist, etc. Victoria Bonnell explains that 'the essence of *tipazh* was not typicality, but typecasting or

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[16] Artists involved in industrial production.

[17] In the thirties, with collectivisation well on its way, the peasant woman was transformed into the *kolkhoznitsa*, the collective farm worker.

[18] The *Komsomol*, the Soviet Youth Organisation, grouped young people aged from 14 to 23. It served two purposes: to spread the influence of the Party and government

typicalisation.'[19] This signifies that *tipazh* was not mimetic, but rather prescriptive. The idea of *tipazh* became necessary because established images of class categories (the lady, the bourgeois, the landlord, and the priest) had vanished, as the groups these types referred to were eliminated by the economic reforms and the collectivisation of the countryside. Classifications needed to be created in order to organise the population within better fitting stereotypes.

The privileged body of the late thirties was allowed to occasionally break away from work: socialist leisure was sanctioned (since 'life had got better'), dresses and sportswear appeared on the shelves of Soviet shops and in representations. The class-conscious middle-aged workers populating Bolshevik images were replaced by cheerful young athletic men and women; children also became more prominent. Women's hair grew longer, magazines and mainstream newspapers informed women on how to look pretty and behave in a 'ladylike' way. High-heels, perfume and jewellery reappeared in ads on the back pages of popular journals such as *Ogonek* and *Rabotnitsa*. They were also displayed in colourful shop windows. In the late thirties, several Soviet cosmetics factories began producing make-up and pomades. A *Pravda* article of 1934 outlines the state-sanctioned ideal for the Stalinist body:

> We endorse beauty, smart clothes, chic coiffures, manicures [...] Girls should be attractive. Perfume and make-up belong to the 'must' for a good *komsomol* girl [...] Clean shaving is mandatory for a *komsomol* boy.[20]

But along with the two previous types, another body survived throughout the thirties. It always maintained a special status as perhaps the 'true Russian' body. It made its physical appearance *en masse* in the city through emigration from the countryside. This body is described in Bakhtin's work, *Rabelais and His World*.[21] It is a body that finds its roots in the medieval religious tradition. This body is separated from the soul, which is more important than the material self, the fleshy shell. It eats, defecates, gives birth, itches, hurts, is born, and dies. Although its bodily functions are seen as important and are celebrated in public festivities (often pagan in origin), the body is doomed, while the

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throughout the population; to provide a training ground for future communists, Party members and administrators.

[19] Bonnell, p. 105. The term *tipazh* was most prevalent in graphic design circles and in cinema, but the influence of the types created extended to all fields of representation.

[20] Quoted by Timasheff, p. 317.

[21] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1968. The first version of this work was completed in 1939 for submission as a doctoral dissertation at the Gorky Institute of Literature in Moscow. It was originally entitled *Rabelais in the History of Realism.*

spirit, because of its superior nature, will survive.[22] Ultimately, flesh cannot be saved. Representations of medieval bodies are either grotesque, as in the *lubok*, or stylised, as in the icons, where of course they are the schematic envelope of a spiritual being, and not bodies *per se*. As Bakhtin describes it, the medieval body is exaggerated, with large breasts, a protuberant belly, an extravagant nose, etc. It possesses clear and exacerbated sexual attributes, visible anatomically and suggested by clothing. It is either very youthful or very old, very handsome or very ugly; it marks stages in life, as the seasons denote the progress of time. It lives according to the cycles of nature and the whims of God. Transgression of the body outside of a special event (such as the carnival) is unthinkable.

The Medieval body might have preserved positive connotations throughout the thirties, when linked to the *folk*. Representations featuring this incarnation were available in picture-shops, both in the countryside and in the city. Illustrated folk tales, for example, were still popular as entertainment with large groups of the population. They corresponded to the cultural needs of the recently immigrated peasant population. Typically, on the top part of a broad sheet of paper, a *lubok* depicted colourful characters, including all kinds of supernatural beings and metamorphosis of humans and spirits into objects, animals and natural forces. The bottom part was generally occupied by the story, hand-written in tight, un-punctuated script.

The design and narrative characteristics of the folk tale were mimicked in the Stalinist period, when 'fake folk' became pervasive. Tales of Lenin challenging the tsars, and songs about the exploration of the North Pole used folk rhetorical and visual patterns.[23] Mayakovsky and Deineka, as well as other propagandists, used this familiar model for their *Rosta* work, designed to educate the barely literate population in a formal language it was familiar with. In the long term, recuperated folk forms were especially successful in neutralising any subversive or religious aspect of the medieval body and its representations.

There is no need to put too much emphasis on the Russian Medieval body, since its tradition is similar to that of its Western counterpart. Although this type might now seem removed, it is noteworthy that the majority of peasants, until Stalin's First Five-Year Plan, still lived in quasi-medieval conditions, in terms of their language, material circumstances, belief system and social organisation. It must also be stressed that they

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[22] Women fared particularly badly in respect to this issue, since the medieval female incarnation hosted the natural principle, while men personified the cultural or spiritual principle.

[23] See for example, Marfa Kryukova, 'Leninist Fairy Tales' and 'Tale of the Pole' (1937), in Von Geldern and Stites (eds), pp. 123-127 and 287-290.

carried some aspects of this culture to Moscow when they immigrated. There were, of course, many other body conceptions existing in the empirical world and in representations in the 1930s, but these existed outside the major body-ideologies circulating during that period. They included those of the intelligentsia, of nepmen,[24] of the ascetic groups,[25] or of certain segments of the Jewry, just to mention a few. They mostly appeared in negative representations and were, in the thirties, contrasted with the positive Stalinist body.

In accordance to the historiographic tradition of Soviet studies, the Socialist Realist incarnation, the Stalinist body, could also be termed the 'Thermidorian' body.[26] But although it might seem reactionary when compared to the body liberated by the Bolsheviks, the Stalinist body did not consist in a return to the split (mind/body) subject, which existed prior the Revolution, or to the medieval body. It did not revert to a subservient position in front of nature or God. Stalinist bodies still benefited from more freedom than bodies ever had on the Russian territory, except during the twenties. The Stalinist body was regressive, in that it had relinquished liberties given by the Bolsheviks, while the bodies of prominent Bolsheviks were literally eliminated from the world. Yet, it is essential to understand that the Stalinist body was not simply imposed by Stalin onto the population. Like Socialist Realism itself, it emerged in representation before it was sanctioned by the Party and was later fetishised in artistic production, through the mass media and sports parades, as a desired physical and ideological type.

During the thirties, the Socialist Realist body rarely appeared in a 'pure' form. The mosaics in Mayakovskaya testify to this. Deineka's conception of the ideal Soviet body conforms to the general notion of a healthy, athletic body, which is typically Stalinist. Indeed, the artist explained: 'I don't see the point of landscapes with machines if weak and flabby people appear in them.'[27] But Deineka's representations of men and women include elements drawn from the Bolshevik conception of corporeality, which are incompatible with the Stalinist discourse. This is not surprising considering Deineka's previous collaboration with Futurist artists and designers, among which Mayakovsky.

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[24] The category that thrived during the NEP period; a variant on the bourgeois type.
[25] Some nineteenth century ascetic trends inspired by philosophers such as Berdyaev and Solovyov reappeared throughout the twentieth century, mostly in the form of millenarist groups. See Eric Naiman, 'Historectomies: On the Metaphysics of Reproduction in a Utopian Age,' in Jane Costlow, Stephanie Sandler and Judith Vowles (eds), *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, pp. 255-276.
[26] The term referring to the conservative backlash which followed the French Revolution is often borrowed by historians to describe the political events of the period.
[27] Deineka, 'Iz Moey Rabochy Praktiki' (1961), in Syssoev, *Aleksandr Deineka*, p. 51.

Deineka's bodies are often ambiguously sexed, and most often formal considerations overshadow physical accuracy.

As the Revolution was 'betrayed,' men and women started loosing control over their bodies; some of the most obvious symptoms of this retreat manifested themselves in terms of abortions, family law and sexuality. I would argue that these losses were mostly felt in woman's corporeality. The shift was justified by Stalin's affirmations that the women's questions had been resolved when Socialism was attained.[28] Posters and paintings from then on started to depict explicit sexual distinction between male and female bodies. But, contrasting with Nazi Socialist Realist representations, a perfect ethnic body type never appeared during this period, when *tipazh* defined a social body.[29]

The inscriptive body

Even if the new legal, social and economic climate of the thirties permitted relatively liberated bodies and the production of images of new people, incomprehension of the images or of the achievement of the 'new one' was still a significant factor. The body had often provided the basis for inclusion or exclusion of individuals from society. There was a strong emphasis on the production of a body that would correspond to the Stalinist choice population. Again, the problem of an accurate reading of the representations emerges. In order for Socialist Realism to perform ideally, it had to be understood clearly by its intended public, which, in the context of this work, was the general user of the Moscow Metro.

These concerns about reception were taken seriously by Soviet officials who conducted extensive research on public response to posters and other propaganda media. Although there had been some information compiled during the twenties on the effectiveness of some propaganda tools, the thirties marked the beginning of 'scientific propaganda.' A strategy resembling focus groups was used in an attempt to understand and systematically analyse viewer reactions, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of performative representations. Indeed, a Central Committee resolution in 1931 instituted poster review committees among workers and peasants. The Union of Revolutionary Poster Artists (ORRP), also created in 1931, implemented this measure. On the first

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[28] 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), p. 228.

[29] It is too often forgotten that anti-racist rhetoric was prevalent in the twenties and thirties, even if only marginally successful. See the famous children's poem *Mister Twister* (1935) by Samuil Marshak, about Soviet response of outrage to the racist language used by an American billionaire visiting the ethnically diverse Moscow. In Von Geldern and Stites (eds), pp. 201-211. A similar example is provided by the musical film comedy *Tsirk* (1938) by Grigory Aleksandrov, in which the American mother of a biracial child finds love and acceptance in the Soviet Union.

review meeting of this organisation, 22 posters intended for publication were discussed. Half were rejected as being incomprehensible or unsuitable, while the majority of other images were subjected to severe criticism and subsequently re-designed.[30]

This brings about two issues. First, the government and the artists of that period were sensitive to how different publics could understand images, drawing from their own knowledge, interpreting body images in a manner aligned with their own bodies. For example, Nadezhda Krupskaya, who was in charge of the literacy campaign after the Revolution, implied a difference in reading modes rooted in culture and literacy level:

> For the present and the near future, a peasant can learn to improve his production only if he is taught by visual example. And in general, the peasant, just like the workers in their mass, think much more in terms of images than abstract formulas; and visual illustration, even when a high level of literacy is reached, will always play a major role for the peasant.[31]

This problem, associated with the cultural nature of the sign, was intensified by the aforementioned demographic movements from the country to the city, and the differences in literacy levels and culture in Moscow during the period examined. Further examples will be provided in the analysis of the Mayakovskaya mosaics. Suffice it to say that visual matter was understood as being a more direct and performative way to spread a message to a vast group, than the written or oral text. Therefore, the position of the viewer and her visual literacy needed to be taken into account. In order to understand this, the assumption of the unity of culture has to be done away with. Soviet citizens of the thirties were not all speaking the same 'body language.'

The second issue at hand is that performativity was not seen as straightforward. This should not come as a surprise, since theoreticians like Voloshinov and other members of the 'Bakhtin circle' were theorising communication and ideology throughout the period. Indeed, the role of Socialist Realism is irrevocably tied in with this problem of performativity and communication. As Zhdanov stated in 1934, '[...] truth and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction must be combined with the task of the ideological transformation and education of the working people in the spirit of Socialism.'[32] In other words, representations of people and space were useful only in that they *could* transform people and space. This implied a malleable space (as illustrated by the General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow, see chapter three) and bodies available to be inscribed. It signified that bodies *are* constructed, even those made

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[30] See Bonnell, p. 111 and note 36, p. 300.
[31] Bonnell, p. 5.
[32] Zhdanov, p. 293.

of flesh. This idea of artificial selection corresponded to the new relationship with nature developed under the Bolshevik regime.

The body-as-sign is only made possible in intercourse with the empirical body, and vice-versa. It is therefore impossible to consider them in isolation. Indeed, the body in representation translates desires, ideology, etc., by and for the empirical body. The empirical body is understood not as an inert object, but as determined by discourses, defining permitted uses of the body, which become knowledge through representation of more bodies. Because they are signs, all bodies interact with other signs.[33] They are transformed by them and transform them in the transitory act of reading, or literally in transit. They can also react, in perhaps unpredictable ways, to their environment. This is what can be understood as the 'inscriptive body.'

Vicky Kirby explains this communion of the inside with the sheath of the body through the example of dermagraphism.[34] She refers to Charcot's notes discussing hysteric patients, whose symptoms imitated skin diseases. In this context, the skin became the marker of the patient's state of mind. Although this image is evocative, it leads to readings of somatism as being purely pathological, and therefore negative. Any discussion on hysterics and Charcot's aesthetisation of the pathology is now over determined by the discourse of psychoanalysis. Conversely, the ideal of artificial selection connotes an optimistic body action. This might be closer to the production of stigmata, the process by which the body momentarily transforms itself through faith or religious ecstasy. This willed transformation of the body might also be compared to callisthenics, where the shape of the body can be radically changed to fit an ideal of health and beauty. This example should, however, be stripped from its current ideological content, since the strong, muscular body connoted different values during the periods in which Mayakovskaya was built. Because of all these reservations, the more material image of the body as a palimpsest will be used in the following discussion.

The body in Socialist Realism, just like the style of Socialist Realism, was never precisely defined. It was left for the artists to formulate its form, either relying on public feedback, or their observation of representations of bodies in different media. In this sense, the Stalinist body differs from that of Nazi art, which corresponded to a specific physical, ethnic type: blonde, blue eyed, etc. Only two attributes were clearly required of the Socialist Realist body: it needed to be healthy and productive.

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[33] This refers to Voloshinov's aforementioned theory of signs and ideology.
[34] Vicky Kirby, *Telling Flesh: The Substance of Corporeal*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 56-57.

The role ascribed to representations of the human figure was more clearly determined: the function of the Socialist Realist body was to change the bodies coming in contact with it. The aim of the images was therefore not to mimic nature. Instead, they functioned as devices arousing the viewer into the process of change. Because of the ever-changing nature of the sign, as theorised by Voloshinov, the body of the viewer could only be in constant transformation: always past or future. Both the empirical body and the body in representation constantly influenced and redefined each other. Indeed, Socialist Realist representations of the body were actively involved in the aforementioned process of artificial selection. They consisted of a wager, an act of faith in the possibility of inscription of history on the body, and the body in history. In this sense, art fabricated the viewer, it produced its user, and it did not encourage passive contemplation. Neither did it engaged with the bourgeois project of self-realisation of the artist, but with an ideal task of transforming the material world in its most critical and most resistant site, the body.

Soviet citizens were conscious that they were involved in an unprecedented period in history; they reflected on this in their memoirs. Many were aware that they were constructing a 'new world,' that they possessed a new kind of control over their own nature, even in the time of the purges. Physical culture organisations, artistic circles, and scientific study groups all contributed to a larger climate of change and control assumed by the Soviet citizen over everyday life. Apart from sport, science and art, other striking, and maybe less romantic examples of this are the re-education camps where men and women were 're-forged.'[35] Even sex and reproduction seemed like they could be engineered. This was exemplified by Sergey Tretyakov's play 'I want a child' (1927).[36] The issue of reproduction is, of course, always latent in a discussion of the production of bodies.

M. German wrote that: 'borderlines between tough reality and fairy tales have dissolved... Nevertheless, [Socialist Realist painting] may claim authenticity, because many people at that time believed in miracles that in the end became reality.'[37] If a leap of faith is required to believe that bodies can be transformed through representation, so be it. The mosaics in Mayakovskaya do not represent nature, but a fantasy in the process of becoming typical, the typical exception, in Henri Lefebvre's words. However, this

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[35] In his novel set in a siberian exile colony, Victor Serge comments on the re-education camps: 'Our concentration camps produced re-education miracles. What an extraordinary word they have found to express this process: the *re-forging* of man!' Emphasis added. Victor Serge, *S'il Est Minuit dans le Siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, 1939, p. 205.

[36] Tretyakov tells the story of a modern, independant woman, seeking a 'biological father' from the right social background to impregnate her.

vision could only come about if the viewer was equipped to understand the stakes of representation, and perhaps most importantly, if she recognised in the model proposed something she wanted to emulate for ideological or pragmatic reasons. Indeed, understanding art, propaganda or material culture meant aligning one's body with a broader social project. By investing the body with politics, the body had become self-consciously political. The body could, therefore, be seen as a mode of political writing. Consequently, in the years of the purges, representation could be a dangerous act, as many writers and artists fell out of favour, disappeared in labour camps or were reduced to social exclusion.

Socialist Realism was a performative form. It was designed to impose attitudes on its viewers, transform their bodies, and make them perform differently. Because of this, it can be said that it functioned just like a speech act. But it has to be recognized that a speech act is not something natural, or even logical. It is based on contingencies and conventions. For any speech act to be efficient, the conventions it relies on have to be understood, otherwise meaning can be diverted in unexpected directions. Indeed, signifiers can disseminate the information they carry along unforeseen routes. Conversely, signifiers are also resistant to change. An example of this is that ideas suppressed during the Stalinist period kept on being disseminated in foreign opposition journals, in underground circles, and certainly inhabited people's memories. Finally, Socialist Realism, as a speech act, is only plausible if the body is considered inscriptive.

Fourth mosaic; The country needs to know its heroes

The fourth mosaic features motifs iconically related to the Red Army Fleet. A signalling seaman, up on the ship's top deck, waves red flags. A seaplane is hovering above. The sky is free of clouds. The plane is an old Russian single engine seaplane from WWI era.[38] Its motor, mounted on top of the cabin, and the round bottom of the aircraft, could permit it to land on water, near the ship. Although this is an older plane, the mosaic might depict a new, contemporary use of the aircraft. Planes captured during the civil war were recycled, serving as reconnaissance or courier planes supplying information to the Red Army. They

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[37] M. German quoted by Holz, p. 83.

[38] This could be a Tupolev reference, as the aviation engineer's doctoral dissertation was concerned with hydroplanes. Deineka might have been in contact with Tupolev, because of the architect Dushkin's collaboration with the aircraft designer A. Putilov, who contributed to most Tupolev projects of the thirties.

Fig. 17. Fourth mosaic
Fig. 18. Metro stakhanovite Tatyana Fedorova

formed the Red Army fleet until about 1928, when the fleet essentially consisted of a heterogeneous assortment of foreign-made and obsolescent aircraft. However, as they were appropriated, the aircrafts were most often entirely repainted. A red star, even an awkward or cockeyed one, was always painted on the tail or the sides of the machine, in order to integrate it symbolically into the revolutionary fleet.[39] But Deineka's seaplane displays a tail still adorned with the flag of the previous regime. This was a very unlikely sight, by the late 1930s.

The point of view chosen by Deineka doesn't provide the viewer with much detail as to the specific model of the ship. Equipped with a landing platform and aircraft cranes, it is most certainly a battle cruiser. It might be identified with the *Marat*. Named after the French revolutionary leader, the battleship had received exceptional press coverage in 1937 for visiting the UK for the Coronation Review. In any case, Deineka's evasiveness about the ship, contrasting with the more detailed rendition of the aircraft, conforms to the general lack of popular knowledge/interest about boats during that period. Indeed, boat technology was less of a mass culture phenomenon in the thirties than aircraft technology, perhaps due to the relative sluggishness of the progress in naval technology. Furthermore, the difficulty of producing a full size battleship in Gorky Park, or on Red Square on parade days, reduced public accessibility to the ships, and made them less prominent in discourse, as a feature of the Union's defence apparatus.[40]

In the centre of the mosaic, linking the plane and the boat into an ambivalent narrative (in time, space and politics) a sailor vigorously signals with broad arm gestures. He is ostensibly not signalling to the plane flying above his head; he is not looking in its direction. The man's body is caught in a rapid torsion of the waist. Both his flag bearing arms are extended towards the centre of the Metro station while his pelvis still points to the entrance. His shirt, too stiff to fully register movement, has also remained in the initial position. The red flags and the extremities of the dark blue ribbon tied behind the sailor's white hat flutter in the wind. The ribbon is gripped by the wind, the red cloth drags, under the influence of the forces of inertia. The sailor's head, framed by his arms seems to be looking down to the viewer in Mayakovskaya. This includes her in the picture, perhaps as a pilot, and forces her to take position in the narrative. This position

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[39] Many pictures of such appropriated planes and their artless paint jobs can be found in Lennart Andersson, *Soviet Aircraft and Aviation 1917-1941*, London: Putnam, 1994.

[40] Jürgen Meister observed that 'Even today few Soviet naval personel have some knowledge of the composition of their own fleet much less that of the whole Soviet navy, and the same situation prevailed during the war years.' Jürgen Meister, *The Soviet Navy*, tome 1, London: MacDonald, 1972, p. 4.

can not be simple, since the visible plane, the ship and the sailor's uniform can all be identified as either tsarist Russian or Soviet.

Along with aviators, and stakhanovites, sailors were one of the most important fetishes of the Soviet Union. This was the result of their very prominent place in the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. Once again, Shestakov's *A Brief History of the USSR* can shed some light on the popularity of sailors in common discourse. The first mention of sailors in the textbook is linked to the 1905 Revolution. The events are those famously portrayed in the 1925 Soviet cinematographic blockbuster *Battleship Potemkin* by Sergey Eisenstein. This is how Shestakov reports the story:

> The revolution spread to the army and navy. In June 1905, a mutiny broke on the battleship Potemkin, then stationed in the Black Sea. The battleship was at anchor off Odessa, where the workers were on strike. The sailors had heard about the events in Odessa, and were excited and eager to respond to the call of the workers to join the struggle.
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> *One day, while the sailors were at their mid-day meal, one of the sailors shouted: 'Boys, there's maggots in the soup!'... The incident of the maggots hastened the outbreak...* In response to the call of one of the sailors, Matyushenko, they took to arms and shouting 'kill the monsters!' they hurled themselves upon the hated officers, killed them and threw them overboard. The Red Flag was raised on the Potemkin.[41]

Two elements should be noted here: first, the implied revolutionary 'nature' of the sailors; second, the role of the maggots in their upraising against the Russian officers. Eisenstein's film rendering of the event highlights the same elements. It begins and ends with quotes by Lenin about the inherent revolutionary disposition of Russian sailors. It also features several stomach-turning close-ups of maggots eating their way through the sailors' meal. This is the catalyst. The 'maggot sequence' was undoubtedly one of the most disturbing cinematic scenes at that point in the history of the 'seventh art.' The narrative emphasised that the revolutionary nature of the sailors, like that of the working class, needed to be prompted by some explicit bodily function, in this case hunger. The second event related to sailors in the textbook is that of the October Revolution:

> On the morning of October 25 (Nov. 7) the Revolutionary forces closely surrounded the Palace. The revolutionary cruiser Aurora, with three torpedo

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[41] Shestakov, p. 153-154. Emphasis added.

boats, steamed up the Neva.[42] [Later that day,] the guns of the Aurora boomed.

The bombardment had effect. The machine guns in the Palace were silenced.[43]

The sailors of the Kronstadt Island naval garrison were among the most active supporters of the Bolsheviks. Since August 1917, the Soviet of Kronstadt had been governing the island in all but name. Their activity was crucial to the removal of the Kerensky-led provisional government put in place after the fall of the monarchy during the February Revolution. The Aurora, from the Baltic Sea Fleet, was a pivotal weapon in the plan drafted by Lenin; the revolutionary impulse was not entirely a spontaneous action, unlike the Potemkin mutiny. Sergey Eisenstein and Grigory Alexandrov's *October* (1927) describes the devotion of the sailors to the Bolsheviks. It also suggests that the October Revolution was triggered by the popular realisation of how little material gain the February Revolution had actually delivered. After five months, the Provisional Government had failed to provide the still starving population with 'bread, peace and land.'[44]

While most sailors accepted the October Revolution, very few naval pilots joined the Bolsheviks. The pilots had even planned to break the power of the Petrograd Soviet by bombing its headquarters at Smolny, just before October. When Lenin came to power, few airmen supported him. Therefore, in the fourth mosaic, the plane and the ship are historically opposed, but united in the 'present' of the representation. The tsarist aeroplane hovers as a ghost of past conflicts.

The Kronstadt connection, which haunts all Soviet naval imagery (there are innumerable paintings, songs, stories, etc. emblazoning the event), is one of the many nodules where the Stalinist discourse on heroes falls apart. Indeed, the Kronstadt uprising of 1921-1922, during which thousands of sailors were shot or dispatched to the Ukhta labour camps in the Russian north, was common knowledge.[45] It nevertheless eluded the textbook narrative. Simply stated, the contradiction embodied by Kronstadt sailors reveals why it is dangerous to erect a monument to a figure, which is still alive. Any hero can turn around and betray the cause he or she was celebrated for. Especially

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[42] Shestakov, p. 189.

[43] Shestakov, p. 190. The battleship Aurora (or Avrora) can still be visited today in St. Petersburg. It has been preserved as a historical relic.

[44] The movie was based on John Reed's 1919 recollections of the Revolution, *Ten Days that Shook the World.* The slogan 'bread, peace and land' appears throughout the film.

[45] The population makeup on the island changed, and at the end of the civil war, it included many counterevolutionary elements. During the mutiny, the sailors demanded a multi-party government and the end of the grain requisitioning policy, which was an intrinsic part of War Communism.

if, as in the case of the Soviet Union under Stalin, the cause itself had bifurcated from its original line or got off course altogether.

In 1931, the newspaper *Pravda* launched a campaign under the title 'The Country Needs to Know its Heroes,' designed to popularise the *udarnik* (shock-worker) movement. Before this, the term hero in the Soviet media mostly referred to the collective, the whole of the Union. The shift from a 'heroicised mass' towards individual heroes became most apparent after 1935, with the rise of 'stakhanovism,' most often described as a hero-building trend and an incentive to raise individual production.[46]

> During the night of 30-1 August 1935, a slim and pleasant looking 29-year-old, Aleksey Stakhanov, cut a 102 tons of coal in one shift at a mine in the Don river basin. This amounted to 14 times the prescribed norm.[47]

Stakhanov's record was immediately recuperated by the regime: 'It was the great Stalin who drew from my record a practical lesson for the whole country; and this lesson is the nation-wide Stakhanov movement.'[48] The journal *Stakhanovets* described and glorified the newly created Stalinist heroes, who followed Aleksey Stakhanov's path. There seems to have been significant enthusiasm for this movement among the population, as more and more ordinary citizens were awarded the title. But evidence reveals that the double-talk was not entirely invisible. Stakhanovites were rewarded for their high production levels, and consequently quotas were heightened. As Trotsky noted in 1937, the anti-socialist incentive of better pay forced workers to extend their labour period. 'Of the seven-hour working day, there thus remains nothing but the name.'[49]

The Stakhanov movement meant that egalitarianism in Soviet Society was replaced by the creation of a privileged minority among workers. Stalin justified this reactionary move as a necessary transitional phase towards a system where people would consume according to need, instead of output.[50] Stakhanovites benefited from special privileges, just like military officers, athletes, and sailors. Incarnated in the hero, the 'new one' left the rhetorical sphere and interacted with other citizens in the empirical

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[46] For a critical history of stakhanovism, see Lewis Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[47] Robert Thurston, 'Reassessing the History of Soviet Workers' Opportunities to Criticise and Participate in Decision-making, 1935-41' in Stephen White (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet History*, 1992, p. 172. See also Stakhanov's own account: Aleksey Stakhanov, 'The Stakhanov Movement Explained' (1936), in Von Geldern and Stites (eds), pp. 238-242.

[48] Stakhanov quoted in *USSR in Construction*, 4 (1938), n. p.

[49] Trotsky, *The Revolution*, p. 80.

[50] A. Fineberg (ed.), *Labour in the Land of Socialism; Stakhanovites in Conference*, Moscow: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1936, p. 15.

world. By their example, heroes encouraged others to improve and transform themselves into the 'new one' and, therefore, share in the privileged life acquired by stakhanovites. It seems that promises of increased access to goods, better living conditions, superior pay, social standing, etc., equally contributed with ideological consideration in the success of the hero building trend.

Between 1937 and 1939, command of the Soviet Navy changed five times. Admirals Orlov, Viktorov and Frinovsky all died by Stalin's order, without trial. Many others were arrested for being allies of the military marshal Tukhachevky, who had been the Union's main military advisor up until then, and maybe one of Stalin's most important rivals in the context of his great popularity, and the imminent war. This purge might have gone unnoticed if the hero-building trend hadn't rendered these people so popular. By the late thirties, it was difficult to erase them from public memory, even if they could easily be obliterated from history books. In the first instance, it was impossible to force children forget the songs and poems they had recently learned to glorify the heroic figures. Therefore, the rhetoric of the hero cracked and revealed in its fissures the characteristics of a martyrology. For some, the putrefied meat, which triggered the Potemkin mutiny, might have conveyed the same stench as the flesh of the Bolsheviks tortured during the purges.

Fifth mosaic; Steel birds

The naturalistic rendition of the three planes is a great contrast to the more approximate forms of all other representations featured in Mayakovskaya. The massive grey planes, a red star tattooed on each wing, are clearly meant to be recognised by the viewer. Even the bicycle undercarriage has been carefully depicted. With its four wheels, it is easily ascertained as one of the Tupolev design trademarks. As well as drawing on popular knowledge and his personal experience, Deineka might have also had access to the original engineer sketches and plans when he created this image. Indeed, the engineer A. Putilov, who designed the stainless steel decorative beams for Mayakovskaya, had been part of the Tupolev team in charge of the design of the TB-3.[51] Furthermore, Deineka could have

[51] Dushkin and his chief engineer Ilich Gotseridze consulted A. Putilov who provided technical asssistance and helped convince the Metro Project leadership as to the advantages of using stainless steel in the station. The pieces were crafted at the Red Army aircraft factory. The initials TB stand for *Tyazhely Bombardirovshchik*, heavy bomber. For a detailed history and technical information on the TB-3, see Andersson, pp. 251-255.

Fig. 19. Fifth mosaic
Fig. 20. Sky divers jumping from a TB-3, 1930s

Fig. 21. Gustav Klucis, 'Long Live Our Happy Socialist Land,' poster, 1935.
Fig. 22. Parachuting tower in Gorky Park, 1930s
Fig. 23. Townlet of science and technique in Gorky Park, 1930s

examined the plane at his leisure in the Gorky Park of Culture and Rest, where aeroplanes and balloons were shown and explained to the public on an 'aviation ground.'[52]

If Deineka paid so much attention to the pictorial description of the TB-3, it is only proper that today's reader be supplied with some information about the historical importance of this specific plane. Andrey Tupolev's TB-3 was one of the most outstanding aircrafts in the history of aviation. The world's first four-engine cantilever monoplane bomber, it was a gigantic plane, with a wing span of 41.85 meters. It weighed more than 18 tons, could fly at 195 kilometres/hour, climb up to 3,000 meters in 20 minutes and could load 2 tons of bombs. Its crew consisted of a bombardier-front gunner, two pilots (commander and co-pilot), a flight mechanic and four gunners, one of whom was to operate the photographic and radio equipment lodged in the aircraft's cockpit. TB-3 could also accommodate up to 35 parachutists or paratroopers in its fuselage and wings.

After a series of prototypes, an initial batch of three aircraft was ordered in 1931. The production of the TB-3 ended in the Spring of 1937. Over 800 aircraft had been produced; by which time the plane had undergone many transformations and improvements. Some TB-3s had even joined the civil fleet and a variant was developed to partake in the much-publicised Arctic exploration of 1937 (see sixteenth mosaic). It participated for the first time in a May Day celebration in 1932. 'To the spectators at the traditional May Day flypasts over Red Square in Moscow in the 1930s the formations of large grim-looking four-engine bombers became a symbol of the Soviet Air Force.'[53] The three-plane formation was also a well-known strategic bombardment formation, it signified security.

It has already been explained how the plane, as a signifier, circulates freely between discourses of war and peace (see first mosaic). The ambivalence already described is not, however, simply included in the viewing process or in the process of being hailed by the image in one way or another. The plane officially played a double role in public manifestations. An example of this can be found in TB-3's participation in the Aviation Day celebrations (August 18). On September 14, 1938, roughly a month

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[52] 'In Gorky Park there is a "Townlet of Science and Technique." Fifteen cabinets exhibit models of the most modern machines and engines. There is an "aviation ground" where airplanes and balloons are showed and explained to the public.' *USSR in Construction*, 9 (1934), n. p.

[53] Andersson, p. 251. In spite of many modernisations, by the time WWII broke out, TB-3 was rendered completely obsolete by its weight and relatively low speed. Most aircraft were tranferred to Aeroflot, the Soviet civil fleet. The civil version of TB-3 was called G-2 and was mainly used as freight aircraft.

after the event, the writer Vladimir Stavsky wrote his impressions of the Aviation Day exhibition in his personal diary:

> What struck me most that day was the raid by 'enemy aircraft' and the defence of the airfield. It was an incredible, emotional experience for us all. First, the three toned blare of the air raid sirens. Then the fighter planes on alert take off into the sky. The attacking planes are speeding over from behind the hills on the right, flying low to the ground. [...] Then comes the rattle of the truck mounted machine guns. The antiaircraft guns, also mounted on trucks fire, sending flames up into the sky[...][54]

This vision might seem in radical contrast with better remembered purely aesthetic displays of aircraft technology, in which aeroplanes flew in organised patterns in the sky, spelling out the initials of the Union or the Leader's name, before they launched hundreds of colourful parachutes into the summer sky.

It seems that the mosaic cycle in Mayakovskaya attempted to instil and encourage respect for the military at a time when its heroes and leaders were being purged. The aforementioned persecution of the military and navy leaders, as well as the show trial of the immensely popular Marshall Tukhachevsky, seem to haunt all military images. Furthermore, the purges subsequently spread to civilian 'heroes of the People' involved in the defence industry. For example, Tupolev was arrested on October 21, 1937. He was charged with selling his designs, for the construction of the Messershmitt BF-110, to Germany.[55] The engineer was released later that same year.

Dushkin was especially pleased with the way the light from the incoming wagons was reflected on the grooved steel of the columns.[56] According to the architect, steel, which is the most distinctive feature of the station, functioned as a signifier for Mayakovsky. It connoted the Futurist poet's dedication to new modes of production and a new society.[57] Furthermore, steel served as a basic symbol of industrial development in the Second Five-Year Plan, which concentrated on heavy industry. Its best known use in the thirties was the construction of aircraft. Within Mayakovskaya, for the first time ever in Soviet Russia, the cold, silvery metal was introduced to the public in a vernacular way, where it could be caressed and domesticated through daily contact.

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[54] In Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), pp. 239-240.
[55] Used by the Germans during the Spanish Civil War (1936-38), the Messerschmitt was known as the most advance twin engine bomber in 1935.
[56] Barkhin, p. 98.
[57] Natalia Dushkina, 'Maiakovskaia: Stantsiia-Pamiatnik,' *Arkhitekturnyi Vestnik*, 3 (1997), p. 61.

The creation of Soviet heavy industry was the focus, and privileged marker, of the first two Five-Year Plans.

> A measure of the tempo of this rush into industrialisation can be gleaned from the rate of increase in steel output. In 1920 the output was down to the unbelievable figure of slightly over 100,000 tons, and by 1929 it had risen only to the 1913 level of 4 million tons. By the end of the first Five-Year Plan, it had risen to almost 20 million tons a year. Comparable growth rates occurred in other basic products needed in the development of heavy industry.[58]

Thus, an up-to-date aviation fleet was necessary, as a symbol for a government that prided itself on its scientific progressiveness and heavy industry.

The parallel between planes and birds is obvious. In fact, the TB-3 was often referred to as a 'steel bird' in popular press and songs.[59] Yet, the three planes represented in symmetric formation take on another character here. Perhaps because they are represented with such obvious sympathy, and in minute detail, the planes gain an almost human appearance. In the Mayakovskaya series, these TB-3s have more in common with the female divers already encountered in the second mosaic, than with any plane or bird. It seems that Stavsky had a similar impression in 1938, when watching the aforementioned Aviation Day display. 'No, these are no longer machines, they're people up there in the sky, who have subdued the metal and made it into a part of their body; it serves them, diving down from one side, as quick as thought...'[60]

The heroisation of the steel birds testifies to a powerful association between machine and the 'new one,' via defence and technological interests of the Soviet Union. The planes did not refer to cold faceless technology. They were more akin to an object-stakhanovite, the 'new technological one.' The cyborg of Bolshevik science fiction emerged here within the Stalinist images of machines. Just as the stakhanovite referred upward to Stalin, as the embodiment of socialism, the plane was caught in a metonymic chain conducting to the Leader. Whether this was perceived as a positive association or not depended, of course, on the signified associated with all these motifs (plane, bird, human body, cyborg, Stalin).

It is a short leap from the steel birds to the 'new one,' or to the 'man of steel' himself, Stalin whose chosen pseudonym in Russian literally means 'man of steel.' But

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[58] Kenneth Whiting, 'Soviet Aviation and Air Power under Stalin, 1928-1941,' in Kenneth Whiting (ed.), *Soviet Aviation and Air Power: A Historical View*, London: Brassey's, p. 48.

[59] The metaphor of the 'steel bird' is used in the famous 'Aviator's March,' see tenth mosaic.

[60] In Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), p. 240.

there are other people, other bodies, implied in this representation of planes. There is a whole new generation of Soviet citizens needing to be educated in war and technical skills, in order to service the new industry. The crew inside the plane is virtually present in the image, as well as the parachutists (military troops or civilians enrolled for the holiday display), and the crowd below for which the display is created and for whose benefit defence training is executed. This presence of a crowd, or public, will be addressed later since it appears more prominently in the following mosaics.

There is one last point that needs to be touched upon here. It is part of the argument of this thesis that the vocabulary of Socialist Realism in the thirties originated from the events of everyday life and/or popular culture, and not from an artistic or iconographical tradition. Tradition has stabilised the vocabulary, but only by a retroactive process, which has very little to do with how Mayakovskaya functioned in the thirties. This is why the exhibition of aeroplanes in Gorky Park's Townlet of Science and Technique needs to be discussed at this point. Yes, Deineka could have sketched the planes in Gorky Park at his leisure. This also means that many Muscovites also had the opportunity to visit TB-3s, U-2s, Stal-2s, etc. People had the opportunity, and were encouraged to climb into the cockpit, to ask the experts questions, and even examine disembodied engines. They could measure their own bodies against the planes they so often read about and saw perform in mass celebrations, and get a sense of their scale.

The sheer gigantism of the TB-3 echoes the magnitude of the new Soviet space of representation. After the General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow was initiated in 1935, the narrow streets of medieval Moscow were broadened to accommodate up to six lanes of cars; small wooden houses were destroyed and replaced by monumental apartment buildings. Gorky street, above Mayakovskaya station, is a perfect example of this swelling process. Everything in Moscow became massive or broad in a matter of a few years. Mayakovskaya exemplified the immensity of the new Soviet capital in which the human body had to redefine (re-scale) its own bodily presence.

Sixth mosaic; Sky pedestrians

As if fulfilling the promise of the previous mosaic, the sixth image produces a parachutist whose body is dwarfed by extreme foreshortening. The parachutist, a blond-haired androgyne, plunges toward the user, nose forward, still clutching the string liberating a large fabric canopy. Her right arm is extended, testifying to the transitory movement. Her left hand presses lightly on her chest. The white harness contrasts with her cobalt uniform, which echoes the blue of the sky. The pinkish parachute floats limply behind

Fig. 24. Sixth mosaic

Fig. 25. 'Day Off,' caricature from *Krokodil*, (21) 1935

her; the wind has not caught it yet. A fraction of a second later, the whole sky behind her should be engulfed by the parachute. Even from the distance, the viewer can see that the parachutist's eyes are wide open. The expression on her face is not one of fear; her smile shows her snow-white teeth. If she is dizzy, it is from pleasure, and a feeling of having conquered the sky.

There are two planes hovering above her feet, each carrying, in its own form, specific implications about the nature of the jump. The closest is a grey U-2; a very light plane characterised by wings measuring about twice the length of the fuselage. This aircraft is about to leave the oval frame of the mosaic, after having dropped its human package. This is the type of plane Soviet youth learned to pilot in civil aviation clubs. Yet, higher above, a TB-3 circles. It might also be responsible for the jump. The bomber refers to, as it has already been explained, collective jumps, whether military in design or linked to popular festivities.

During the first two Five-Year Plans, military leaders found an alternative military use for their bombers. The aircraft could carry paratroopers and their support equipment behind the enemy lines in order to disrupt an opponent at some depth in territory. Thirty-five parachutists and their gear could be carried in a TB-3.

> The parachute troops, an idea which Tukhachevsky pushed vigorously, were first organised in 1931 in two small units.[...] Although the parachute troops had their trouble during the purges between 1937 and 1939 - especially with the execution of their mentor, Tukhachevsky [1937] - their strength steadily increased.[61]

By 1938, the airborne troops were organised in four brigades of about a thousand men each. They were key to military strategy and civilian imagination and hagiography. More than a modernising feature developed by the army, parachuting also became a marker of the 'new one' and its qualitatively new body, a body that could inhabit the sky. This body had new abilities and could master new skills. In the thirties, it responded to a very practical need, as the demand for manpower able to deal with aeroplanes increased. Two elements were favourable. The mechanisation of agriculture in the collectivisation process encouraged people to become mechanically literate. Therefore, peasants learned to deal with their tractors, trucks and combines quickly. In addition to this, Osoaviakhim (Society for the Promotion of Defence, Aviation and Chemical Warfare),[62] a voluntary

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[61] Whiting, p. 52.

[62] Osoaviakhim, created in 1927, was composed of six departments: aviation science and industry, chemical industry, aero-chemical defense, agriculture, sports aviation and aerial law. The ambivalence is built into the institution. One could talk of 'institutionalised ambivalence.' Along with the military Tukhachevsky, R. P. Eideman, chairman of Osoaviakhim, and several Osoaviakhim staff were arrested in June 1937.

organisation dedicated to training young people in skills needed by the arms forces, taught tens of thousands of male and female youth how to operate, maintain, and repair engines, radios and motor vehicles. They also taught future pilots the rudiments of flying, shooting and parachuting. The army also had its own training institute.

It might be difficult to imagine nowadays that parachuting was a popular sport in the thirties. Sport parachuting originated in the late twenties, following the invention of the first packable parachute (RK-1), by the Russian G. Kotelnikov in 1911. In the USSR, large-scale development of parachuting as a sport became registered in 1930. The first All-Union sport parachuting records were marked in 1932. In 1934, Osoaviakhim instituted the title Master of Sport Parachuting of the USSR. In 1935, the Central Aviation Club of the USSR was formed to link aviation clubs and parachuting stations throughout the country. The first All-Union competitions in sport parachuting were held during that period. Sky diving was not only a popular sport, but also as a well-liked spectator sport. A caricature from the humorous journal *Krokodil* might provide a mental picture of the sudden popularity of parachuting. It depicts a couple in a small red biplane. The sky around them is congested with jumpers dangling from their delicate parachutes. The pilot tries to kiss the parachutist, as she is about to leap into the crowd. 'Don't kiss me Misha.' She snaps. 'There are too many people around.'[63]

Parachute jumping was further democratised when parachuting towers were erected in the parks of several large cities. 'The parachute tower is the most attractive entertainment in [Gorky] park. Very numerous are the people who take an "air stroll" from the top of the tower and are safely delivered on the ground by the multi-coloured parachute.'[64] André Gide, in his *Retour de l'URSS,* recounts a visit to Gorky Park:

> In a corner of the park, near the entrance, extends the parachutists' territory. It is one of the preferred sports there. Every two minutes, one of three parachutes, liberated from a 40-meter high tower, deposits perhaps a bit brutally a new amateur.[65]

Bell towers of monasteries were even used as parachuting towers.[66] Ostensibly, many of the Mayakovskaya users would have either jumped or seen fearless youths strolling about in the sky. They might have also clenched their teeth at the sight.

The December 1935 issue of *USSR in Construction*, illustrates the step by step parachute training of an 18-year-old girl, Katya Mednikova. Her training and preparation

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[63] *Krokodil*, 21 (1935), p. 9.
[64] *USSR in Construction*, 9 (1934), n. p.
[65] Gide, p. 25.
[66] See illustration, *Ogonek*, 23 (1936), p. 15.

are documented in a series of photographs.[67] Physical and intellectual instructions over a period of a few weeks were required to ensure the safety of the young *komsomol*. But, a much more relaxed attitude seems to have been adopted in some of the other aeroclubs. Tatyana Fedorova, a famous stakhanovite Metro builder, tells the story of how one day at the *Metrostroy* aeroclub,[68] while she was watching some of the Metro builders jumping, the instructor came up to her and asked if she wanted to fly. 'Of course I do!' She was immediately fitted with two parachutes (the second, a security parachute strapped to her abdomen) and leaped into the plane, where the instructor casually briefed her on what to pull, and what to do if the main parachute did not to open. Up in the sky, when she was told to jump, she did not hesitate. She later described her step into the void, the powerful blow felt throughout her body as her parachute opens wide, and her ecstasy: 'I scream from joy, I sing [...] My ears are ringing. My soul is filled with great happiness.'[69] Fedorova entered 'augmented humanity,' that of the 'new one,' when she became a stakhanovite, when she conquered the sky. Such stories were reported regularly as human-interest stories in *Rabotnitsa* and *Stakhanovets*, the journal dedicated to telling the real-life transformations of ordinary workers into stakhanovites.

Becoming a stakhanovite was not simply understood as the result of over-fulfilment of production quotas, but mostly as a qualitative transformation of the worker. For example, in her speech to the 1936 All-Union Conference of stakhanovites, the industrial worker N. I. Slavnikova, a female boring machine operator, tells the story of how she became a stakhanovite by challenging another shock-worker into competition. She recalls having been told:

> What are you thinking of? Do you expect to beat Makarova? Why, you have never worked on this machine, it is a new one...
>
> But I replied: I am a fearless *parachute-jumper* and I am not afraid of this standard. I will upset it.[70]

The slippage between the boring machine and the parachute is telling; it reveals that the 'quality' of the 'new one' permits her to indiscriminately achieve new tasks and break

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[67] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n. p. The final jump is represented in a foldout display. When the oversize page is folded Katya has barely jumped. Once the page is unfolded, the parachute is open and Katya is experiencing her first 'air-stroll.'

[68] *Metrostroy*,acronym of the general Metro building organisation. The Metro builders received land near the aerodrome at Malye Vyazemy for their aeroclub in 1933. In 1934, having built a hangar after their regular workshifts, they received four U-2 planes and three gliders, along with parachutes. See Tatyana Fedorova, 'Naverkhu-Moskva,' in Reznichenko (ed.), pp. 143-157.

[69] Fedorova in Reznichenko (ed.), p. 148.

[70] In Fineberg (ed.), p. 180. Emphasis added.

new records. In this sense, the parachuting license functions as a symbol of a new kind of humanity, of youth, and of higher standards.

Just like articles in *Stakhanovets* emphasised the attainability by most Soviet citizens of the hero status, many representations of parachutists include the viewer in the image.[71] For example, in Vasily Svarog's 'Stalin and Members of the Politburo Attending a Celebration of Aviation at the Tushino Aerodrome' (c. 1937), Stalin, Voroshilov, Kalinin and other officials, visitors and parachutists are all crowded in a semi-circle around the landing field. The viewer is included in the group, standing next to an affectionate couple in jumping gear. They are greeting a parachutist, who has barely touched the ground. She hangs on to the parachute with her left hand, while holding a bouquet of flowers in the right.

The parachutist in the sixth mosaic of Mayakovskaya station relates to the viewer in a specific way, determined by her apparent proximity. She seems so near, that she forces the user into the parachuting experience, up into the sky, also grasping at the string to open her parachute. As parachuting, or air strolling, became a more common activity during the thirties, the viewer was forced into feeling the dizziness, at least as an empathic spectator. During the fleeting moment in which her body was exposed to air-borne sensations and emotions, the dizziness might have been enough to perform a slight inscription on the user's body.

The Collective Body

It is possible that Bakhtin himself walked among these bodies on his way to visit his friend the philosopher, Voloshinov. He might have carried his *Rabelais* manuscript with him. He might also just have been curious to see the mosaics over which the 1938 newspapers produced so much laudatory text. It is more than likely that his body would have been part, at one time or another, of the crowd of subway users. Taking notice of the crowd of bodies in transit is crucial to understanding how the work of public art functions.

Mikhail Bakhtin, theoretician of crowds and of the polyphony of discourse (heteroglossia) is useful here. Reading Bakhtin today opens up a philosophical world, where genealogical translation is problematised.[72] About the Rabelaisian carnival, Bakhtin observed that it is very difficult to understand disparate phenomena such as philosophical discourse and obscenity (as well as oppression and laughter) as being allied

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[71] Many Socialist Realist images use this strategy.

[72] By genealogical translation, I mean the translation of meaning or events from a different historical period into our own.

in a singular logic.[73] This is key to not only understanding Rabelais, but also Bakhtin's personal intellectual investment in the Stalinist period. Indeed, while the debate continues on whether Bakhtin used *Rabelais and His World* to reflect upon the dissident intelligentsia, his personal spirituality, or a romanticised version of the folk, one aspect remains clear. The unique logic of the Stalinist period, during which he wrote the work, permitted the juxtaposition of disparate phenomena, which now seem incongruous. Literal readings of that period are, therefore, useless, and moral readings even more so. In the thirties, optimism and the purges were not dialectically opposed. They were united in a very peculiar logic.

As a period in which the political field was aestheticised, the thirties relied on all kinds of festivities and public events. The dizzying effects of the festivities are recognised by all (opponents and supporters) in the regime. For example, the former *kulak* and camp intern Andrey Arzhilovsky described the 1936 Anniversary of the October Revolution, with a touch of irony, in his diary:

> The parades were a great success. It seemed as though the entire city had come out onto the streets; not so much to march in the parades as just to gawk. Lots of people and noise, everyone all decked out in their best. Enormous achievements. Life has become easy. People sing songs that say this is the only place in the world where a man can breathe free. It's a fact. A foreigner would get a most unlikely impression: you sure live well, God grant everyone such a life. It would be interesting to calculate the amount of vodka and beer drunk to celebrate the anniversary.[74]

In Bakhtin's work, the carnival is a liberating force. One should not, however, as it has often been done, confuse the Stalinist parade with the carnival. Carnivals were still celebrated in the thirties, and reflected some of the medieval carnavalesque aspects described by Bakhtin. Mask-wearing men and women were allowed a certain degree of irreverence and excesses on carnival night. Conversely, socialist holidays functioned differently; they were highly regulated. They were not made to relieve pressure *per se*, but rather to inform and create the ideological consensus that did not yet exist in the thirties.

There had been criticism for the lack of ideological unity represented in the celebrations of the twenties, when people were encouraged to take initiative in the decoration of the city and in the parades. In the thirties, the need for a coherent ideology was translated into the seizure and destruction of amateur posters crafted by the

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[73] Bakhtin, p. 71.

[74] In Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), p. 120.

demonstrators themselves. The parades were formalised; distinct groups paraded together as metonymic markers of the system. *Pioners* paraded together, aviators participated as a group, just as did the Metro builders. The celebrations were bureaucratised with the establishment of an organisational hierarchy and post-holiday reports which, like the poster review committees, were aimed at evaluating the performative success of the events in order to adjust them.[75]

It seems that for a person, like the aforementioned Arzhilovsky, an 'enemy of the regime,' the mass celebration offered a temporary period of truce. But philosopher Mikhail Ryklin conceives participation in festivities as just the opposite. For Ryklin, both the carnival and the socialist holiday represent moments in which social diversity is obliterated and convergence, therefore, takes place. Individual bodies then become part of a mass body; they loose their individual identity.[76] I agree only partially with this view; Ryklin is concerned with an acculturation, which is immediate and fully efficient, a myth in the Barthesian sense of the word. As it has been argued in the first chapter, historical evidence contests the possibility of such a phenomenon during the pre-war Stalinist period. The moment of the festival is, however, one of the most important loci for the formation of the Stalinist canon.[77] The festival provided the occasion for people to gain common knowledge and become familiar with the traits and the vocabulary of the 'new one' which, according to the media and the arts, already existed. During these events, a certain degree of inscription undeniably occurred on the citizens' bodies. The body's experience, common sense and memory would, however, have simultaneously challenged inscription. This partial marking could only happen within the discourse of a unified mass, and the demonisation of social outcasts and wreckers, embodied by parade exhibits. Indeed, throughout the thirties, marching columns of similarly dressed people held up dummies personifying fascists, bourgeois types, the pope, or Leon Trotsky, which they beat upon with long sticks, as they walked and chanted optimist rhymes about the socialist future.

The presence of wreckers and traitors in an otherwise cheerful narrative is not specific to the mass celebration. It also appears numerous times in the aforementioned

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[75] See V. Tolstoy, *Street Art of the Revolution. Festivals and Celebrations in Russia 1918-1933*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1990. Journals such as *Massovik* and *Massovaia Kultura-Prosvetitel' naia Rabota* provided general principles in mass-directional techniques.

[76] Ryklin, p. 52.

[77] One could also conceive of this process in terms of Lamarckism, a system in which characteristics (such as physical strength or intellectual abilities) acquired during a lifetime are passed down to future generations. This should not be understood within a genetic framework, but rather within a broader system of signs.

schoolbook narrative. It is the tenacious feature of any representation of the bright future in the Stalinist period, perhaps an unavoidable supplement.

After the assassination of Kirov in 1934, the purges started. The show trials by which Stalin sent most of Lenin's comrades in arms to their death had, as a principal defendant, Leon Trotsky, who had been in exile since 1929. The Bukharinites, Rykovites and, of course, the Trotskyites were accused of all sins, their sabotage serving as a screen for material setbacks or errors committed by Stalin's bureaucracy. Progress and growth in the Soviet Union was all the more impressive since they had bloomed in spite of vandalistic activities. Trotsky's followers were most commonly accused of being fascist spies, provoking train collisions, blowing up and setting fire to factories, and, occasionally, poisoning workers or mixing ground glass into the food rations.[78] In the thirties, optimism and the purges are often intricately linked. But the incompatibility of the two terms exceeds binary relations. Optimism and the purges were linked in a logic that might escape the present viewer. The show trials and the massacres, which ensued, appear in representations of a bright future only when fished out of the empirical world by a persistent (and very material) parergonal link.

Zinoviev, chairman of the Comintern was tried and executed in August 1936 along with Kamenev, Smirnov and 13 other Party officials. In January 1937, Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov were eliminated. Marshall Tukhachevsky was killed in June 1937, along with several other Red Army officers. In February 1938, Bukharin, Rykov, Rakovsky, Yagoda and many others perished. All these people had participated and distinguished themselves in the Revolution and the civil war. They were household names in recent history. Victor Serge, who was lucky enough to leave Russia in 1936, testified that, in spite of the trials and accusations of sabotage, these men still preserved credit in their country, even after having confessed to crimes they did not commit.[79] Their trials and executions must have sent shivers down the spines of millions. This brings to mind the question of memory, alluded to in the first chapter, inevitable in the act of deciphering meaning. Who could have forgotten the people, the objects, and the events that were transformed or doctored to fit Stalinist ideology? Maybe the very young, and those who wanted to.[80]

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[78] One example of these accusations can be found in Shestakov, p. 246.

[79] Serge, *From Lenin*, p. 92.

[80] In 1937, Trotsky wrote: '43% of the population of the Soviet Union were born after the October Revolution. If you take the age of 23 as the boundary between the two generation, then over 50% of Soviet humanity has not yet reached this boundary. A big half of the population of the country, consequently, knows nothing by personal recollection of any regime than that of the Soviets.' Trotsky, *The Revolution*, p. 161.

Robert Thurston argues that, while the tragedy of the purges will never cease being horrific, it must be understood that by 1939 only a little over two percent of the Soviet population was in detention. The terror fell mainly on highly placed officials, those 'in the know,' while regular workers felt relatively safe. If this is true, it can be deduced that, had the terror hit the strata of the population, Soviet citizens might have responded differently.[81] If everyday life, more than abstract ideas, served as the main political motivation, it may not be such a great paradox that, in the years of terror, a great number of Muscovites still supported Stalin. By the end of the First Five-Year Plan, a significant proportion of the Soviet proletariat lived arguably better than they and their parents had before the Revolution and, of course, during the civil war. Housing had somewhat improved, although the fight for decent living quarters was far from being over. The employment market dramatically benefited, as it went from over-supply to a desperate shortage of workers, to the degree where lateness or absenteeism was severely punishable. While opposition in the ranks of the Party official could be punished by deportation or death, in factories, workers' councils still encouraged discussion and innovation within work organisations. This is partly responsible for the active participation of workers in industry and the rise of the Stakhanov movement.

Caryl Emerson notes that 'in writing about Rabelais during the Stalinist 1930s, Bakhtin was composing a requiem for the individual. Your body, my body, became incidental, synthetic, disposable, mute - and in its place the collective body of the people was granted all the reproductive and rhetorical rights.'[82] Although this statement crudely simplifies the problem of the collective, it has to be said that the staged rhetoric of the collective is not only one of the most important figures used by the Stalinist discourse, but also provided the most commonly shared experience in this society. The festival was one of the few occasions when people really met, regardless of age, social background, education, etc. Most importantly, during holidays, Soviet citizens shared *en masse* an experience that provided them with a common vocabulary. Much effort on the part of the regime was geared towards the 'massification' of its people: rallies, meetings, sporting events, parades, public holidays of all kinds, etc. For example, between 1939 and 1941, 111 mass celebrations were conducted at Leningrad's Central Committee Club.[83]

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[81] Robert Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 137.

[82] Caryl Emerson, 'Preface to Mikhail K. Ryklin 'Bodies of Terror,'' in *New Literary Review*, 24 (1993), p. 48.

[83] Alexander Zakharov, 'Mass Celebration in a Totalitarian System,' in Alla Efimova and Lev Manovich (eds), *Tekstura: Russian Essays on Visual Culture*, Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1993, p. 201. This figure is only meant to give an indication of the emphasis put on mass celebration by the regime. Since Moscow was the capital of the

However, the crowd does not always function as a collective, as a mass seen from above. Indeed, it rarely sees itself in this way. Furthermore, the discourse of the Soviet people as a homogeneous mass started to show some inconsistencies in the thirties; for example, the Stakhanov movement and other hero-building trends focused on individuals. Indeed, the making of heroes aimed to transform, or elevate the mass to a new qualitative standard by singling out recognisable 'superior' individuals. Therefore, one has to take into consideration obviously conflicting discourses when discussing the homogenisation of the mass and the collective body in Socialist Realism.

The conception of the mass as a monolith, a unified body, the 'mass ornament,' has been best theorised in the work of Siegfried Kracauer. In a description of the participants of Nazi rallies filmed by Leni Riefenstahl, he wrote that 'they appeared as mass ornaments to Hitler and his staff, who must have appreciated them as configurations symbolising the readiness of the masses to be shaped and used at will by their leaders.'[84] This point of view from above is sustainable only for the viewer lodged on the rostrum next to the Leader. Unfortunately, historians of Nazi Germany and of Stalinist Russia obstinately privilege this sitting arrangement.

The point of view from the mass is quite different. Large configurations are not visible from below, while interaction, contradiction and subversion are part of the fabric of the experience. Even where the massification becomes the ultimate goal, as it was in Stalin's time, the unruly matter of everyday life, of subjectivity and the pulsating nature of human bodies coexist with the narrative of the unified collective. In Bakhtin's book the two masses come together. This double vision should incite a reading of the totalitarian rhetoric, which would not be deceived by itself; which would not be fooled by the rhetoric of a monolithic mass.

Seventh mosaic; It was the most beautiful moment of my life

The previous digression on the 'collective body' introduces two reflections. First that mass culture, public art and Socialist Realist art are most often experienced collectively, yet subjectively. For example, reading a Socialist Realist novel is both a shared experience with the readership, motivated by the ideological text, as well as a profoundly individual experience, which draws on a person's feelings, recollections, relation to the world, etc. The same applies to several activities: listening to the radio, looking at public art, viewing a parade, and even participating in a mass celebration. Whether the action

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USSR, it is plausible that there was at least an equivalent number of celebrations conducted there.

takes place in one's own room or on Red Square, both dimensions are always present in Socialist Realism; the individual is always linked to the community, and vice-versa.

Secondly, the site studied here is collective in nature. Mayakovskaya is constantly buzzing with a transiting public. It can never be observed in isolation, without other moving bodies fusing with it, except perhaps in the latest hours of the night, by men and women sweeping the marble floors and polishing the steel and rhodonite columns. Similarly, a number of the station's mosaics refer to events that could only be viewed, in the empirical world, from within a crowd. An example of this is the seventh mosaic, representing a plane formation flying past Spasskaya Tower of the Moscow Kremlin wall. The cycle's first and only real marker of empirical space unequivocally places the user on Red Square during a mass celebration. Spasskaya is easily recognisable by its red star and the large mechanical clock flanking the tower on its four sides.[85] It was the symbol of the Co-operative of Workers Publishing House, which mostly published textbooks such as Shestakov's, and its figure was on postcards, in movies, etc. The tower stands on a cardinal spot on Red Square, to the right of the red granite mausoleum, which, today, still bears the letters **L E N I N** carved from black stone.[86] The clock indicates 12:00. The blue sky prevents a reading of this image as unfolding at midnight. Noon is a time at which Muscovites would have been accustomed to hear Spasskaya's chimes resound.

The fragment of a flypast over Red Square indicates a mass celebration.[87] The planes, eleven are visible, exhibit red stars on their wings, rendered here by small pieces of crimson smalto. As it was customary under Stalin, the flypast might be forming a word, or be part of a phrase (the name of the leader, the initials of the Soviet Union or a slogan, for example), which exceeds the frame of the mosaic. During such events, the mausoleum served as a rostrum for Stalin and his staff. This is quite significant because the askew point of view of the towers and sky set the viewer on Red Square, looking

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[84] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp, 94-95.

[85] The tower motif is repeated in the seventeenth mosaic, as part of a different configuration. The clock can be heard and seen from a distance, its face spanding six meters in diameter and its long hand, just under two meters in length. Spasskaya Tower will be discussed at length along with the seventeenth mosaic.

[86] Built in 1930 by the architect Shchusev, it replaced the previous wooden mausoleum.

[87] The planes are I-15 biplanes fighter pilots. These were designed in 1933 by Polykarpov's bureau.

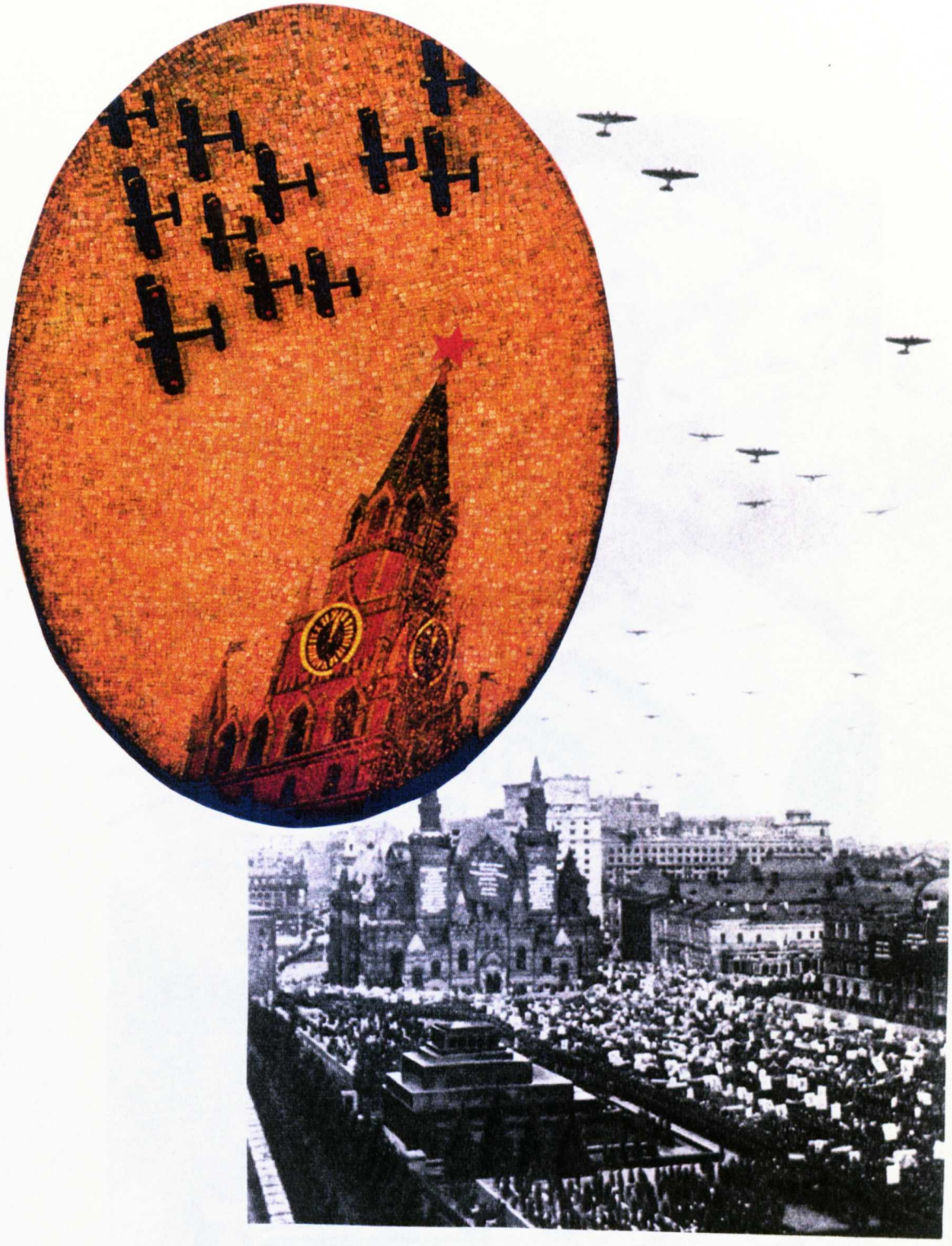

Fig. 26. Seventh mosaic

Fig. 27. May Day 1938, Red Square

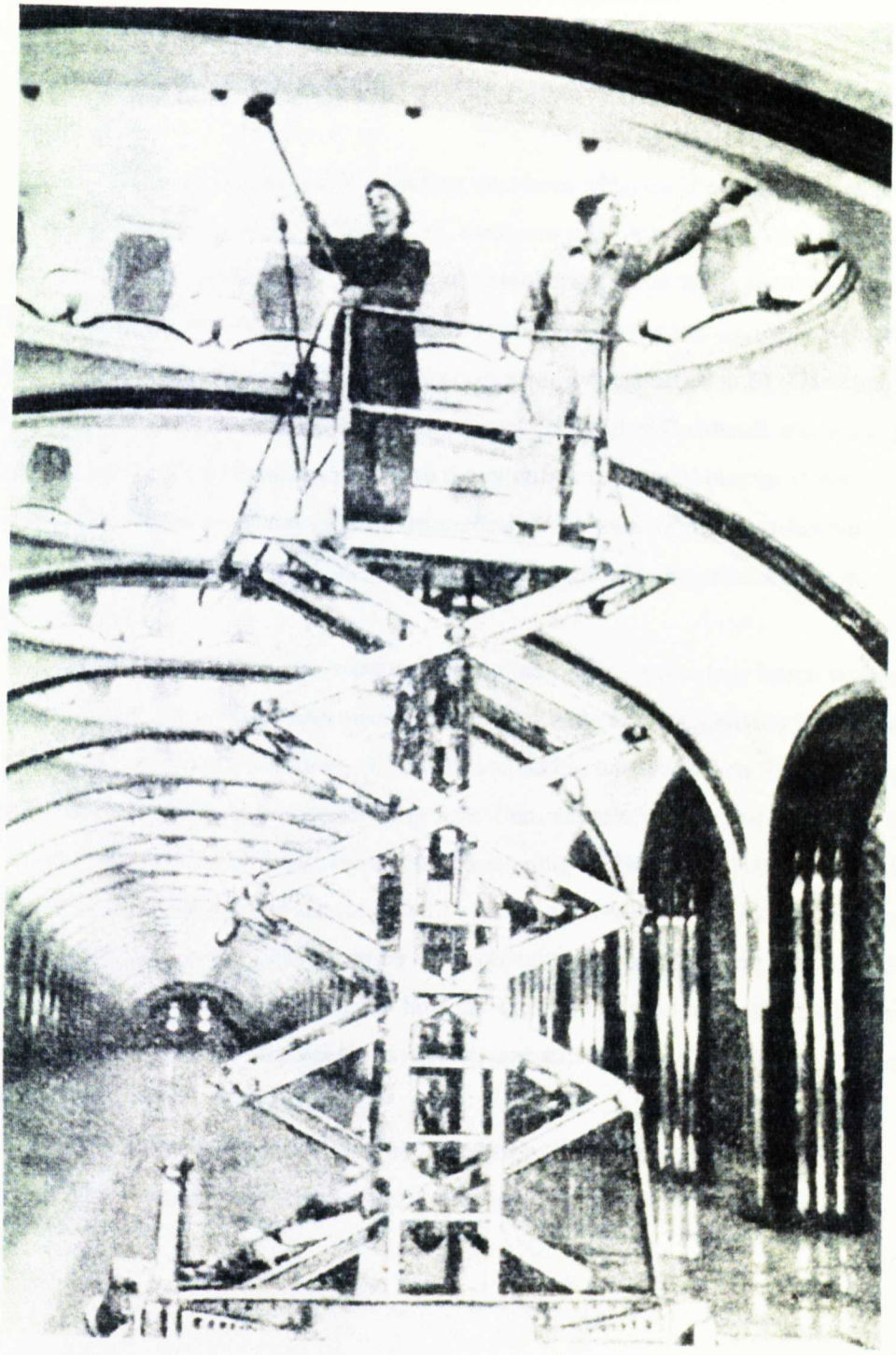

Fig. 28. Cleaners in Mayakovskaya at night, 1954

upwards. It also positions her body facing the Mausoleum, where Stalin presumably perched. The southwest geographical orientation dictates a spatial relationship to the Leader. The superposition of Stalin and Lenin also implies a discursive and ideological paternity, a historical continuity. But anyone who remembered the words pronounced by the dead man on the same site (on Red Square, not the Mausoleum), and could contrast them with those of the living Leader, would have been troubled by the obvious contradictions.

Red Square,[88] prior the Revolution, had been Moscow's central market. It had hosted wooden kiosks bearing fruit, grain, meat and other goods. This commercial trade diverges from the later symbolic exchanges, which took place in the same locus. Traditionally, the site of noisy crowds and commotion, it was ideologically transformed when, in 1918, the capital returned to Moscow after two centuries in St. Petersburg. In the years following the Revolution, Lenin, Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders had used the Red Square site to communicate with the population. Several historical documents show Lenin, upraised on a wooden rostrum, delivering some of his most famous speeches. The Soviet masses walked freely on the square, by then liberated from hawkers' stalls.

During the thirties, the mass was disciplined. Anti-crowd legislation was adopted and mass celebrations were organised with parades and marches. Outside festival days, large crowds were rapidly dispersed. This seems odd in a period when official discourse encouraged people to do everything in groups. For example, novels and paintings, such as Fedor Antonov's 'Collective Farm Youth Listening to the Radio' (1934), exalted the joy and virtue of listening to the radio with a group of co-workers, family or friends. The body needed to be public in order to be inconspicuous, yet crowds were simultaneously branded as dangerous. The memory of how crowds in Petrograd had taken to the streets, provoking the collapse of the previous regime, was still vivid; and Stalin's government was determined to hold on to power.

The participation in the parades was seen by many (especially the youth) as a great honour. Nina Stasova remembered her own participation in a 1935 *Komsomol*

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[88] Red Square, from the Russian *Krasnaya Ploshchad*, previously meant 'Beautiful Square.' The adjective *krasny* (red) meant 'beautiful' in the Middle Ages.

parade as the most beautiful moment of her life.[89] Chosen *pioners*, *komsomols*, stakhanovites, aviators, athletes, and other model citizens would parade from the city into Red Square and occupy its centre. Vehicules were banned from the streets on celebrations days; bodies occupied the streets.[90] Watching the participants march, spectators stood on the curb or at the periphery of the square. The public display, the living aesthetisation of the Party line, was orchestrated by Kerzhentsev's Committee for Artistic Affairs (see chapter one). The selected participants might have even seen their picture appear on the cover of *Ogonek, Izvestia* or *Pravda* on the days following the celebration. Their name and group affiliation were spelled out in bright red letters.

There seems to be a tension between the two groups briefly outlined. On the one hand, the privileged few embodied the spectacle of Stalinist politics. On the other hand, bystanders passively watched. Binary thinking would imply terms of inclusion and exclusion. The bodies participating in the parades or standing on the rostrum would be included, while others were not. Exclusion could be ideological, or aesthetic; old, fat, weak or handicapped bodies would not be permitted amidst the display of ideal, lightly clad bodies. But, as always under Stalin, things were not that simple. Just as bodies of heroes referred by metonym to the leader, bodies of spectators were given the chance to identify with the chosen citizens. Indeed, *Ogonek* and *Pravda* captioned their portraits with short biographical profiles rendering explicitly the 'kid-next-door' nature of the many participants. In the same way, the point of view induced by the mosaic places the Mayakovskaya user right in the centre of Red Square, among the *komsomols*, stakhanovites, parachutists, etc. She is positioned as the 'new one.'

'According to observers, "the crowd was alive, it felt free, uninhibited."'[91] Once the spectacle was over, the borders between viewers and performers completely dissolved. Bodies-as-signs and empirical bodies mingled in close physical contact, prompted by activities exceeding the norms of everyday life.

In 'Bodies of Terror,' Ryklin transported the public of the festival into the Moscow Metro. Focusing on the 'culture's store of visual possibilities,' the philosopher distinguished between two kinds of visions 'which strive not to intersect.' The first is a 'speech-vision' which sees only its own unrealised possibilities. Ryklin proposed that these expectations prevent collective bodies from visualising themselves as individual

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[89] *USSR in Construction*, 12, (1935), n. p.
[90] The importance of the subway as the main mean of transportation on holidays is noteworthy.
[91] Zakharov, p. 201.

bodies, which could be stricken by fate. The second stubbornly refers to the trauma of urbanisation, labour, the everyday grind, terror, etc.[92]

These two categories are undeniably useful for the analysis of Socialist Realism. They outline the extreme responses provoked by Socialist Realist works. Ryklin's reading of the Metro is, however, largely influenced by western theories of culture, relying on historical continuity, such as the work of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes. Ryklin claims that the viewer vacillates between these two experiences. But why can't these two visions intersect? And why would they even 'strive not to?' In a sense, this reading, which heavily draws on Bakhtin's *Rabelais* undoes its most important accomplishment, and imposes anachronistic dichotomies on this period.

There is also a problem linked to Ryklin's free periodisation. The philosopher does not distinguish between pre-war Metro stations and those constructed at the height of *zhdanovshchina*. This is what permits him to see the population of Moscow as an unified mass. This a-historical tendency is especially problematic in the subway. Certainly, unlike during mass celebrations, the crowd in the subway does not move in roughly the same direction. People run to squeeze between the doors of a departing train, boys and girls pour out of another. People of all ages use Mayakovskaya as a pleasant and dry place to meet, and stand waiting by the columns. The collective body on Mayakovskaya's platform is pure chaos; the individual body is therein necessarily eccentric.

Eighth mosaic; My 100,000 girlfriends -- to the tractors!

The best known medallion in the mosaic cycle depicts a female collective farm worker manning a combine in the afternoon sun. Proudly standing against the wind, she wears a red kerchief, which she has tied at the nape of her neck, as city women did.[93] Endless fields of wheat surround her; a red flag indicates that the combine bin is full with grain. This configuration was referred to as *kombainersha*.[94] She is usually read as an image of the peasant contribution to Soviet wealth through industrialisation. Along with centralised industrial planning, collective agriculture served as the basis of Soviet economy throughout the thirties. The *kombainersha* was a frequent feature in the visual culture of the thirties. This configuration even appeared on the painted panels executed by Pavel Kuznetsov and his team, for the Soviet Pavilion at the Paris World Fair in 1937.

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[92] Ryklin, pp. 59-61.
[93] Peasant women traditionally tied their kerchief under their chin.
[94] Female combine operator.

Fig. 29. Eighth mosaic

Fig. 30. Pasha Angelina teaching her sister Nadya to drive a tractor, 1930s

Similar images could be found in abundance in Soviet papers and journals during that time, delivering the following statistics: '200,000 grain harvesting combines produced,'[95] or slogans encouraging women to join the *kolkhoz* movement.

In Arkady Plastov's, 'A Collective Farm Festival' (1937), the combine set in the background serves as a rostrum. It supports the portrait of Stalin and a banner stating that 'Life has become easier, life has become merrier.' The colour red is omnipresent in the work. A woman in a red dress and red kerchief, also tied behind the head, stands at the very centre of the image. The colour of her garments echoes the red flag, which sways straight above her head, announcing, just as in the mosaic, that the combine bin is full. Matthew Cullerne Bown calls this image a 'paradigm of Socialist Realism under Stalin, one of the key works of the movement.'[96] He is referring to the joyful optimism of the painting.

Textbooks from that period immediately provoke an alternative reading of this type of image. The narrative proposed to 3rd and 4th graders[97] goes as follow:

> But the Party succeeded in proving to the peasants, not only by arguments, but also by deeds, the enormous advantages of large scale collective farming over small individual farming. The Soviet government sent numerous tractors, harvester-combines and other machinery into the rural districts. In 1929 large numbers of middle peasants followed the poor peasants into the collective farms. The *kulaks* [the well-off peasants], realising that the collective farms would sweep them away, began furiously to resist the organisation of collective farms. They murdered the leading collective farmers, spoiled collective farm machines and set fire to collective farm fields. In their fight against collective farms, the *kulaks* were supported by a small clique of traitors to the people, headed by Bukharin and Rykov. They too, like the Trotskyites, were opposed to the Five-Year Plan. The Red Army helped the peasants to break the resistance of the *kulaks* and to destroy them.[98]

The story is one of a violent struggle between the state and the landowners for the collectivisation of all Soviet land, not one of joyful and optimistic collaboration.

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[95] Combines had not been produced in pre-Revolutionary Russia. They entered Russian industrial history in the late twenties and thirties as a symbol of the country side's collaboration to the Socialist project.

[96] Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting*, London: Yale University Press, 1998, p. 156.

[97] Nine and ten year old children.

[98] Shestakov, p. 235.

In 1938, the collectivisation process was almost complete. The surface of Socialist fields given to agriculture amounted to 220,000,000 hectares. About 90% of peasant farms had been transformed into *kolkhozy*.[99] Yet, in 1938, the majority of Muscovites had either been born peasants, or was from rural origins.[100] Although there was a real divide between city and country life, in terms of living standards, ideology and culture, the migration and/or social ascendance of the peasant-born population could not have completely erased the memory of village culture and of the brutal collectivisation, which left at least two or three million *kulaks* dead or deported.

A 1930 play by Kirshon will serve as an example. The play is entitled *Khleb*, Russian for 'wheat' or 'bread.' It describes the difficult process of collectivisation, and was hailed as a great success by Moscow and Leningrad theatre critics. However, when it was shown to former *kulaks*, the reading of the Socialist Realist work was turned on its head; the peasants applauded vigorously the *kulak* characters, while they booed the actors dressed in Red Army uniforms when they walked on stage.[101]

The *kombainersha*'s identity is revealed within the pages of Shestakov's *A Short History of the USSR*.[102] She's a type, this is true, but incarnated in several real persons, to participate in Stalin's hagiography. The material, as well as legal, conditions under Stalin had made it possible for women to become *kolkhoz* machine operators. This new state of affairs begged for a hero who could incite more women to join the ranks of qualified *kolkhoz* workers. She appeared in the form of a young Ukrainian of Greek descent named Praskovya Angelina, or Pasha, as she was affectionately referred to by the whole nation. As one of the first trained female tractor drivers, Pasha organised the first all-female brigade of tractor drivers in 1933, at the tender age of 20. In 1938 she incited women to join her in her work with the slogan 'My 100,000 girlfriends -- to the tractors!' According to the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 200,000 women responded to her appeal.[103]

The original team and their leader became some of the most famous women of the period, through a vast campaign of paper articles, biographies, children's stories, postcards, songs and even circus acts, all about them specifically or indirectly. An

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[99] Holz, p. 83.

[100] For a number of reasons, the 1932 Trade Union Census is not entirely reliable. It nevertheless indicate that between 45% and 85% of Moscow workers (depending on the industry) were from peasant origin (father's occupation). See David Hoffman, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow 1929-1941*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994, pp. 236-241.

[101] This event described by Régine Robin (*Le Réalisme*, p. 91) is alluded to by A. Afinogenov, 'Khleb V. Kirshona na Tsene MkhAT', *Prozhektor*, 9 (1931), p. 22-23.

[102] Shestakov, p. 240.

example of this is Sergey Tretyakov's 'Nine Girls' written in 1935. The writer who travelled to workplaces to write about 'real' Soviet workers spent two years on *kolkhoz* researching this story about Pasha Angelina and her all-female brigade.[104] As the best-known agrarian stakhanovite, Pasha Angelina was invited in 1935 to receive the 'Order of Lenin' from Stalin himself. In 1936, she worked only three days a month and spent the rest of her time on tour.[105]

The single figure in Socialist Realism is rarely a portrait;[106] it is most often an example of *tipazh*. One could argue that the *kombainersha* in the mosaic is simply an allegory; then so had become Pasha Angelina who, like any media star, had been depersonalised to a large degree in order to signify. The excessive use of both Pasha Angelina and the *kombainersha* for similar purposes had caused them to collapse into an ambiguous signifying entity. Pasha 'as a sign' was particularly efficient because she could function on different registers. One of these is the liberation of women through socialism. Indeed, following Marx, the Bolsheviks had proclaimed that a socialist revolution could not be attained as long as women were exploited. Furthermore, they understood that women needed to be completely freed from their economic dependence on men in order to enter the new society as equal members. Under the Family Code, they organised massive legal reforms as early as 1920, to give women all rights from which men benefited.[107]

In accordance with this discourse, it was common knowledge that Pasha's parents had been *bednyaks*, exploited by *kulaks*. The *bednyaks* were the very poor peasants, the proletariat of the countryside, who had to sell their labour to the *kulaks*. Since the twenties, Pasha's parents had been firm supporters of the collectivisation, and had been instrumental in the formation of their own *kolkhoz*. Very progressive politically, the Angelins also held relatively broad views about women's issues and were against their daughters' wearing of the veil. This was a practice upheld by different ethnicities living on Soviet territory and discouraged by the Party. The Angelins also espoused positive views on the importance of education for women.

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[103] A. M. Prokhorov (ed.), *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* [translation of the third edition], tome 1, London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1974, p. 396.
[104] In Von Geldern and Stites (eds), pp. 216-227.
[105] Siegelbaum, p. 182.
[106] Unless it depicts a Party official.
[107] See Barbara Evans Clements for a description of the thorough programs instated by the Bolsheviks and the participation of women in the development and application of the resolutions. Barbara Evans Clements, *Daughters of the Revolution; A History of Women in the USSR*, Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1994, pp 37-44.

As posters from the 1930s reveal, collectivisation promised women's liberation from religion and patriarchal society. Women joining the *kolkhoz* could expect to benefit from education, communal childcare and cooking facilities, which would liberate them from the double burden. Our young heroine hence came to embody some of the rights already acquired by urban Soviet women in the early twenties, but that had been slow to make their way to rural areas, where traditional practices were solidly anchored. Some of these rights were access to birth control, abortion on demand, right to divorce, free access to every level of education, full participation in elections, etc.

These gains were firmly fixed in popular memory when, in 1936, things began to change. Two years before Mayakovskaya station was opened to the public, divorces became more difficult to obtain. A tax of 59 rubles was imposed on a person's first divorce, 150 rubles for the second, and 300 rubles for any divorce thereafter.[108] Abortions were re-criminalised under the following justification: in view of the high standard of welfare reached in the Soviet Union, every mother could be assured of the future of her progeny. Therefore abortions were no longer necessary and should have been avoided since harmful to the health.[109] The actual reason for this ideological-legal shift probably was that population growth was needed to counter the depleting effects of the civil war. To justify this reinterpretation of Soviet values, monetary assistance for all nursing mothers was raised and it became illegal to refuse equal wages or employment to women, or to lay them off when pregnant. Bonuses were offered to women giving birth to their seventh child and every child thereafter.[110] The June 1937 issues of *USSR in Construction* followed this trend in its 'Pasha Angelina' two-page display. Three images present the ever-smiling Pasha: the first, manning her tractor; the second, teaching her younger sister Nadya to drive; the third, posing with her baby, Svetlana. The double burden was presented by the journal as a positive feature of women's lives.

Newspapers reveal that debates about this issue started immediately. Young women, seeing their rights being limited protested vocally.[111] They were aware, however, that in the period of crisis that preceded the war, women in different countries did not have the same rights as Soviet women did, even after these limitations. Some of their gains survived the Stalinist period and persisted until 1991.

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[108] 'Decree of the Central Executive Committee and of the Council of People's Commissaries of the USSR' in 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), pp. 458-459. The decree was originally published in the Soviet Union in *Izvestia*, 149 (28 June), 1936.

[109] 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), p. 458.

[110] 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), p. 459.

[111] 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), p. 228.

The 1936 constitution declared the Soviet Union a 'Union of Republics of Workers and Peasants.' Peasants, who had been discriminated against, especially during the first years of collectivisation, needed to be valorised in popular discourse. A 1934 poster by Konstantin Zotov, for example, is captioned with a quote from Stalin. 'From now on, every collective farm peasants or individual farmer has the opportunity to live like a human being [...]' It depicts a young peasant family who, having benefited from education and industrialisation, has been 'elevated' to the status of proletarian. Books are stacked against the wall behind the peasants, an enormous light bulb hangs above their heads, a gramophone sits in the forefront of the image, and the woman is dressed in urban fashion. She has followed the advice given by a fellow *kolkhoznitsa*, and discarded her peasant attire: 'We can also dress elegantly, because we have good taste and we like to follow fashion. I no longer like wearing bell-skirts and aeroplane-blouses.'[112]

By 1938, collectivisation was almost completed. It therefore seems that aside from encouraging women to join the kolkhoz movement, representations, such as the *kombainersha*, were aimed at reducing the very real friction in the city between different cultural and social groups, while producing an 'appropriate' image of the Stalinist body. For example, it could be argued that the kerchief tied at the nape of the neck, found in Deineka's mosaic and featured in most images of peasant women from 1934 on, was meant to accelerate the homogenisation of the Moscow population.

Ninth mosaic; Ready for labour and defence

The body of an athlete occupies the centre of the ninth mosaic. It is impossible to tell whether it is a man or a woman. The pole-vaulter flies in a high jump over a shaft stretched across the narrower section of the oval mosaic. Her right arm reaches forth, while her left hand seems to act as a visor to protect her eyes from the sun shining above her, thus lighting up her upward- turned face and defining bright patches on her clothing. She has dropped the striped black and white pole, as if her body is equipped to fly on its own. The pole, parallel to the athlete's right arm draws a cross with the black elevated shaft.

The vaulter's body is dressed in a pale blue baggy shirt and shorts, bearing a red stripe on the left thigh. Her outfit echoes the colour of the sky. She looks like she belongs up there, her blue shape contrasted against the whiteness of an oversized cloud. Her leg and arm muscles are well defined. She is wearing black track shoes. The representation is

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[112] From *Pravda*, December 31, 1936, quoted in André Gide, *Retouches à Mon Retour de l'URSS*, Paris: Gallimard, 1937, p. 85.

Fig. 31. Ninth mosaic
Fig. 32. Ready for Labour and Defence display from *USSR in Construction*, (7-8) 1934

similar to hundreds of popular 'athletic climax' pictures in step-by-step jumping demonstrations.[113]

Amateur athletic competitions had been established under the Bolsheviks in 1920 for men and 1922 for women.[114] By the early thirties, pole-vaulting already had a history as a spectator sport. By the late thirties, it was an activity that all children and many adults had attempted, in the context of the popular Soviet health campaign. Indeed, the GTO movement (*Gotov k Trudu i Oborone*, Ready for Labour and Defence) was initiated in 1931 by the *Komsomol* as a movement of mass fitness and hygiene.[115] Its goals were to give everybody modest targets to aim for, which could bring them honorific recognition, and, therefore, encourage regular participation in sport as a normal feature of the socialist way of life. The targets covered several sporting activities; all around proficiency in a number of sports and general fitness were sought. The second objective of the GTO was to instil knowledge of rudimental hygiene, first aid and civil defence through awareness of the human body. Furthermore, the GTO was to establish a mass base from which potential sport stars could be discovered. Finally, the recipients of GTO badges needed to already be members of a shock-brigade in industry or agriculture. This established a manifest link between physical fitness and excellency in work.

In 1934, the organised Soviet physical culture movement counted, within its ranks, six million people, including nearly two million women. That year, on May Day, GTO badge holders were numbered at one and a half million:

> The physical culture movement gained special momentum since 1931 when the GTO badge was introduced, laying the foundations for an organised system of Soviet physical culture and formulating its aim for the first time with complete clarity. Since then the clear and simple words 'prepared for labour and defence,' have been transformed from a slogan into a concrete and pressing task of the great masses of the toilers. The GTO badge has gained unusual popularity. Wearers of GTO badges can now be met at every step.[116]

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[113] See for example, *Fizkultura*, 7 (1936), pp. 42-49.

[114] For dates of first championships indifferent sports, see James Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society. Development of Sport and Physical Education in Russia and the USSR*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 406-407.

[115] A higher level of the badge was instituted in 1933 (GTO-2). This demanded more than proficiency, but actual training. It is not surprising that the first GTO-2 badges were awarded to military officers. In 1934, BGTO (*Be* Ready for..) was created for school children. A further 'uniform ranking' system for individual sports was instituted in 1935, by the All-Union Physical Culture Council. This later addition was aimed at discovering and training athletes for national and eventually international competition.

[116] *USSR in Construction*, 7-8 (1934), n. p.

The GTO requirements varied according to age group and sex. Fifteen physical events were to be examined. A four page display, a photomontage in Constructivist style, in the July-August 1934 issue of *USSR in Construction*, depicts some of the required disciplines: high jump, hand-grenade throwing, swimming, cartridge case carrying, gymnastics, speed walking while wearing a gas mask, marksmanship, etc.

The six academic requirements included the following:

- To have adequate knowledge of the subject: 'Physical Culture and Sport in the USSR.'
- To be able to explain the importance of, and to perform, a set of morning exercises.
- To know the basic rules of civil defence and to be able to wear a gas mask for 30 minutes.
- To know and carry out the rules of personal and public hygiene.[117]

The hygiene component referred to general cleanliness, knowledge of nutrition, and also the broad notion of combating 'unhealthy' or deviant practices, such as drunkenness, delinquency, prostitution, religiosity, anti-social behaviour, intellectual dissidence, etc.

In 1925, the Party had already stated the role of physical culture in the journal *Izvestia Tsentralnogo Komiteta*. ' Physical Culture should not be confined merely to physical exercises in the form of sport, gymnastics, motor activities and so on; it should embrace both the public and personal hygiene of work and everyday life, the use of the forces of nature, and a proper regime of work and leisure.'[118]

It is important to note at this point that the Soviet system did not simply fetishise healthy bodies; it encouraged a healthy way of life and promoted ways to achieve this goal. This is especially important in the context of industrialisation and cultural changes incurred by peasants having to adapt to life in crammed urban living quarters, from bug infested country cottages. The state concern over functions of the body was also the subject of a series of hygiene campaigns in which artists, such as Deineka and Mayakovsky, had participated by designing posters during the twenties.[119]

From 1929, daily radio broadcasts encouraged individual Soviet citizens to partake, from their own home, in communal exercise, along with thousands of workers throughout the land: 'Loud-speakers wake Soviet workers. 'Good Morning Comrades! Let us do our morning exercise,' The loudspeaker gaily greets him. In every worker's

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[117] Riordan, p. 414.

[118] July 20, 1925. Quoted by Riordan, p. 147.

[119] For example, in the poem 'Aloud and Straight' (1930) Mayakovsky referred to himself as a 'bard of boiled water.' He was probably alluding to his previous involvement in a campaign aiming at convincing the population of the health benefits of

family, physical exercise is performed to the dictation of the loudspeaker before departure from work'[120] By 1934 physical culture and sport had invaded dormitories and factories.

Production gymnastics, introduced in 1931, was one of the major areas of research, which occupied the numerous Soviet institutes of physical culture. This was the 'science' of using physical exercise rationally to improve productivity, cut down absenteeism through sickness and injury, reduce fatigue, etc. This did not imply a quantitative, but rather a qualitative change in work habit. This clearly relates to the question of stakhanovism, as earlier defined. A survey conducted in 1932-34 with the participation of 70,000 employees showed that production gymnastics not only improved efficiency, but also reduced industrial disease. In the Moscow factories of Krasny Triugolnik and Tryokhgornaya Manufaktura, production was increased by 2.8% and 2.1% respectively. Some Leningrad factories advertised improvement of over 6%. This caused *Pravda* to conclude on July 24, 1934 that 'it has been proved in practice what an enormous benefit physical culture can be in improving productivity and in implanting cultured methods of work in production.'[121]

While during the twenties, passive spectatorship had been discouraged, during the thirties spectator sports (with the Stalinist emphasis on festivals and mass celebration) emerged as a favoured distraction. Football was extremely popular, as well as hockey and other sports. Physical culture parades, organised by the Committee for Artistic Affairs, featured *komsomols* and young workers from various unions. The *Metrostroy* always participated in such events. The parades included carefully planned choregraphies and floats adorned with live, mobile, muscled ornaments. The May Day Red Square sport display was instituted in 1931. In 1933, it included 105,000 participants.[122]

In *Sports and Soviet Society*, James Riordan argues that no other activity could be more effective in uniting more people than physical culture, across age, social background, sex, etc. He concludes that sport (spectator sports, as well as the participation in sporting events) was the greatest socialisation tool from which the government benefited. This is because through physical culture common knowledge, shared experiences and an aesthetic view of the new state of affairs, were created in a

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boiling water before drinking it. In *Land of the Soviets in Verses and Prose*, tome 1, Moscow: Progress, 1982, pp. 30-39.

[120] *USSR in Construction*, 7-8 (1934), n. p.

[121] Riordan, p. 147-148.

[122] In 1939, July 18 was declared *Fizkultura* Day, a holiday dedicated exclusively to physical culture and sport.

context that did not seem to be political. The exaltation of leisure indicated that, after the social and economical stress of the First Five-Year Plan, life had indeed become better, and merrier.

> Physical culture and sport in a socialist society have a number of social functions; they contribute to a harmonious personality, socialisation and integration, to political, moral, mental and aesthetic education, health protection, development of people's physical capabilities, accumulation and transmission of knowledge and experience in motor activity, rational utilisation of free time...[123]

Indeed, physical culture was considered to be on par with mental culture. The idea of a healthy body being linked to high moral and intellectual standards is not a new one. In representation, it was certainly pervasive in classically inspired art, at the French Academy, for example. However, the Stalinist body was not meant to be transparent to the soul. Soul, mind and body needed to be improved simultaneously in order to culminate into the 'new one.' They were seen as equally necessary components of the Soviet citizen, undermining the traditional mind over body hierarchy.

Tenth mosaic; To the planes!

In her memoirs, Tatyana Fedorova recalls her favourite *Komsomol* slogan of the thirties: 'To the planes!' The *Metrostroy* aviation club, just as several other civilian clubs, was given four U-2s 'small as grasshoppers,' and three gliders, which Fedorova was able to use to gain air proficiency.[124]

Sport gliding was officially born in 1923, with the first All-Union Gliding Trials held in the Crimean city of Koktebel, subsequently renamed Planerskoe, from the Russian *planer*, glider. The first national gliding records were then set. As with sport parachuting, the development of gliding was linked to the activities of paramilitary organs such as Osoaviakhim. In fact, in 1934, Osoaviakhim established the title of Master Glider Pilot of the USSR. In 1936, the organisation was reported to supervise 150 aeroclubs, with 8,000 members having gained certificates on powered aircraft and 2,000 on gliders. The Osoaviakhim membership for that year was estimated at 13 million.[125]

The tenth mosaic represents three colourful and delicate planes. At least two of them are gliders, unpowered aircraft heavier than air. During the thirties, they were launched in different ways. Most commonly, a steel shock chord was used, and the glider

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[123] N. I. Ponomorev, 'Sport i obshchestvo' in *Teoriia i Praktika Fizicheskoi Kul'tury*, 6 (1973), p. 72.
[124] Fedorova in Reznichenko (ed.), p. 147.
[125] Andersson, p. 61.

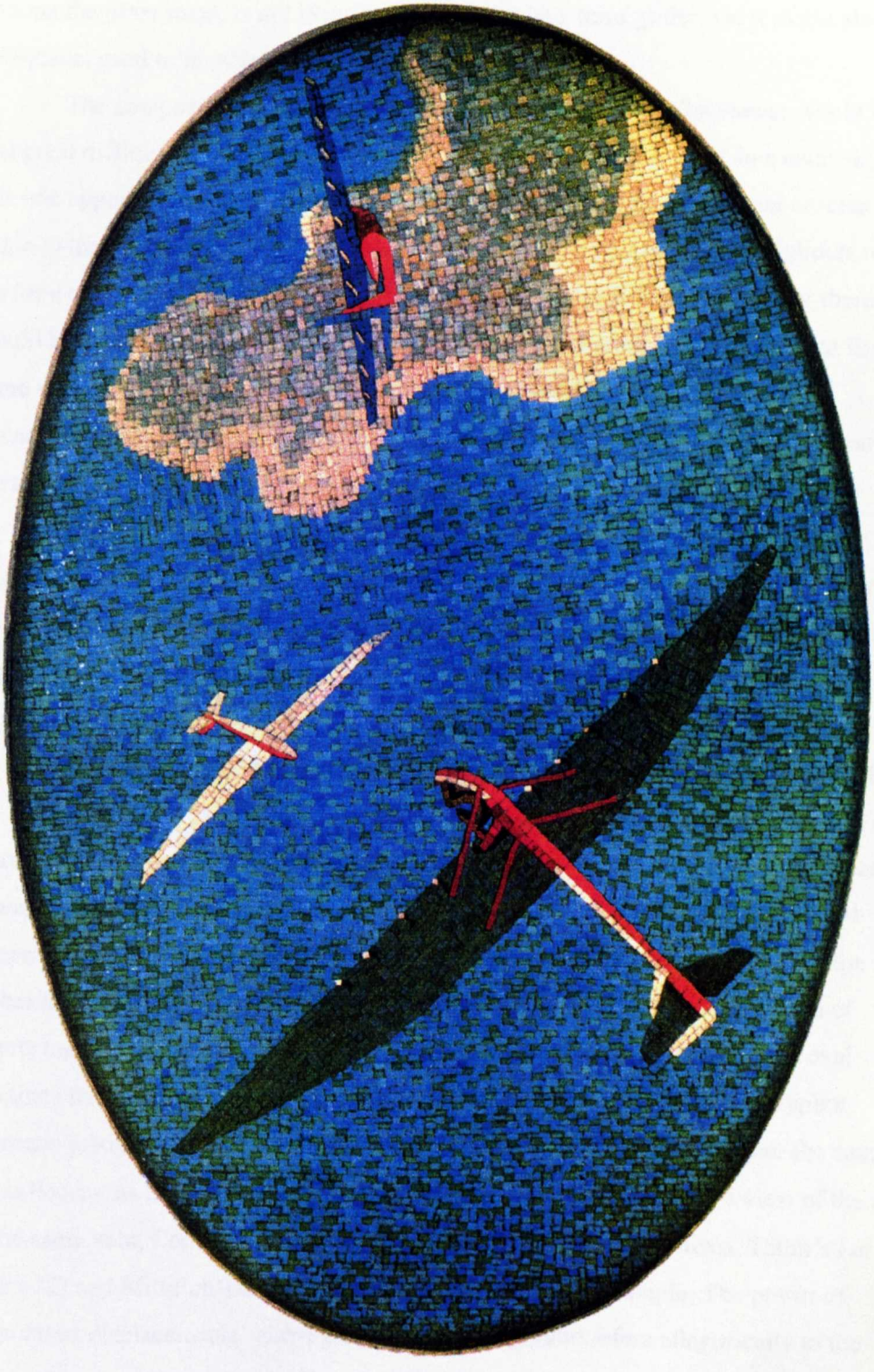

Fig. 33. Tenth mosaic

was launched like a toy from a slingshot. By 1931, Soviet pilots had mastered the method of launching a glider by towing it behind a powered aircraft. This method was mostly used for performance purposes, either in competition or during public celebration aviation displays. The two red and blue aircraft are clearly gliders. The white and red one, on the other hand, is not identifiable. It might be a third glider, yet it might also be a tow-plane, used to launch gliders.

The composition of this mosaic is extremely confusing. The viewer would have had great difficulty to orient her body in relation to the image. Indeed, in a calm sky, as this one appears to be, a glider's flight path would follow a line of constant descent at an angle to the horizon, the gliding angle. If there were rising air currents, the gliders might fly for a certain distance without loosing altitude, or perhaps even ascend. But there would be some continuity in the flight possibilities of different gliders subject to the same wind conditions. The typical viewer would have been able to observe this phenomenon in public displays or read about it in a number of journal articles throughout the thirties.

But in the mosaic, the three planes fly in conflicting directions, at different angles, as if instead of being weighed down by gravity, they had subjected it to their own will. Indeed, the representation of the three planes and a cloud is anarchic. It looks like a Suprematist display of colourful intersecting rectangles rather than any naturalistic depiction of gliders in the sky.

In *Konets Utopii*, A. Morozov reproduces this mosaic, which he uses to explain the following point. The rhetoric of the hero is pervasive in all the Metro stations. Yet, there is a more important symbolic level, that of 'the materialisation of the supernatural power of the New Russian worker [...] the ability of impetuous displacements - and where: in the depths of the earth!'[126] But movement is more than a metaphor for the global reconstruction of the world. Indeed, being transported downward for tens of meters underground, gliding along escalators, and then seeing the sky through oval openings framed by stainless steel columns exceeds the Socialist Realist metaphor. Morozov justly proposes that this draws on the utopian dreams of the turn of the century. Glass houses, as in Chernishevsky's *What is to be done?*, offered such a view of the sky. In the same vein, Constructivist artists built unpowered flying machines, Tatlin's *Letatlin* (1929-31) and Miturich's amphibian *Volnovik* of 1931, for example. The power of 'impetuous displacements' aboveground and underground refers allegorically to the fictional devices created by the Futurists, not directly as in a metaphor.

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[126] Morozov, p. 88. The author erroneously dates Mayakovskya 1938-39 instead of 1937-38.

Similarly, in the aforementioned 1938 musical film comedy *Tsirk*, performers were transformed into 'old-fashioned' cyborgs by metallic prosthetic wings and unisex silvery outfits. They strapped on shiny steel wings and were then launched, shot upward from canons, and glided around in the circus tent. This 'falling upward,' the slingshot effect experienced by the glider, is part of the panoply of newly possible uses of bodies, just as the possibility of being suspended in mid-air, without the use of a motor.

The Stalinist body seeking leisure was entertained in all kinds of new ways. New imagery of leisure had evolved focusing on sports, and often localised in the sky. An illustration of this phenomenon was printed in the humoristic journal *Krokodil*. The scene of the representation is a sporting event...a football game. The black and white line drawing represents a sport stadium overflowing with spectators. A round football and two bodies leap up (fly), emerging from the lower frame. A crowd of spectators view the game from above, their bodies comfortably seated in biplanes, gliders and nacelles, or dangling from parachutes, aeroplane wings and umbrellas.[127]

Two thousand glider's certificates had been granted by 1936, mostly in the Moscow region. Because of its lower cost and relative availability, gliding, as a flying method, somehow fulfilled the Futurist dream of democratised flight. This is the dream of the cyborg, explored by Futurist and Constructivist artists. A further example of this presence of the Futurist ideal in the Stalinist world is related to the song 'Aviators' March.' Written in 1920 by Pavel German and Yuly Khait, the song borrows Futurist, perhaps Mayakovskyan imagery. It was revived in the thirties and became extremely popular among the flying *komsomols*. The airforce later adopted it as its anthem:

> We were born to make fairy tales come true,
> To conquer the distances and space
> Our minds made steel wings for our hands
> And throbbing engines take the place of our hearts. [128]

Eleventh mosaic; Storming the sky

The eleventh mosaic depicts four parachutists inserted in a cobalt blue sky. The tiny parachutists, in dark blue outfits, nearly disappear against the background. Eight fully extended parachutes occupy most of the representational space, and provide the viewer with a colourful display of circular shapes. Each jumper holds two parachutes of yellow,

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[127] *Krokodil*, 23 (1934), p. 7.
[128] Pavel German and Yuly Khait, 'Aviator's March,' in Von Geldern and Stites (eds), p. 257-58.

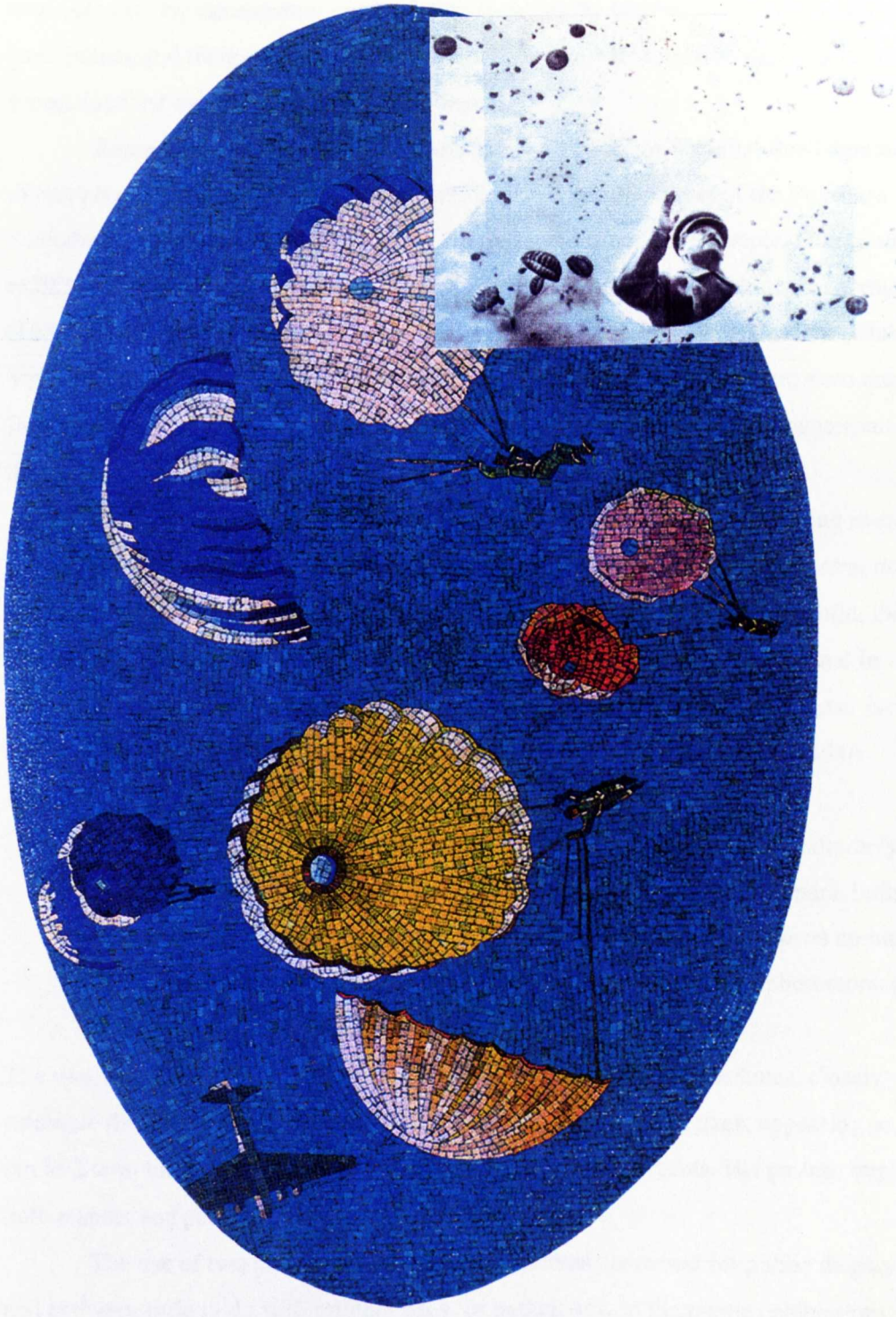

Fig. 34. Eleventh mosaic
Fig. 35. Aviation Day display from *USSR in Construction*, (12) 1935

blue or pink cloth. A faraway four-engine plane is about to exit the frame. This is unequivocally a sport jump made for demonstration purposes. The subject of the image is made obvious by the apparent contradiction between the bomber, which released the four parachutists and their colourful contraptions. The skydivers might be part of a larger group, blocked out by the mosaic's oval frame.

Representations of aviation demonstrations abound in Socialist Realist paintings of this period, Svarog's aforementioned 1937 'Stalin and Members of the Politburo Attending a Celebration of Aviation at Tushino Aerodrome,' for example. One could also refer to the very similar 'Leaders of the Party and Government at Tushino Aerodrome' (1937) by the same artist, or to the more impressionistic 'A Parachute Descent (Blue Variant),' painted in 1932 by Aleksandr Drevin. Such representations were even more frequent in the popular press. The colourful skydiving displays were the counterpart of the military displays, as described by Vladimir Stavsky (see fifth mosaic).

One of the most striking mass media representations of the parachuting event is the elaborate pop-out centrefold of the December 1935 issue of *USSR in Construction* designed by the artists Rodchenko and Stepanova. According to Victor Margolin, the necessary *pliage* was so complicated that it delayed the apparition of the journal in Soviet kiosks by a month. International subscribers received their end of the year issue during the second month of the following year. This issue is entirely dedicated to Aviation Day.

> In the centre of the issue Rodchenko and Stepanova introduced an extremely complex foldout section that moves from two triangular images of parachutists to an interior diamond celebrating four women jumpers. This then opens up into a large square where a photograph of Stalin is superimposed on a photomontage of a sky filled with parachutes.[129]

The tiny, butterfly-like sky pedestrians, each dangling from two parachutes, closely resemble those in the Mayakovskaya mosaic. At the centre of the page, appearing in a circle, Stalin looks up to the sky waving upward to the parachutists. His gesture implies both respect and paternal affection.

The use of two parachutes at once was obviously reserved for public displays, and had very little to do with military uses for parachutes. In the public celebrations, it created a peculiar visual effect. On the one hand, it suggested a larger than the actual number of parachutists wandering in the sky. On the other hand, the jumpers seemed to

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[129] Victor Margolin, *The struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitsky, Moholy-Nagy 1917-1946*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 193.

be reproducing through fission, as single-cell organisms do, as if the 'new one' could engender a whole population by self-duplication.

The previous generation of Russians had stormed the Winter Palace in 1917, and appropriated a new space in order to engender a new life. The Soviet youth, according to the same issue of *USSR in Construction*, was involved in a similar activity:

> The youth of the Soviet Union, *following the daring young Communists, enthralled by their example, have stormed the sky* in aeroplanes, gliders, and parachutes. No sky except that of the Soviet Union knows such crowds of 'sky pedestrians' as we see at our aviation festivals [...] the parachutists are written about, spoken about and thought about so much because their dizzy but cool-headed leaps are a reflection of our Stalinist striving forward, our urge to soar higher, our desire to widen the horizon of life, to make it brighter, bigger and more joyous. 'Life has become better, comrades. Life has become more joyous.' These words of comrade Stalin have already become a proverb of the whole people. It has become better and more joyous to live, and the Soviet youth want to dare, to work, to conquer space and time, to display the force which each one feels within himself.[130]

In the late thirties, the number of bodies having access to flight, and the currency of images representing them, indicates the process of normalisation of the previously uncanny juxtaposition of human bodies and sky. This corresponds to Henri Lefebvre's aforementioned concept of everyday life understood not as the banal, the natural or the ordinary, but rather as the typical exception. This definition is useful at this point, since parachuting and flying had not yet been naturalised *per se*, however, because of their constant presence in representation, they were in the process of slowly becoming myth. On the one hand, the uncanny quality of parachuting was stressed in Stalinist propaganda, as extravagant, unforeseen future possibilities, becoming a part of everyday life. On the other hand, parachuting was considered typical in Stalinist society. First because it consisted in a 'purely Soviet' activity, devised by the 'new one' performing self-improvement, an exclusively Soviet mode of being. Secondly, because it has entered *tipazh*, as an attribute corresponding loosely to certain ideas about youth, health, courage, and other qualities associated with the body of the 'new one.' Even if amateur parachutists were not in the majority, they were set as examples to be emulated, models according to which one should transform one's own body. This idea was reinforced in films, biographies, toys, photographs, public displays, etc.

Twelth mosaic; A whole mountain chain of achievements

The association between physical culture and the military was obvious throughout the thirties. The 'Ready for Work and Defence' slogan was not ambiguous at all. It corresponded to Stalin's 1934 statement that: 'We must rear a new generation of workers, healthy, cheerful, capable of increasing the power of the Soviet land and defend it with their might and main against attacks of the enemy'[131] This conception of physical culture gained momentum in the pre-war years. In fact, the army demanded that the servicemen and women should 'pursue a sport regularly and that the Red Army should become a mass school of physical education.'[132] Outside the Red Army, a reserve was unofficially being trained around paramilitary sport groups, mostly under the patronage of the Central House of the Red Army (TsDKA) and the civil organisation Osoaviakhim.

This interest in sport was reflected even in leadership (at least in representation), as Isaak Brodsky's 'The People's Commissar for Defence, Marshal of the Soviet Union Kliment Voroshilov, Out Skiing' (1937) testifies. This painting, and similar images, rendered Voroshilov more convincing when he stated:

> I make the task of physical culture in the Red Army in the future a determined improvement of its quality, and I demand not only exemplary organisation of physical culture but high technical results in every field of sport.[133]

By January 1935, 85% of all servicemen were said to have passed their GTO-1 test. A few sports were dominated by the army, simply because they had more access to the facilities. Some of these activities included parachuting, gliding, mountain climbing, horseback riding, shooting and ski jumping. But these were, by no means, exclusive to the military forces. Indeed, the clubs of prominent unions (the *Metrostroy*, for example) possessed such facilities. Larger cities were also equipped with major sporting installations in their park. The parachuting tower in Moscow's Gorky Park is an example of this, as well as the ski jumping ramps, which were built in many large northern cities, such as Moscow and Leningrad.

This introduces a brief discussion of the twelfth mosaic. The image depicts a skier flying in a triumphal jump. She wears white mittens on her hands stretched high above her head. She is clad in a bright red two-piece ski suit. Her skis point in a direction

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[130] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n.p. Emphasis added.
[131] *USSR in Construction*, 7-8 (1934), n. p.
[132] Riordan, p. 139.
[133] Quoted in *USSR in Construction*, 7-8 (1934), n. p.

Fig. 36. '1935 Youth Specimens,' caricature from *Krokodil*, (3) 1935
Fig. 37. Twelfth mosaic

parallel to her arms. The top branches of two fir trees pierce the side of the mosaic and provide the representation with an orientation and a measure of the height for the still ascending figure. A small blue and pink cloud behind her indicates that the sun is about to set. Over the red suit, on her chest, she wears a white tank, as athletes do during a competition. It is inscribed with a bright, large, red, suggestive '**1**.' The red '**1**' echoes her own red stretched out body. She *is* the challenger in the socialist competition; she *is* the record-breaker, the best one, the first one, the 'new one.'

If during the twenties, casual physical culture had dominated, in the thirties competitive sports grew in importance: record breaking became the avowed goal of many physical culture events. In this context, the competitive individual emerged from the mass of citizens enjoying routine physical activity. Throughout the thirties, competitive events, the 'Spartakiads,' were organised on a regular basis. Individuals or groups, such as factories, towns, etc., could win medals, certificates, banners and other prizes.

In 1934, the title of 'Merited Master of Sport of the USSR' was instituted. This honour echoed the other 'Merited Master' titles in other fields brought into existence throughout the thirties: Merited Artits, Merited Teacher, Master of Parachuting, etc. Along with the title, money was awarded; 20 rubles supplemented the athlete's salary (compared with a more modest 10 rubles for Merited Teachers). The title was granted to record-setters and competition winners. This phenomenon testifies to a difficult tension between the harbouring of mass participation and the development of a professional elite.

In 1935 in the paper *Krasny Sport* protested: 'We are not against prize-giving as such, but we are against abuse and perversions... We have definitely established the importance of certificates and medals, and they should be the major, *if not the only,* proper sports honours awards.'[134] This signals a whole debate, similar to the one sparked up by the privileges awarded to stakhanovites, which threatened the equality of all citizens in the Soviet Union. For many, the training of remunerated sport stars was contradictory to the democratic goals of the Revolution.

Two years after the publication of the *Krasny Sport* article, for the first time ever, the Order of Lenin (the highest Soviet award) was given to athletes. Some athletes were then taken out of production and admitted into full-time training facilities. This measure defied a resolution by the Moscow Committee of Physical Culture and Sports Affairs, issued in January 1937, specifically prohibiting payment to athletes. Officially, only coaches, instructors and sport administrators could make sport a full-time occupation. Nevertheless, illegal assistance or 'fake jobs' were given to athletes in order to liberate them from their workload. 'Half-trained athletes should not receive extra

money for fictional 'work,' they should not receive subsidies and all manner of gifts for success in competition. That is a bourgeois practice that has crept in Soviet sport.'[135] Testimonies given by former sports officials from the thirties claim that athletes lived well on gifts and bonuses alone.[136] Most 'professional' athletes gravitated around the Red Army, which possessed a certain degree of independence from the Central Committee.

In essence, the stakhanovite, the parachutist, the athlete, were of the same make. They were crafted by the official discourse of the late thirties, and embodied its contradictions. These incarnations would have been impossible 10 years earlier. A 1935 caricature exemplifies the rhetorical similarity between different kinds of 'new ones:' a skier, flying in mid-air (just as the one in this mosaic) shakes the hand of a parachutist. 'I'm busy right now. But let's meet later at the workers' club for a chat.'[137] In 1937, Trotsky also observed the fraternity of the new achievements:

> All sorts of athletic sports developed tumultuously in the army and around it. Among the workers, officials and students, the badges of distinction for marksmanship enjoyed a great popularity. In the winter months, skis gave the regiment a hitherto unknown mobility. Startling successes were achieved in the sphere of parachute jumping, gliding and aviation. The arctic flights and flights into the stratosphere are known to everybody. These high points speak for *a whole mountain chain of achievements.*[138]

This correspondence in achievements also meant that, below the apparently homogenous shell of each incarnation, lay similar resistance, the same kind of ambiguity. Here are a few examples: Kronstadt sailors were both intrinsically revolutionary and a symbol of counter-revolutionary activity; bourgeois values were inherent to Soviet professional sport, once it was remunerated; since 1936, peasants were accepted as equal to workers, yet their culture and appearance needed to be erased; the Stalinist *komsomols* held on to cyborg features, etc. These contradictions were at the heart of body politics in the thirties, in the empirical world as in representation.

Socialist Realism was obsessed with bodies. This fetish might be symptomatic of severe bodily traumas experienced by the population in the previous years: the civil war, famines, the purges, etc. The body was also seen as the privileged site for social transformation. But Deineka's representations do not correspond to a unified canon for

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[134] *Krasny Sport*, October 27 (1935), quoted by Riordan, p. 132. Emphasis added.
[135] *Krasny Sport*, 5 (1930), quoted by Riordan, p. 133.
[136] Riordan, p. 134.
[137] *Krokodil*, 3 (1935), p. 5.

the representation of bodies. They do not strictly adhere to the Stalinist parameters of corporeality hinted to in different propaganda objects. The viewer could, nevertheless, identify with the images if she felt they hailed her. If the narrative in Mayakovskaya somehow coresponded to her aspirations, she could easily project (in a leap of faith) her gender, her race, her age, etc. onto the representation, and become the inscriptive subject of the Socialist Realist representation. Otherwise, she would draw on memories of a near past and saturate the propaganda with legitimate fears triggered by conspicuous contradictions. Because of the absence of a visual canon, the viewer carried an important responsibility in the (mis) reading of Stalinist narratives.

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[138] Trostky, *The Revolution* ,p. 195. Emphasis added.

Chapter Three

Night; Stalinist Space

I admit to being incapable of interesting myself in the beauty of a place, if there are no people in it.
Roland Barthes[1]

Can a social group be expected to recognise itself in a space merely because that space is held up before it like a mirror? Certainly not.
Henri Lefebvre[2]

Explain to all how to use the *Metropoliten*. It brings us comfort and culture, it deserves to be treated in the same way.
I. E. Katsen[3]

The platform is saturated with dozens of heads speaking in different voices. The louder ones resemble the self-assured voices of engineers, as they resonate in the films of the late thirties. There is an echo. Then, the friction sounds of metal on metal, and wind blowing through the station announce the decelerating train.[4] Children's hair flies about, the mass of users shivers, yet they do not cease their humming. The whole scene is bathed in artificial light. There is a special atmosphere in Mayakovskaya. Indeed, the monumental qualities of the station are not solely plastic; they are not exclusively experienced through vision. Monumental spaces are most often endowed with acoustic and other sensory properties; they channel air, as well as guide the movement of bodies. If they did not possess such qualities, their monumentality might, in itself, be devalued.

In the first chapter, the allegorical structure of Stalinist art of the late thirties was discussed. The Stalinist image most often functions as an 'inverted allegory;' the discursive source of this allegory is future, it is not located in an indeterminate past. This means that a work of art refers to a future always deferred by the process of being represented. This allegorical structure, as it appears in Dushkin's architectural work and Deineka's mosaics, is further complicated by the discourse of monumentality, and of

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[1] Roland Barthes, *Incidents*, Paris: Seuil, 1987, p. 65.
[2] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 417.
[3] I. E. Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen Znat' Passazhir Metropolitena*, Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1935, p. 25. This is the user's guide published and distributed for the inauguration of the *Metropoliten* in 1935.
[4] 'The speed of the *Metropoliten* trains can reach 60 km/hour, and their average speed is 35 km/hour. However, since the stations are near one another, and the train is held at each station for half a minute for the passengers to embark and disembark, the travel speed is 26.5 km/hour.' Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, pp. 14-15.

constructed space. This chapter will outline concepts of space prevalent in the thirties. Loosely following the general matrix developed by Henri Lefebvre for the analysis of a Western capitalist spatiality, this section will attempt to draft possible parameters for understanding the social, mental and material space constructed in the Soviet thirties. This analysis simultaneously pursues different objectives. It should define how constructed monumental space was produced and consumed both by the government that commissioned it, and its users; establish links between Mayakovskaya and other projects, which participated in the construction of *novaya Moskva*, the new Moscow; and, finally, discuss specific spatial issues illustrated by Deineka's mosaic cycle.

Again, the general concept of a gap existing between discourse and every day life, between theory and practice, will be addressed. As in the previous chapters, priority will be given to the mental over the physical. This might seem problematic in a chapter devoted more specifically to space. Even though the material, architectural and structural components of Mayakovskaya will occupy a cardinal position in this analysis, it is the construction of space within the sphere of meaning, which will dominate the discussion. Space, just like the body, is constructed within knowledge and ideology, and constantly re-inscribed through its interaction with all kinds of signs and bodies, through perception.

This reflection on the thirties, and the recently broadened general access of the Soviet proletariat to public spaces, brings forth the question of what public places are, and what relations they maintain with their users. Public spaces never are places of 'democracy' unaccountable to general political or social trends, as some would have us believe today.[5] They are sites where meaning is created and enacted materially in constant but uneven interrelation between material space, architects, engineers, ideologues, politicians, artists, and, of course, users who bring their own imaginary identity into the whole process. In this light, the main difference between late capitalist space and that of Stalin's time is that the latter was never hidden behind the illusionary gloss of democracy. Public space, under Stalin, was understood by all such as it was, and was deemed necessary to be just that: a 'space of representation.'

Henri Lefebvre suggests that 'the reading of a space that has been manufactured with readability in mind amounts to a sort of pleonasm - that of pure transparency.'[6] His perceptive observation of the capitalist space of representation does not correspond to Socialist Realist space, where readability was the avowed ultimate goal, and where the public was perfectly aware of the construction. Viewers from the Stalinist era were

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[5] Rosalyn Deutsche explores the current debate about public art and public spaces in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996.
[6] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p.313.

presumably so conscious of the syntactic character of the new art and space, that transparency could never, and should never, have been achieved.[7] This opacity becomes obvious with regards to monumental spaces, which in Stalinist Russia self-consciously revealed their relation to ideology, as spaces of rituals (parades, meetings, etc.), or sites decorated by attributes of the regime, such as statues of Lenin, Marx or Engels, red flags, five-pointed stars, hammers and sickles, etc.[8] Monumental spaces were a crucial topic of public and artistic debate in the thirties when the government decided to use space as a privileged means to transform Soviet bodies, as well as the attitudes and habits of the population in the USSR. As the sculptor Ivan Shadr marvelled, the Soviet attitude to space provided artists with great opportunities.

> Never in the history of humanity has there been such a powerful concentration of means and forces united in the hand of planners. Never in the history of humanity has life set for architects, sculptors and painters, such a full table of political and artistic challenges, as our great homeland gives us. Only in our country have such powerful material-technical possibilities been given to architects, sculptors and painters, to realise their projects.[9]

Monumental spaces of the thirties were constructed with the explicit goal to insert the future into the present. They were meant to provide access, through vision and imagination, to an always-deferred spatiality. Indeed, Stalinist representations, as inverted allegories, centred knowledge on a focal point of social desire. However, in opposition to utopia, monumental spaces were real spaces carrying contradictions emerging from existing social and spatial relations. This is why socialist monumental space always gave priority to the known over the lived, where contradictions are inevitable. This signifies that rhetorical aspects, whether structural or ornamental, were exacerbated and took precedence over function, as opposed to Constructivist conceptions of space of the 1910s and twenties, which prioritised use.[10]

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[7] Journals and papers of the period constantly reminded users of the constructed, ideological nature of space. Articles about the rebuilding of Moscow, which was conducted in the thirties, served this purpose. They described how the previous city incarnated bourgeois values, and therefore how a socialist space needed to be conceived and constructed for the 'first socialist capital.'

[8] The hammer and sickle emerged as the official emblem of the Russian Socialist Republic in 1918.

[9] Ivan Shadr, 'Velikie Dostizheniia' (1937), in Ivan Shadr, *Shadr*, Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo, 1978, p. 138.

[10] About Constructivist urban planning theories and architecture, see Anatole Kopp, *Town and Revolution: Soviet Architecture and City Planning 1917-1935*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1970.

An *anekdot* from that period might illustrate the tension felt in the thirties about the conflict between official discourse on space and the users' experience of space. During a conference on the reconstruction of Kharkov as a model socialist city, engineers and architects depicted 'state of the art' living facilities that were being erected in the Ukrainian city, the transport infrastructure and leisure facilities to the gathered crowd. A man stands up and protests: 'I'm sorry citizens, but I am from Kharkov, I have walked the streets of that city and I'm not aware of anything you've described.' An engineer replies: 'Then maybe you should spend more time reading the papers and less time walking around.'

Most scholarly studies describing this period tend to stress the rhetorical, the ideology of the Party, over all other aspects of urban planning and architecture, uncritically recreating the Stalinist discourse, within which this space evolved. This suggests a total victory of space over its users and their spatial practices. This chapter proposes that spatial practice often deviates from official discourse of /on space. Previous spaces and daily spatial practices can be co-opted or hidden, elements from these spaces nevertheless persist. In fact, the habits of consumption of space by its users obsessively creep back into the re-created space, preventing any site from becoming a pure mental space... a pure space of discourse. Space constantly shifts from mental to social to physical and back again. Like the body, space is an intricate construction, which often takes the aspect of the palimpsest.

Before the analysis proceeds, it is indispensable to define three terms borrowed from Henri Lefebvre: spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. Lefebvre's 'spatial triad' will be used to discuss the specific site of the Mayakovskaya station, which was a new type of space in Russia during the thirties. Unlike the *Kremlin*, merchant houses or streets that were used before the Revolution, Mayakovskaya had no pre-Revolutionary history. The Metro station produced a new spatial function for Soviet citizens. It hosted a mode of transport that could only be linked to the Soviet period, for the Russian user.[11] In fact, the first stations of the Moscow *Metropoliten* opened for exploitation during the Second Five-Year Plan. It is

[11] The first underground railway system used to transport large numbers of passengers within an urban area was inaugurated in London on January 10, 1863. It used steam locomotives that burned coke and later coal. The first electric underground railway was opened in 1890, also in London. Many other European, American and Asian cities followed London's lead. Underground railways, which predate the Moscow Metro are: Budapest (1896); Paris (1898); Boston (1897); New York (1904); Philadelphia (1907); Buenos Aires (1913); Tokyo (1927), Kyoto (1931) and Osaka (1933). Since WWII, several subway systems were constructed in large cities around the world.

this important feature, which is reflected in the 1935 slogan: 'We had no Metro [before the Revolution], now we have one!'

1. Spatial practice:

> *Spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*.[12]

More concretely, this is the *lived,* or the daily facet of spatiality. It corresponds to the political and social uses of a site, the *de facto* production and the consumption of a given space. In the first instance, a more or less 'immediate' relationship with the modes of production is assumed within a political/economic system, i.e. Stalinist planned economy during the first two Five-Year Plans. It further implies a more 'mediate' relation with users of the space, linked to their specific culture, religious beliefs, social background, education level, gender, etc.

Spatial practices related to Mayakovskaya therefore include the building process of the station by hundreds of workers organised in brigades; the excavation of streets; the workers involved in its exploitation starting in 1938; the practical role played by the Metro in the general transport infrastructure (i.e. how it linked different urban zones, how it provided access to adjacent sites such as Mayakovsky Square, the Meyerkhold Theatre, the Akvarium Gardens, etc.); the role the Metro project played in the economy. Spatial practices also include how bodies are guided; where certain trajectories are encouraged; where some movements are made impossible. On the other hand, they encompass several more subjective issues of comfort and accessibility; of the quality of service performed by/within the site; of how the Metro answered certain urban needs; of how it contributed to general quality of life; of how it responded to safety concerns, etc. This is where habits and memory play a major role in letting users accept, reject or co-opt a space. This is where the absence or presence of social consensus is felt, where it can therefore eventually be created. It is indeed part of the argument developed in this study that Stalinist culture was eventually created through more or less general acceptance and adherence of spatial practices, rather than by coercion.

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[12] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 33.

2. Representations of space

> *Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs [...][13]

This aspect could be termed the *conceived.* It implies both ideology and structure. In his analysis of capitalist spatiality, Henri Lefebvre would argue that this facet is designed to conceal itself. The conceived is the realm of engineers, urban planners, politicians and social engineers. It differs from the lived, which is experienced through use. The conceived and the lived can obviously be one and the same on some occasions.

The conceived relates to material structures, their strategic elaboration and their ideological implications. For example, the depth of Mayakovskaya, the deepest station in the network at the time of its inauguration, was achieved by the innovative use of a steel structure and elliptical formations on the ceiling of the station. These structural features carry implications in terms of science and technology (assumptions about what is materially possible), and they connote power (structural strength as well as symbolic power; technological, social and political progress; access and exclusion to the space). This is to say that Mayakovskaya was at least partly determined by 'recognised power,' by the mechanisms of central planning managed by the Stalinist government. Furthermore, as Lefebvre notes, representations of space set up a certain kind of 'official' truth. 'For those who accept the [spatial] practice of which [the representation of space] is a part, it is indistinguishable from knowledge.'[14] Of course, in the case of Mayakovskaya, this affirmation is destabilised by the aforementioned lack of cohesion in the 1930s spatial practices.

Stalinist representations of space are echoed in a multitude of popular slogans. In pointing to the pro-active, positive attitude of the regime toward the production of these spaces, the slogans impede on any possibility of transparency in the first few years of the exploitation of the Metro:

- We're building the best Metro in the world!;
- The first proletarian city deserves an exemplary transport system!;
- All Moscow built the Metro!;
- All the country built the Metro!
- We had no Metro, now we have one!

This category of the conceived is where ideology mainly resides. The mosaics and the stainless steel did not function simply as decorations but as windows open to, and

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[13] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 33.
[14] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 9.

contributing to, meaning. They signified national pride, community spirit, pride in Socialist Realist art and architecture, access to work and culture, etc.

3. Representational spaces

> *Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces).[15]

This is the perceived aspect of space. By focusing on this feature, the originality of the architectural structure designed by Dushkin is very noticeable: the high ceilings, the columns of crimson marble and stainless steel, the rhythm in the space created by the columns, the arcs and the depth, as well as the technology, which made all this possible. One can appreciate Deineka's mosaics depicting actions located in the sky. The history of the materials, the history of technology and the history of style are included in this category. In terms of representational spaces, Dushkin and Deineka play equal roles. Indeed, signs produced within different practices interact freely in representational spaces.[16]

Representational spaces are the realm of artist, architects and philosophers. They can best embody utopias and inverted allegories. These spaces simultaneously provide the site where codes acquire their significance. They can unfold within the context of a vast signifying entity, a work of art, an architectural space, a planned city, and the Mayakovskaya Metro station. Representational spaces are the locus of official propaganda (itself a sign, as well as a producer of signs), and the 'clandestine' referred to by Lefebvre (dystopias, works of art that do not fit the Socialist Realist requirements, works that had never left the censor's office). The clandestine aspect, in Soviet Russia of the thirties, left relatively few traces in terms of representational spaces, for causes of repression, later destruction of works and the specific organisation of the institutions, which commissioned representational spaces, such as unions and planning committees.

In the late thirties, the clandestine features mainly within spatial practices. It is created and consumed through every day use of space. Obviously, these three facets of spatiality - the lived, the conceived and the perceived - overlap. They can often be indistinguishable.

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[15] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 33.

[16] This conception of intertextuality was developed in the previous chapters in relation to the work of the Russian semiotician V. Voloshinov.

A short history of space

Just like the body, space has a history. It is not the product of *a priori* categories, but rather the product of historical processes and representation. Every society produces its own spatiality. But, to paraphrase Marx, it does not produce it as it pleases. It does not produce it under circumstances chosen by itself, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.[17] Consequently, history leaves its mark, fragments or traces in the process of producing any given space.

When space is discussed, it must immediately be known what occupies that space and how it does so. Space cannot be considered in isolation; it would then be an empty and worthless abstraction. This is why Mayakovskaya has to be understood in its socio-political-cultural aspects, but also in accordance to the physical environment it is set in (the streets, the neighbourhood, the country) and with the movement that characterises it, its sounds, its users.

Assessing a culturally foreign space, for which the codes and the process of formation are unfamiliar, is fraught with serious complexities. For example, it is now difficult to fully understand the optimism and the terror, the atavisms, anachronisms and breaks imbedded in the spatial practices, the representations of space and the representational spaces of the Stalinist thirties. The process of building socialism, and an environment corresponding to its needs, belonged to a very specific society, the Stalinist world, which no longer exists. There are therefore multitudes of significant intersections which will elude spatial, as well as temporal, foreigners.

Is a methodical destruction of codes related to space possible? No. Traces of the former spatiality always remain: words, images, metaphors and practices. These survive beyond their space of origin, they interact with different spaces. During the thirties, three spaces coexisted with, and to various degrees participated in, the space being created by the Stalinist regime, through the General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow. They are the 'Euclidean' space, the 'Medieval' space[18] and the shattered space, which characterises the first years of the twentieth century.[19]

Of the three spaces, maybe the latter one was felt by the Stalinist regime as the most threatening, like many concepts shared by the Bolshevik government and Avant-Garde artists and architects. The regime seemed to accommodate itself quite well with Euclidean and Medieval conceptions of space. Indeed, through central planning and

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[17] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, London: Lawrence Wishart, 1984, p. 10.

[18] This does not refer to historical time, but rather to a specific attitude to space, which was sketchily described in Bakhtin's study of Rabelais.

[19] These terms will be defined in the following pages.

management of information and space, the Soviet Union in the thirties aimed to piece the unity back together, found in the Euclidean and Medieval conceptions of space, which was broken up in the years that preceded and accompanied the Revolution.

> The fact is that around 1910 a certain space was shattered. It was the space of common sense, of knowledge, of social practice, of political power [...] Euclidean and perspectivist space have disappeared as systems of reference, along with other former 'commonplaces' such as the town, history, paternity, the tonal system in music, traditional morality, and so forth. This was truly a crucial moment.[20]

Russian Avant-Garde artists participated actively in the destruction of rational space. Kazimir Malevich and his circle borrowed the faceted space of Cubism, and eventually entered a pictorial space inhabited by non-representational, coloured geometric forms, which appeared to float against an unlimited background, as aeroplanes or spacecraft. Malevich's texts on Suprematism open up a philosophical space inspired by mathematical studies into the fourth dimension. In Rayism (or Rayonism) Mikhail Larionov and Natalya Goncharova developed a scientific space, which was eventually populated exclusively by overlapping dynamic rays of light, bouncing off invisible objects. Within the concept of 'laboratory work,' El Lissitzky drew *prouns* (projects for the elaboration of the new). This was, in fact, the creation of a proto-design language. These forms were elaborated in the absence of specific future usage; they were to be eventually adapted to rising spatial needs. In 1930, Lissitzky stated that:

> Perspective bounded and enclosed space, but science has since brought about a fundamental revision. The rigidity of Euclidean Space has been annihilated by Lobachevsky, Gauss, and Riemann.[21]

Deineka's early works drew heavily from all these radical visual innovations. They all left their trace in his later representational spaces. However, in the opinion of several artists, the availability of new concepts of space had taken away from the subject the possibility to locate herself in space in the traditional way. This forced artists to shape a spatiality inscribed with new social, political and aesthetic needs. Avant-Garde artists, according to Lefebvre, did not invent a new world. They made the collapse of old points of reference visible.

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[20] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 25.

[21] El Lissitzky, 'A. and Pangeometry,' *Russia: An Architecture for World Revolution*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1970, p. 144.

Lefebvre argued that:

> Naturally, 'common sense' space, Euclidean space and perspectivist space did not disappear in a puff of smoke without leaving any trace in our consciousness, knowledge or educational methods [...][22]

This idea of persistence is useful with regards to the study of Socialist Realist spaces. Although in the thirties there was a concerted effort to form a coherent space (after the Avant-Garde's attempt to abolish it), artists, architects, space makers of all kinds, along with the users of space could never fully recover the unified space.

What kinds of spaces previously existed so that progress, aesthetics and philosophy could shatter them? The question is complex and would require a lengthy analysis. The first chapter in Victor Burgin's *In/different Space*, and Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* both touch upon a history of space. For the purpose of the present study, I will limit myself to describing a few features, which are particularly important for this study, or more specific to the Soviet experience of space.

Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*[23] is considered by many the most important tract on space for the history of Western culture. The basic principle of Euclidean geometry is that space extends in three dimensions, the user of this space, the eye, positioned at its centre, at the intersection of the three dimensions. This idea later championed by thinkers and artists of the Renaissance produced perspective as we know it; the conception of space as an empty box populated by objects; the shift from God to man as the organising principle of environment.

In modern Russia, this ordered, measurable environment coexisted with what is here termed Medieval space, a space that cultivates magic, superstition and miracles. This spatial conception, if it still survives in the cities is, however, most descriptive of traditional rural life. The physical world of the Russian peasant was never really separated from the sacred, whether pagan or Christian Orthodox. In the forest, icons were known to appear in trees, and *russalki*[24] swam in rivers and streams. A supernatural force possessed each distinguishable space. The *domovoy*,[25] for example, a type of spirit living in every single home, protected its inhabitants and their house-pets. It might also punish its hosts for breaking habits and rules of the home... its spatial practices. It was customary to invite the *domovoy* to follow in the event of a change of residence. This is how this spirit of the home, as well as the spatial practices it guarded, migrated to the city. The *domovoy* was perhaps the most stable superstition in Russia, one that was still

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[22] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 25.
[23] Written *circa* 300 BC.
[24] Mermaids.

very much alive in the Russia of the twenties and thirties. Indeed, Deineka created a number of illustrations about the cult of the *domovoy* for the anti-religious journal *Bezbozhnik u Stanka* (Godless by the Machine-tool) in order to demonstrate the absurdity of the superstition and instil in the population a more materialist conception of space.[26]

Similarly, the *vodinoy* inhabited ponds, rivers and wells, the *polevoy* lived in cultivated fields, while the *leshy* was know as the spirits of the woods, etc.[27] It appears, by this abridged list of spatial incarnations, that in the superstitious of the 'Medieval mind,' there was no difference between 'natural' spaces and built sites. Within this worldview, every space had a resident creature. Furthermore, space itself was not considered as the Euclidean vacuum populated with objects or spirits, but as a living, unpredictable force. The specific characteristics of this space were exalted by many classical Russian writers, such as Aleksandr Ostrovsky, and in the works of the late nineteenth century Symbolist painters and poets. The pagan space was never seen to be in contradiction with the space of the Orthodox faith, or the mechanical age.

During the Second Five-Year Plan, economy, security and ideology were all redefined. After being limited within the borders created by the civil war and subsequently reshaped by the annexation of neighbouring Soviet republics, Soviet space became more abstract. The Soviet Union and Moscow came to stand for the one another, as well as for a future socialist world, defined by ideology, forces of production and ideology, rather than by geographical borders.

Todorov speaks about a socialist world structure, which has more to do with collage than continuity. 'The intuitions of sacral continuity and immanent providence are replaced by visions of collage discreteness and political plannings. Authenticity is supplanted by the media.' The users of the twenties saw '[...] design rather than providence, facts rather than truth, objects rather than organs of the infinite world body.'[28] According to this interpretation, space functioned like a mosaic, composed by the juxtaposition of opaque, transparent and reflective pieces, held together artificially. This is an important feature of the inter-war, heterogeneous space of Moscow, piecing itself together, imposing a planned structure onto itself, attempting to enclose itself in the socialist frame it invented through discourse and urban planning.

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[25] From the Russian *dom*, house.

[26] Several of these are reproduced in Demosfenova's *Zhurnal'naia Grafika Deineki*. They were part of a broad anti-religious campaign.

[27] *Vodinoy* is from the Russian *voda*, water, *polevoy* from *pol*, field and *leshy* from *les*, woods.

[28] Todorov, p. 24.

Lefebvre proposed a similar view of space in the inter-war period. He explained that a new concept of space, a global concept of space, was discovered. This is the link between industrialisation and urbanisation, between the dwelling and the workplace. This notion is exemplified in the work of the Bauhaus, and perhaps nowhere better than in the 'paper architecture' of utopian architects and urban planners such as Georgy Krutikov and Yakov Chernikhov. 'No sooner had that link been incorporated into theoretical thought, it turned into a project, even into a programme.'[29] This seems to be a feature of the ideology of modernity, not necessarily of the socialist system of production. Similar projects were popular in France and Germany, as well as in the United States, even if few were ever realised. 'It was no longer a question of introducing forms, function or structures in isolation, but rather one of mastering global space by bringing forms, functions and structure together in accordance with a unitary conception.'[30]

Deineka used representational devices from all these conceptions of space for the elaboration of his mosaics, whether in terms of aesthetic strategies or narrative structure.

Monumental space

In *The Production of Space,* Henri Lefebvre argues that monumental space traditionally offers a membership into spatiality; it provides the user with 'an image of his or her social visage.'[31] In other words, monumental space performs the role of a collective mirror. According to Lefebvre, this mirror allows certain distortions. It nevertheless functions on the basis of consensus. The Christian cathedral, for example, corresponded to a common code of space, a common concept of space and a consensus about spatial needs, elaborated in a culture over a lengthy period of decades, if not centuries.[32] The building process of such a site was also spread over decades. Its 'code' of space slowly developed within the texture of space and everyday life. So what exactly were the cathedrals, *kremlins*,[33] triumphal squares and other monumental places? In essence, they were political acts, displays of power; they were efforts by the systems in power to preserve the social and political *status quo,* through representations of space, representational spaces and spatial practices. In essence, they were the material, three-dimensional, bearers of what Barthes has termed mythologies.

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[29] Lefebvre, *The Production,* p. 124.
[30] Lefebvre, *The Production,* p. 124.
[31] Lefebvre, *The Production,* p. 220.
[32] Lefebvre, *The Production,* p. 74.
[33] Russian fortified town. The Moscow *Kremlin* became the seat of the Soviet government in 1918.

Monumental spaces are endowed with formal features (form, line, rhythm, texture, etc.), structure (material and rhetorical), meaning within a history of style, through narrative devices or possible uses, etc. They are either constructed or appropriated, subverting the spatiality of a previously produced space. This means that space is never neutral or natural. There is no *a priori* space. In fact, even an untouched natural space would be coloured by pre-existing conceptions of nature in the first instant of its consumption by a user. Consequently, urban spaces always carry meaning. They do so in obvious ways by displaying iconographical elements, but also by their geographical position, the materials used for their construction, the system of production that generated them or maintains them, etc.

If space is produced, it is according to certain plans, certain social, ideological and technical prejudices. Space therefore contains entangled networks of messages and assumptions. It cannot, however, be reduced to the messages that were built into its visible form. Its interaction with users, or with adjacent spaces, multiplies the possible sequences of meaning.

To what degree can a space be read or decoded? Lefebvre offers that a space is decipherable inasmuch as it implies a process of signification.[34] In other words, meaning cannot be read simply in a site as it stands, but rather in the process of the creation of a specific site; the need for such a site; the expression of this need; as well as the different agents and forces which contributed to the production, and the later consumption of the site. This conception of a space's locus of significance implies a thorough analysis of the various modes of production/consumption available in the historical period according to which the space is to be decoded. Yet, social and political forces that shaped the space will fail to master it completely. The allegorical structure, the constant deferral of meaning, precludes this. The process of consumption of space by users always induces indeterminacy into the equation, just like the consumption of any artefact by the non-specialised public.

All spaces are meaningful in the larger sense. However, some places carry more meaning than others do. Mayakovskaya station is such a site. Here, all signifies self-consciously. There is no attempt to mask meaning and make the site and its representations seem natural or transparent: form, ornamentation, and even the material used, are over determined. They flaunt their propagandistic function: the stainless steel, for example, signifies of much more than its production in Soviet industry and its recent place in architectural history. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the innovative use of stainless steel in the ornamentation of the station refers to a special involvement of the

Soviet economy in heavy industry during the Five-Year Plans, war-time production and mechanised agriculture. Even the unoccupied space between the heads of the users and the high ceilings is full of significance: technological progress, use of modern materials, colonisation of the underground, and so on.

> People in the Soviet Union are justly proud of the sumptuous architecture of the Moscow Subway, the finest in the world, named after L. M. Kaganovich. Marble and precious stones, porcelain and steel were used in the decorative scheme of the stations.
>
> Special steels were required not only for rapid and high-class construction underground. Special steels are light in weight and artistic. The Mayakovskaya Square station is an eye-opener even to those who are accustomed to the luxurious style of our subway. The stainless steel columns of this subterranean palace, fluted and shining like burnished silver set off with stones of rare beauty and exquisite pictorial mosaics form a worthy monument to the best and most talented poet of our time - V. V. Mayakovsky.[35]

In the thirties, monumental space was understood as neither an object, neither a collection of signs, nor an empty space inhabited by objects or monuments. The regime understood well that space could do more than represent, it could engage in the social transformation process.

In fact, as early as 1918, the Soviet government attempted to both theorise, and use monumental space for its political purposes. The Plan for Monumental Propaganda devised by Lenin addressed the whole city as a coherent monumental space.[36] Its ultimate aim was to spread the idea of the Bolshevik Revolution (its history and its goals) widely, by means of representational devices available for consumption in the public spaces of the city. In order to do this, Lenin emphasised the visual, which he considered particularly effective in mass propaganda:

> Painted on the walls of [Campanella's][37] fantastic socialist city are frescos, which serve as visual lessons in aesthetics and history for the young citizens, and which arouse civil pride from within them. They participate in the education and formation of the new generations. It seems that this is not naive at all. With obvious adjustments to this idea, we could appropriate it and realise it today...

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[34] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 17.

[35] *USSR in Construction*, 7 (1939), n. p.

[36] For a history of the plan and its content, see Jean-Michel Palmier, *Lénine, l'Art et la Révolution*, Paris: Payot, 1975

[37] Tomasso Campanella, the author of the utopian tract *The City of the Sun*, written in 1602.

> I would call this monumental propaganda [...] Our climate would probably not permit the use of fresco, about which Campanella dreamt. This is why I am mostly referring to sculpture and poetry. [...] I think that monuments are more important than inscriptions: busts or full figures, perhaps bas-reliefs and sculptural groups.[38]

Lenin's plan was supposed to take shape with a display of more than 100 sculptures by various artists in the cities of Petrograd and Moscow. Fifty monuments were commissioned for the street corners and squares of Moscow. The artists were chosen by competitions judged by the Commissariat for Enlightenment. The sculptors were allowed six months to complete their works before their planned unveiling at the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. Unfortunately, in Moscow, only a dozen artists met the deadline. Each inauguration was conceived as both a propaganda act and a history lesson. In a note to Lunacharsky, Lenin insisted that:

> Special attention needs to be directed at the unveiling of such monuments. We ourselves, and perhaps other comrades, as well as leading specialists, could give speeches. Each of these unveilings should be a propaganda event, a small celebration.[39]

In the same letter, Lenin proposed that celebrations should be periodically organised to keep the memory of the heroes represented by each monument alive, and to remind the population of their special contribution to socialism. In other words, the intent was to swiftly create a social practice around specific sites. It has to be borne in mind that, for the Plan to be successful, the historical importance of the figures represented needed to be fully understood by the public. The success of the operation seems to have been challenged by the lack of practical directives. Some works crumbled under the first rain because they had been crafted in inferior materials, mostly gypsum and wood. Others were criticised and later removed, denigrated for being hermetic in style, and their significance, therefore, inaccessible to the uninitiated public. The case of B. Korolev's two Constructivist busts of Marx and Bakunin are the best known example of propaganda monuments being rejected by the public for illegibility.

It can be argued that Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda was of crucial importance, and served as the basis for conceptions of the whole city as a propaganda tool. This is an idea, which became extremely popular in the thirties through the General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow. Under Stalin (who was as laconic on

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[38] Lenin quoted in Osip Belkin, 'Monumental'naia Propaganda,' *Tvorchestvo*, 11 (1938), pp. 2-3.

this issue as he was about arts in general), Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda was discussed and constantly revisited in art publications, such as *Tvorchestvo* and *Iskusstvo*. It was reinterpreted in order to fit the imperatives of Socialist Realism closely. The ideal of monumental propaganda was stretched to its logical conclusion to include architecture, the transport network, and even the whole structure of the city.

Monumental space, as described by Lefebvre, is however incongruent with the city

experienced by Moscow's nomadised population of the thirties. Because of the absence of social consensus, produced by rapid urban growth, migration and social mobility, space became a tool of normalisation, forged by the planned economy. Myth, in the Barthesian sense, and devices promoting the *status quo* were options neither immediately available nor desirable for the Stalinist regime, which was still struggling with a more or less coherent range of peasant, religious and bourgeois practices in the population, as well as in its own ranks. Monumental space, as a network of signs, objects and space, therefore contributed to the production of a common language, just as did individual artefacts, such as posters, books, paintings, films, etc.

How can space self-consciously evade its past, while simultaneously aiming to create the codes of a future mythology? This is indeed the fundamental spatial problem of the period. The Plan for Monumental Propaganda, the city as a whole, as well as individual sites, all seem to have been plagued by this contradiction. Places claimed a brand new identity. Yet, a radically new identity could only be constructed according to fresh ideological principles, and the emerging codes specific to them. The originality of a space, and the eccentricity of the codes it used, was therefore a guarantee of opacity in the first instance.

The break with the past was performed in different ways: by destruction of sites and massive rebuilding; by imposing ideologically coded ornamentation onto existing constructions; or simply by renaming sites with more appropriate, socialist names. This is how Petrograd became Leningrad, Tverskaya Street in Moscow became Gorky, Ostozhenka street became Metro Workers' Street, there appeared countless namesakes to Lenin,[40] Derzhinsky, Kirov, Kalinin and, of course, Mayakovsky. A strategy of general acculturation seems to have been the most straightforward means to level out cultural differences in a heterogeneous population. The ultimate goal of acculturation was

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[39] Lenin quoted in V. A. Vinogradov, *Moskva 850 let*, tome 2, Moscow: Moskovskie Uchebniki, 1997, p. 64.

[40] In the thirties, Moscow counted five Lenin streets. Some were eventually renamed to avoid confusion.

evidently the creation of a new unified culture. A unified socialist culture was also the eventual goal of the reconstruction plan, its deferred bid for transparency...for myth.

Practice has shown that homogenous ways of understanding and using space, ways that seemed natural, were very slow to come about. For many Muscovites, Gorky Street remained Tverskaya, and people still crossed themselves when passing Strastnoy Monastery, which served as the Central Anti-religious Museum of the Union of the Militant Atheists of the USSR during 1937 and 1938. Furthermore, the attitude of the government was not always coherent in relation to its own strategies of acculturation. In some instances, traditional spatial practices were explained, historicised and proven wrong, unscientific or harmful, while the benefits of alternative socialist practices were promoted. In other cases, an attitude of denial of the past was adopted. This position, which might be read as an anticipated illusion of transparency, could not be fully effective in a period of sharp, rapid break with the past. Denial of the past parading as transparency is the illusion which might have fooled the foreigner, the fellow-traveller, or the present viewer, removed spatially or temporally from the process of production of Stalinist space and its spatial practices.

A certain tension between the ideologically informed spaces and spatial practices must have been generally felt in the thirties. The multitude of books dedicated to explaining to Muscovites their new spatiality could be read as a symptom of lack of common codes, the need for the population to understand their new environment, and perhaps learn how to use it properly. An example of this is *Moskva*, a very large illustrated tome edited by L. Kovalev in 1935. The book is made up of a series of specialists' interpretations of Moscow's past, contemporary and future spatialities (by architects, engineer, city planners, etc.), and of privileged users (Metro builders, stakhanovites and poets are in their ranks). Many such testimonies were printed in *Ogonek*, *Stakhanovets*, *Rabotnitsa* and other popular journals. Maybe much more effective, because they targeted the youngest public, were a series of children's books, explaining, in text and abundant images, the technical and ideological implications of their environment. For example, *Metropoliten*, by Elizaveta Tarakhovskaya, which explains, in rhymes and images, how to use the Metro properly, and why it is such an important part of every Soviet child's life.[41] Another example of this is M. Ilin's *Story About the Great Plan*, which explains, using numbers, graphs, photomontages and catchy slogans, the relationship engineered by the Soviet leaders between the new one and its

[41] Elizaveta Tarakhovskaya, *Metropoliten*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Detskoi Literatury, 1936. Such illustrated books accompanied the inauguration of many of the 'great

new socialist spatiality.[42] Children born or educated within the early Stalinist spatiality were most likely better adapted to its codes than their parents.

The General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow

The idea of creating a unified plan for the reconstruction of the whole city was not new *per se*. The first known projective plan was drawn up by Ivan Michurin in 1739. The ink drawings represent Moscow's third ring road, which did not exist at that time, as well as a number of streets which came into being in the following years. In 1775, a tsarist commission drew 'project plans' for the cities of Petersburg and Moscow. They included parade squares, green areas, etc. Only a few of the elements proposed in the plan were executed. The unity of the urban fabric was constantly challenged by the erection of dissonant buildings on privately owned land.

In 1812, a major fire burned whole sections of Moscow to the ground.[43] About 70% of Moscow's housing were annihilated. This tragedy marks an important step in Muscovite urban planning, permitting a significant break with the past materiality of the city. This provided the occasion to transform the structure of the city according to new conceptions of urban planning and architecture. The rebuilding was considered a governmental duty. A sense of ideological and aesthetic unity could be created by rebuilding the city according to a coherent plan, which gave Moscow a more European face. It made the former Slavic capital more similar to the neo-classical St. Petersburg. By the same token, Moscow became more appropriate to its emerging merchant economy. Because of its governmental nature and its homogenising goal, the 1812 plan is a noteworthy ancestor of the 1935 General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow.[44]

In March 1918, just a few months after the Revolution, the capital of Russia was moved back from Petrograd to Moscow after 206 years. This change was more than a spatial shift in the strict sense; the Russian capital simultaneously emerged as the first socialist capital in the world, and the heart of the Third International. The move

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projects,' such as the Moscow-Volga Canal, the electrification projects, etc. Deineka illustrated some of these.

[42] M. Ilin, *Rasskaz o Velikom Plane*, Moscow: Ogiz-molodaia Gvardiia, 1933. This book focusing on the First Five-Year Plan was written by the popular children's fiction writer Ilya Marshak under the pseudonym M. Ilin.

[43] This fire, which accelerated the retreat of the Napoleonic troops from Moscow, was possibly intentionally lit by a Russian commander, Count Fyodor Rostopshin. See Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Histoire de la Russie*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 1987, p. 341.

[44] For a more detailed history of the successive plans for the reconstruction of Moscow in the pre-Revolutionary period, see M. I. Astafeva-Dlugach, *Rasskazy ob Arkhitekture Moskvy*, Moscow: Stroizdat, 1997, pp. 5-22.

prompted a series of questions about who should live in the new Moscow, and most importantly - how? In the spring of 1918, a special commission was established to investigate these issues. Under the direction of architect Aleksey Shchusev, the commission planned to rebuild Moscow on a new social basis. This implied much more than the creation of a new aesthetic vocabulary; it meant the rethinking of the communication and transport infrastructures, the establishment of neighbourhoods, the administration of the relation between centre and periphery, etc. Because of their breadth, the measures were more difficult to implement than the superficial transformations effected by the 1918 Plan for Monumental Propaganda. Indeed, the latter was ornamental, rather than structural, in means. Yet, in spite of this important difference, these plans should not be considered in isolation.

Because of the civil war, the chaos experienced during the NEP and the paucity of the state coffers of the newly established Union very little construction was initiated before the First Five-Year Plan. Nevertheless, fresh plans for the reconstruction of Moscow were constantly drawn up. They all proposed different views on labour, the distribution of resources, hygiene conditions, collective living and the family, etc. In fact, they all posed philosophical and economic questions, as well as social and ideological ones. Solutions were multiple and ranged from the complete destruction of Moscow, to its transformation into a garden city, or a high-rise metropolis.[45]

Discussions about the reconstruction of Moscow were conducted in conferences, academies, journals and newspapers. By 1933, it became customary to present new plans for the whole city, as well as for individual sites, in the shop windows of Gorky Street, adjacent to the site where Mayakovskaya was to be built. By 1937, plans were also being displayed and studied in the Museum of the Mossoviet (Moscow Soviet), in an exhibition dedicated to the socialist reconstruction of Moscow.[46]

The General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow was ratified by the Mossoviet and the Central Committee on July 10, 1935. It was decreed that the General Plan was of 'international and historical significance.'[47] Although it was conceived as a 10-year project, it provided the main directive in urban planning until the next general plan was drawn up in 1971. It espoused two contradicting ideas: first, the construction of

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[45] The general debate, as well as a number of specific plans, is discussed in Vinogradov, pp. 98-103. Le Corbusier proposed the complete destruction of Moscow.

[46] The exhibition is described in the Moscow guide-book *(putevoditel)* by V. L. Dlugach and P. A. Portugalov, *Osmotr Moskvy*, Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1937, pp. 285-286. This guidebook was designed exclusively for internal Soviet tourism to the capital. Foreign tourists were made to arrange travel with the *Intourist* agency, which published its own guides.

[47] L. Perchik, *Bol'shevistskii Plan Reckonstruktsii Moskvy*, Moscow: Partizdat, 1935, p. 7.

an entirely new city, based on socialist representations of space and spatial practices; second, the preservation of the old city as a museum for the conservation of a past, pre-socialist civilisation. The city's ring structure was to be maintained, as well as many monuments of national architecture: churches, cemeteries, merchant estates, monuments to poets and artists of the past regime, etc. These were described and placed in their proper architectural, aesthetic and historical contexts, in the pages of many Moscow guide books, distributed in the thirties to workers, and in state museums of history and architecture. The concern with the preservation of architectural monuments was inherited from the Leninist attitude toward the culture of the previous regime, as exemplified by the following 1918 decree:

> Citizens, the old masters have gone, leaving behind a vast heritage. Now it belongs to all the people.
>
> Citizens, take care of this inheritance, take care of the paintings, statues, buildings - it is the embodiment of your spiritual strength, and that of your forefathers. Art is something wonderful, that talented people were able to achieve even under the yoke of despotism, that bears witness to the beauty and strength of the human soul.
>
> Citizens, do not even touch one stone, protect the monuments, the old buildings, articles, documents - all this is your history, your pride. Remember all this is the soil from which will grow your new, people's, art.
>
> Executive Committee of the Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies[48]

Simultaneously, many sections of the former Moscow were destroyed in order to facilitate the establishment of the transportation network of the Socialist capital. The most famous of these instances are the controversial destruction of Sukharev tower, razed just a few weeks after it had been restored, in order to ease the flow of motorised traffic;[49] and the demolition of the Christ-the-Redeemer cathedral, where the Palace of the Soviets was to be built.[50]

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[48] Quoted in Kathleen Berton, *Moscow; An Architectural History*, London: Studio Vista, 1977, p. 199. In the first eight years after the Revolution, 10,000 buildings of special interest were brought under state protection, and 3,000 of them were actually restored.

[49] Built in 1695 by M. Choglokov, its destruction was decreed in 1933. Many groups of architects immediately protested. A series of plans were drafted in order to redesign Sukharev Square, therefore reorienting traffic and saving the tower. These efforts failed, and the tower was brought down in 1934.

[50] In 1937, the authors of the guidebook *Osmotr Moskvy* described the site: '[...] across the river we see the space where the enormous and awkward building of the Christ-the-Redeemer cathedral [built in 1812] previously stood. Today, workers prepare the grounds for the construction of the grandiose Palace of the Soviets.' Dlugach and Portugalov, pp. 20-21.

The elaboration of Moscow as a coherent whole was thought of as the creation of a work of art. In spite of the aforementioned contradiction between the preservation of the old within the new, the city was to be planned as a consistent architectural ensemble, every single neighbourhood linked to the whole in a synechdochic fashion. This relationship between the segment and the total space implied an interchangeability of parts. For example, a painting, a tramway, a building, or a whole street could be displaced to any site in the city and still fit in the general spatial logic...the Socialist Realist narrative.

> In Moscow, each block of houses, each section of a street, each street or square will affirm itself as an integral ensemble, and the city, as an architectural composition unified both in project and execution.[51]

This is an exceptional case in the history of urban planning. This eccentricity is evidently linked to the mode of production responsible for the reconstruction of Moscow, and its expropriation of privately owned land.[52] It is impossible to conceive of a capitalist city functioning this way, except utopian settlements. Lefebvre gives the example of Venice, which, he argues, can be experienced as a 'festival' by anyone, even without knowing the concepts according to which it was built. Venice is based on a common code of space, on a common language of the city. Yet, as opposed to the Christian cathedral, or the work of art (or Moscow), 'it has none of the intentional character of an "art object."'[53] Its unity is therefore purely accidental. Moscow provides the opposite example; its coherence was planned, yet no common language of the city existed to underlie it.

The term *novaya Moskva*, new Moscow, was frequently used in newspapers and journals. It indicates rhetoric of the total appropriation of space in the city, just like the renaming of the streets. This representational strategy could not, however, immediately transfer to spatial practices. An excellent example of this is the Sergey Medvedkin movie

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The Palace of the Soviets was planned in honour of the completion of the First Five-Year Plan. The chosen project was a high rise structure by Boris Iofan, picked from 160 entries. Crowned with an enormous statue of Lenin, the building was to measure 420 meters in height, and be higher than the recently built Empire State Building. The statue of Lenin atop the object was to measure 100 meters in height. Furthermore, 17,500 square meters of paintings, 12,000 frescoes, 4,000 mosaics, 20,000 bas-reliefs, 170 sculptures and 12 group sculptures were conceived to decorate the building, which was never built past its foundation pit. Christ-the-Redeemer cathedral has now been rebuilt on the same site.

[51] S. E. Chernyshev, 'Arkhitekturnoe Litso Novoi Moskvy,' *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 10 (1935), p. 34.

[52] Very little private property was left in Moscow. One notable exception is the architect Konstantin Melnikov's bi-cylindrical studio, which was owned and inhabited by Melnikov himself until his death in 1974.

[53] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 74.

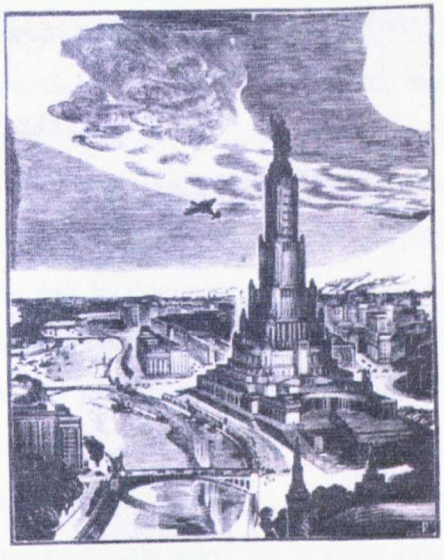
Novaya Moskva (1938), which was censored at the time of its release. The film tells the story of a provincial engineer's eagerness to participate in the (re) construction of the new Moscow. The main character, Sergey, moves to Moscow with his progress-crazed grandmother. When they are accidentally separated, a spellbinding exploration of Moscow unfolds. The public is led by the characters to discover the wonders of *novaya Moskva*. The viewer is taken to 'parks of culture and rest,' to the National Exhibition site on Carnival night, inside the Moscow Metro, in car and trolleybus rides on the widened avenues of the capital. At the opposite pole, Petya, a Muscovite, paints what he calls *ukhadyashaya Moskva*, the fleeting Moscow. Before he can achieve any painted record, the buildings he is depicting either crumble under a wrecking ball or are transported on metal rails to other sites, leaving the artist in clouds of concrete dust with paintbrush in hand.

The last scenes of the movie present the achievements of the protagonist. The young engineer created a film representation enacting the transition from old to new Moscow. While Sergey is late for the projection, a mistake occurs. The film is shown backwards; modern buildings disintegrate, while churches and merchants' homes rise from the dust. The crowd roars with laughter. Medvedkin's film concludes with the enactment being shown once more, with its restored narrative order. In my opinion, censors prevented the movie from being seen by the Soviet public because it exalted this tension between progress as a positive force and the inevitable material inertia (and the occasional, perhaps uncontrollable, leap backward), linked to the body and memory. The film directed the viewer's attention toward the gap between the Stalinist rhetoric on space and the lived space, toward a 'differential space.'

The Metro itself occupied a strategic role in the General Plan as part of the city's infrastructure and as a propaganda tool:

> Urban transport plays an enormous role in the life of large cities. This role is especially grand here, in the country of socialism, where urban transport is at the service of the labouring population.[54]

[54] Perchik, p. 68.



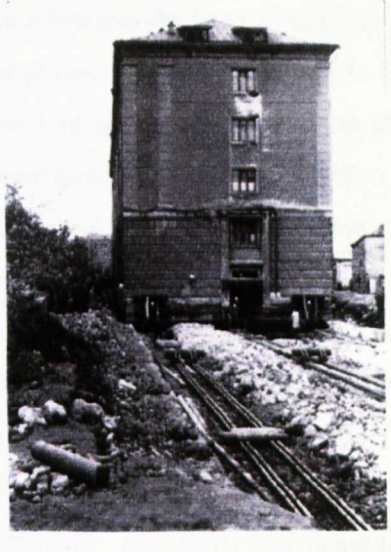


Fig.38. 'Lets Mobilise Our Strength to Fulfil Stalin's Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow, ' poster, 1935

Fig. 39. P. Ryabov, 'Moscow,' 1935

Fig. 40. House transported on rails, 1930s

In the many books and pamphlets published in the thirties to explain the plan as a whole, or specific aspects of it, the reader finds the following explanation. The expansion of the city and the increase of its population justify an improved transport network. This implies access to factories, punctuality, and therefore bears a direct link with production. Yet, the most important argument seems to be the cultural one. Transport is directly linked to the culture of Soviet citizens, because it economises time and broadens accessibility to the city and its cultural resources. The average worker of the old Moscow, it is said, had to travel for over an hour after work to get home, and the lack of transport kept him or her at home after work. In any case, leisure for the working class was not a state concern in pre-Revolutionary Russia. As it has been argued in the previous chapter, in order to create a unified culture the population needed to be introduced to a socialist popular culture and communal leisure. Public transport hence contributed to culture:

> Science and art, theatre and workers' clubs, cinema and parks, are now all accessible to the wider masses. After work, workers and their families have enough time to go to the theatre, the workers' club, a lecture, an excursion, the park, the sports ground, to friends, etc.[55]

This interdependence between spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces, is partly what was alluded to with the slogan 'We're building the best planned, the most beautiful and the most cultured city in the world.'[56]

The *Metropoliten* opened on May 15, 1935, just a few months before the General Plan was announced. It served as a synechdochic model of what the whole city was to be:

> Our Soviet Metro, the first-born of the grandiose Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow and other cities of the USSR, appears not only as a technically perfect and durable construction. It outshines the best metros of the leading capitalist countries with its durability and technique. Our Metro surpasses the metros of capitalist cities on all indicators, but especially in relation to comfort for its users, and by its architectural design. Our Metro appears as the prototype of our socialist planning, and because of this, it holds enormous historical significance.[57]

Because of its particular role in the Soviet propaganda machine, the Metro was meant to deploy all signifying possibilities. But these had to be adapted to the specificity of the Metro, as a monumental space and as a mode of transportation.

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[55] Perchik, p. 78.
[56] Perchik, p. 101.
[57] Perchik, p. 81.

> The *Metropoliten* is not simply a station where one waits for trains infinitely among bags and suitcases, using this time to appreciate the beauty of the murals. In the Metro, one doesn't wait. It carries users quickly and regularly, therefore, monumental-decorative art needs to be expressive, yet simple (i.e. cannot rest on a complicated iconography). The viewer must perceive it at first glance. At the same time, it must enrich the viewer aesthetically, just as a sculpture would.'[58]

This double objective, ideological and aesthetic, was the underlying principle of the planning of the Moscow Metro.

> The architecture of the stations of the second line of the *Metropoliten* is saturated with ideological content. This is reflected, most of all, in the monumental painting and sculptures. These means of influence embody in their form Vladimir Ilich [Lenin]'s ideas about monumental propaganda.[59]

Of course, even by 1938, the Metro network was limited to the centre of Moscow. It did not serve most areas of the city, and did not play a major role in every worker's day. However, slogans such as 'All Moscow is building the Metro,' rhetorically rendered it a universal experience for Muscovites. The slogan also referred to the interconnectedness of all sectors of the economy in a system based on central planning, and perhaps also to the voluntary contribution of thousands of unpaid Soviet citizens labourers in the construction of the Metro. The slogan revealed a pride in the progress achieved in controlling space, in unifying the experience of space, through state planned production and increased mobility. The Metro was also promoted as being an ideal mode of transport, since it did not create traffic or threaten pedestrian areas. Once built, it was the only mode of public transport, which would not disrupt the general use of space in the city. However, in the short term, its construction had the reverse effect. During the digging of the tunnels and the construction of the stations, whole neighbourhoods were cut off from all types of transportation.

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[58] Shadr, 'Moskva' (1934-35), in Shadr, p. 124.

[59] I. E. Katsen and S. Ryzhkov, *Moskovskii Metropoliten*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Arkhitektury SSSR, 1948, p. 12.

Differential spaces

In the Moscow of the thirties, it became more and more difficult to find the dividing border between signs and the empirical world. This doesn't mean that the two domains coincided; the gap between discourse and everyday life constantly reaffirmed itself through a multitude of contradictions, which might appear irreconcilable. This space between discourse and practice is termed 'differential space.' This refers to a mental space where the subject struggles with meaning, where opposite or conflicting categories are juxtaposed.

One of the aims of Socialist Realist art and architecture was to eventually overcome contradictions encountered in everyday life by creating a rhetorically unified space. This was, of course, an impossible feat. As Henri Lefebvre remarked, in the capitalist world, the need for unity is usually expressed in ways that serve to underscore its importance.[60] This can not be said of Stalinist space during the first two Five-Year Plans. The need for unity was not hidden behind appearances of individualism, but quite the opposite. Mass celebrations, communal living in standardised dwellings, and the acknowledged will to create new aesthetic categories and culture denoted the desire for cohesion. This ideal underlied the structure of the city projected in the General Plan, as well as its architecture.

It is noteworthy that practical directives in terms of Socialist Realist architecture were as sparse as they were in terms of painting, as noted in the previous chapter. Catherine Cooke has observed that:

> The First Congress of Soviet Architects in 1937 confirmed Socialist Realism as 'the method of Soviet architecture,' without doing much to illuminate further its professional implications. Kaganovich set them a challenge to which the Metro had already responded handsomely: 'The proletariat does not simply want to live comfortably. It wants its buildings to be *beautiful*. And it wants its housing, its architecture, its towns, to be *more beautiful* than in any other countries of America of Europe.'[61]

Even if there had been clear directives or a consensus, architects and urban planners could not have had total freedom to follow, or ignore, a rhetoric of socialist space. This is the nature of spatial projects, and of representations of space. Indeed, the raw material of the General Plan, the city of Moscow, was already occupied with practices and meanings, which pre-dated the plan. It was impossible to entirely dissolve the previous spatiality and build a space from a clean slate.

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[60] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 12.
[61] Cooke, p. 99.

One could argue that through the General Plan, the Soviet regime turned Moscow's spatiality on its head by infusing it with another ideology, other practices, etc. For example, the *Kremlin*, the former fortress city, centre of power of pre-Petrine Russia, was reappropriated to become the seat of the Soviet government. This move subverted the meaning of that specific site, and the subversion had inevitable reverberations on the city spread in concentric circles around it. Yet, the pre-Revolutionary spatiality of the *Kremlin* left clearly visible traces in the architectural techniques and materials, books and images that depict the site, and the population's habits in relation to the site. All three elements of Lefebvre's triad obsessively clung on in spite of efforts for a radical transformation of the city.

There are contradictions in all spaces. Some are atavistically induced by history. Others are fresh; these are built into the matter of representations of space and representational spaces. For example, the General Plan proposed the simultaneous preservation of the old city and its architectural treasures, and the eradication of the values, practices and structures of both Medieval Moscow and the Moscow of the merchants. Many contemporary critics pointed out this contradiction. Another example of spatial contradiction refers to the Moscow-Volga Canal digging project (1932-35), which utilised forced labour. This practice was either denied, or toned down by many testimonies of workers professing the rehabilitating effect of working on the site, of participating in its practice. Between the actual spatial practice of the canal works and representations of this specific spatiality, laid a vast differential space.

Mikhail Rylkin has argued that it is through monumental space that terror could acquire the 'much needed attribute of invisibility.'[62] He further contended that:

> The characterising trait of the images of the Moscow Metro is their inconspicuousness, the fact that they are unnoticed by the mass that flows by them as if passing through them. And this is in spite of the broad, boldly striking images. The transformation of these representations into objects of contemplation is an extremely aggressive act, which quite entails for them a lethal outcome [...] their function is not to be read but to exert an influence... while remaining unnoticed.[63]

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[62] Ryklin, p. 52.
[63] Ryklin, p. 57-58.

However, testimonies and photographs of the time seem to indicate that the images displayed in the Metro were noticed, perhaps only because they were then new features. Ryklin, nevertheless, hit on an important point: these images are the performative agents of a system without stable structures, codes or goals. Because of this, Stalinist spaces could not maintain total integrity, or be without differential spaces.

Differential spaces are not entirely negative features of space. Indeed, it could be argued that, in view of the prospective nature of Socialist Realism, a gap between discourse and experience is necessary. In this way, differential spaces would provide society with an opportunity to catch up with representation, or vice-versa.

> In our times, life has become a fairytale, which became reality at an incredible pace! Art, and especially sculpture, on the contrary, moved away from life; it now drags at the tail end of progress.
>
> THE ARTIST SHOULDN'T MAKE ANYTHING UP!
>
> His works, his 'images,' come from life itself; images, provided by life are 'tired of waiting for artists to catch up.'[64]

As the journey within Mayakovskaya station continues, and more segments of the ceiling devised by Deineka are examined, some of the differential spaces in the represented spatiality depicted within the smalto images will unfold. These differential spaces are at the intersection of discourse and practice. Their investigation is crucial since they hold within their folds all the variations of cultural experience, and preserve the viewer from a totalitarian interpretation of Stalinist space.

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[64] Shadr, 'Srochnaia Neobkhadimost'' (1937), in Shadr, p. 139.

Thirteenth mosaic; The Stalin Route

Deineka's thirteenth mosaic for the One Day in the Soviet Land series represents a white-bellied monoplane, flying over a redwood forest. Four trees project into the space of the representation from its periphery. Their tops point to the centre of the image. The circularity achieved by this composition places the Metro user in the middle of a forest. As she glances upward at the plane, she is surrounded by trees stretching their red trunks tall above her head. The angle of vision determined by the abrupt *raccourci* indicates the gigantic dimension of the trees depicted. This can only be a first growth forest. The sky above is darkening; the clouds show traces of reds and browns. The deep green foliage is stained with lighter patches, testifying to an invisible sunset. This image refers to a night flight over a flora reminiscent of the North American West coast, rather than the Soviet Union. The depicted movement in the rustling leaves indicates that the plane is battling against strong winds.

During the summer of 1937, three long-distance flight expeditions occupied the imagination of the Soviet population. The missions were designed to break all records in long distance flights, and most importantly, to set an international precedent by opening hitherto unexplored air routes. The flights, which mobilised all media for several months, were destined to reach the United States of America, flying over the North Pole.

The first crew to set out on its journey was the Valery Chkalov team, flying a Tupolev ANT-25 monoplane.[65] The June 18 to 20 flight lasted 63 hours and 16 minutes. The 8,510 kilometre distance separating the Moscow aviators from their destination was covered without a single landing:

> June 20, 1937, 20 hours 20 minutes, all Moscow listened to a radio programme from America: 'Washington, 20 June. At 16h. 30 minutes, Greenwich time, 19h. 30 minutes, Moscow time, Chkalov landed at the Barracks airport, near Portland (Washington State).'[66]

There is confusion in the press of the thirties as to where the plane actually touched down. Sources mention alternatively Vancouver (Canada), Seattle (Washington, USA) and Portland (Oregon, USA). Valery Chkalov's own account sheds some light on the matter. According to the pilot, the expedition made its way over the Canadian portion of the Rocky Mountains, and the redwood forests, looped over the Pacific Ocean and reached Portland. By this point, it was understood that the plane should land without much delay; fuel levels were low, and the winds were fierce. The crew did not obtain

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[65] V. Chkalov and G. Baidukov were both test pilots. They flew with the navigator A. Belyakov.

[66] Valery Chkalov, *Istoriia Nashego Poleta*, Moscow: Detizdat, 1937, p. 16.

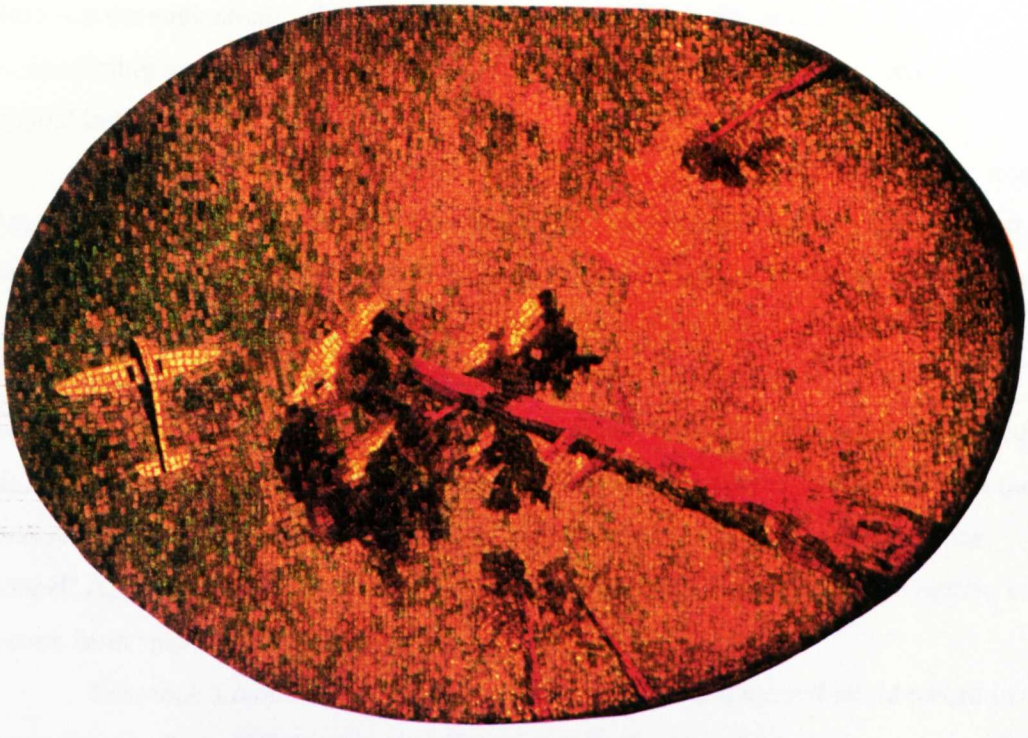

Fig. 41. Thirteenth mosaic

Fig. 42. 'Stalin's Mission has Been Completed' (The Stalin Airway), postcard, 1937

permission to land at the civil airport. It therefore re-traced its trajectory toward the North, past Seattle, to an American military airport near Vancouver.[67] There is tension between the authenticity of the landing site and the authenticity of distance in the contradicting reports. Two concepts of space, location and interval are reflected in this spatial indeterminacy.

The name given to the itinerary was painted onto the fuselage of the plane; it was baptised *Stalinsky Marshrut,* the Stalin Route. The long distance record was registered worldwide, and for weeks the Soviet pilots held the headlines in newspapers around the world. Chkalov and his team toured the United States: Forida, Washington and New York. In each location, they drew phenomenal crowds. However, they were most elaborately greeted in their home country. On August 11, 1937, they returned to Moscow as heroes. They were received with parades, speeches, radio shows, songs written in their honour, etc. The Soviet press bestowed on Chkalov the title of 'greatest pilot of our times!' Apparently, Chkalov's reception was only matched 30 years later by Gagarin's return from space.[68]

Less than a month later, the Gromov team set out for a second world record in long-distance flight.[69] This time, the pilots aimed for the city of San Jacinto, also on the American West Coast. Also drawn along the polar route, the Moscow-San Jacinto itinerary was baptised the Stalin Airway. The flight was conducted between July 12 and 14, 1937. The men flew their ANT-25 for a distance of 10,147 kilometres in 62 hours 17 minutes, thus breaking the previous record both in distance and speed.

Gromov's team was also received as heroes upon their return to Moscow. This glorification of record-setters was in the order of things, within a system that used hero-building processes as a strategy for influencing its population. Indeed, as it has been outlined in the previous chapter, pilots held one of the highest ranks in the popular hierarchy among 'new ones.' They ranked above stakhanovites, athletes and engineers. The records set internationally, combining a pride in Soviet technology and the 'new one,' bound the nation together, in spite of the social stress and strain experienced in the thirties. As John McCannon remarked, propaganda aimed to mobilise, inspire and

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[67] Chkalov published half a dozen books about his journey, as well as numerous articles. This particular version is from *Istoriia Nashego Poleta.*

[68] According to an explicative board at the Central House of Aviation and Cosmonauts, Moscow.

[69] M. Gromov had flown the Maxim Gorky propaganda plane and was Chkalov's former aviation instructor. In 1937, Gromov flew with A. Yumashev and the navigator S. Danilin.

educate the population as an alternative that was more efficient than coercion, indoctrination or brainwashing could ever have been.[70]

Many historians have documented Stalin's personal interest in aviation. He was often referred to as the 'father of pilots' and the 'father of aviation.' The photograph of Chkalov and the Leader, taken at Moscow's Central aerodrome (Tushino, later renamed Chkalov airfield), at the pilot's return home from the United States, provided viewers with an example of Stalin's mediatised proximity to the long-distance aviator, and conversely, the latter's proximity to power. Printed on the first page of the August 11, 1936 issue of *Pravda*, the image of Chkalov embracing Stalin was titled 'The Son Greets his Father.'

In the Soviet Union, as in Europe and America, aviation was perhaps the most triumphant expression of modernity. Pushing the limits of technology, and therefore mastering space (understood here both as nature and distance), the Soviets could consider themselves as evolving politically and technologically. All this was manifested in the Soviet space of representation. As McCannon has observed:

> If there is a single venue in which technological development, visions of modernity, and the public imagination can be said to have converged during the first half of the twentieth century, it would be in the skies. The classic 'golden age' of aviation began with the Wright Brothers' 1903 flights at Kitty Hawk and was still going strong on the eve of World War II. Air races, crossing of the English Channel, dogfights, barnstorming, flights across the Atlantic, and circumnavigation of the globe: all these worked their magic on the thoughts and emotions of millions for almost four decades. It was small wonder that aviation became a cultural leitmotif of such magnitude in modern, industrialised countries like America and the nations of Europe. Aviation was associated with a broad spectrum of powerful issues: age-old dreams of flight, economic development, national pride, scientific attainment, religious and philosophical musings about the transcendent nature of the heavens, the spectre of military destruction and more. Much the same happened in the Soviet Union during the 1930s. Indeed, it would be difficult to find anything, excepting the image of Stalin himself, that was more prominent as a cultural symbol in the USSR than aviation.[71]

The records established by Chkalov and Gromov were meant to inaugurate a string of long distance flights, pushing the limits of both the pilots and their machines. This placed

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[70] John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union 1932-1939*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 8.
[71] McCannon, p. 68.

Soviet aviators and engineers at the forefront of the race to conquer the sky. The project was spatial in two ways: it involved control over space, as well as worldwide influence and prestige through mastering spatiality. Yet, the emphasis on a particular kind of space, on a victory, not on speed or gravity, but on distance, became the privileged focal point of the project. 'Of the three elements of the nation's aviation motto - 'faster, higher, and farther' - 'farther' became the most important.'[72]

The *pièce de résistance* of the 1937 flight programme was to link Moscow to California. This new itinerary, which was to be the longest, was called the Stalin Path. On August 12, 1937, S. Levanevsky and his crew[73] set out in an ANT-6, a larger plane than the ANT-25. The aircraft disappeared over the North Pole. The search for the Levanevsky team lasted until March 1938 and cost millions of rubles. It resulted in a string of accidents, including the death of M. Babushkin, an experienced Arctic pilot. No trace of the pilots or of the aeroplane was ever found. These deaths had a severe effect on the nation's mood. Needless to say, it severely tarnished the glow of the events of the summer. Yet, the media's enthusiasm for aviation never seemed to decline.

During the late thirties, this tragedy was widely discussed. As a result, the exploration and record-setting projects became multifaceted. This is important to note at this point, since history and Socialist Realist representations of aviation themes have muted this polysemic aspect. In fact, journals and papers of the period expressed ambivalence, distrust and confusion when space took 'revenge' on the pilots. Yet, Chkalov and Gromov had opened a new air route to the United States.

In his 1938 account of his own trip, Chkalov quoted an obviously pro-Soviet American journal:

> 'Tangible proof of the existence of a new society reached us through the North Pole. It has been 20 years since the victory of 1917. Twenty years of false information about the USSR. But now the gap has been breached. The flight through the North Pole realised by the sons of the working class brings new ideas to the minds of millions of Americans...'
>
> So what did the People of America see in our flight?
>
> The strength and courage of our motherland. Our new socialist people, educated by 20 Soviet years, educated by Stalin, are not limited by technical possibilities.[74]

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[72] McCannon, p. 70.

[73] V. Levchenko, N. Kastanaev, N. Galkovsky, N. Godovikov, and G. Pobezhimov.

[74] Valery Chkalov, *My Eshche Prodolzhim 'Stalinskii Marshrut,'* Moscow: Rostizdat, 1938, pp. 4-5.

The long distance records stood for a breakthrough in communication and transport, and new spatial possibilities opened to humanity. Space was understood abstractly, both as a site and as distance. As noted in the article quoted by Chkalov, the control established over distance implied that other spaces could also be tamed: the spaces of ideology, of knowledge, etc. Indeed, Deineka's thirteenth mosaic connotes several victories over space; the sky conquered by technology; a victory over distance; the Soviet Union establishing itself in the world space through this kind of exploit in the inter-war world order.

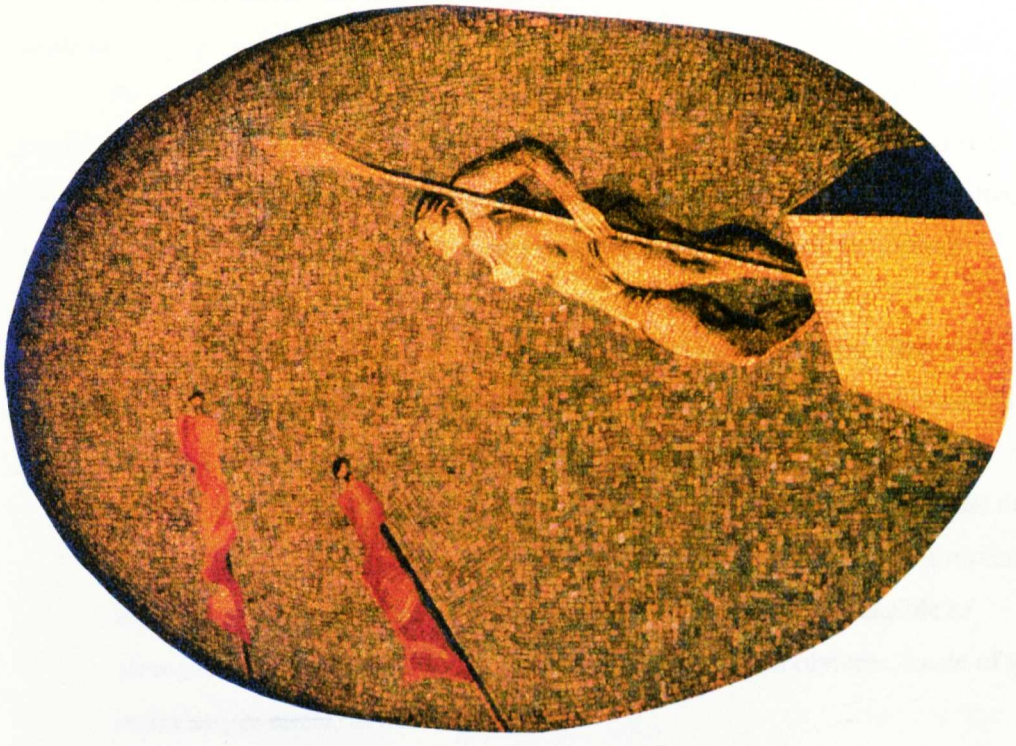
Fourteenth mosaic; I would like to awake in the 'Park of Culture and Rest'

A white statue representing a girl towers at the centre of the representational space of the fourteenth mosaic. Standing on a marble podium, the figure holds an oar in her left hand. The object rests against her exaggerated muscular thigh. The user sees her as if from below; her head is reduced by effects of Euclidean perspective. Two red flags on thin ball-headed staffs shoot into the image. Their trajectory upwards intersects with the still gaze of the stone athlete.

Her white marble skin shines against the cobalt coloured smalto sky. The statue can easily be identified as Ivan Shadr's 'Young Woman with Oar' (1934-35), or perhaps the very similar statue by R. Iodko, which bears the same title (1936). This specific sculptural theme was popular in the thirties. One could even talk about athletic representations as a genre in Socialist Realist sculpture. Shadr's young woman was reproduced *ad infinitam* and erected in countless parks, seaside resorts and sports camps throughout the Soviet Union. She also repeatedly appeared in the Soviet press as a symbol of these places.[75] And, her white body came to stand for them.

The duplication of art objects was quite common in Socialist Realism. This implies that effectiveness or significance of a representation was more important than its originality for centrally planned art production. The government routinely commissioned official copies of paintings and sculptures. The copies were most often erected in appropriate buildings, in order to orient spatiality according to the meaning expressed in an especially successful work. The repetition of the work, and its use as marker of significance in a space, gradually transformed it from an allegory into an icon, or a symbol. An image could then be adapted to different media, a well-known sculptural form stepping into monumental mosaic, for example. The currency of a configuration

[75] For example in *Ogonek*, 28 (1937), p. 21.



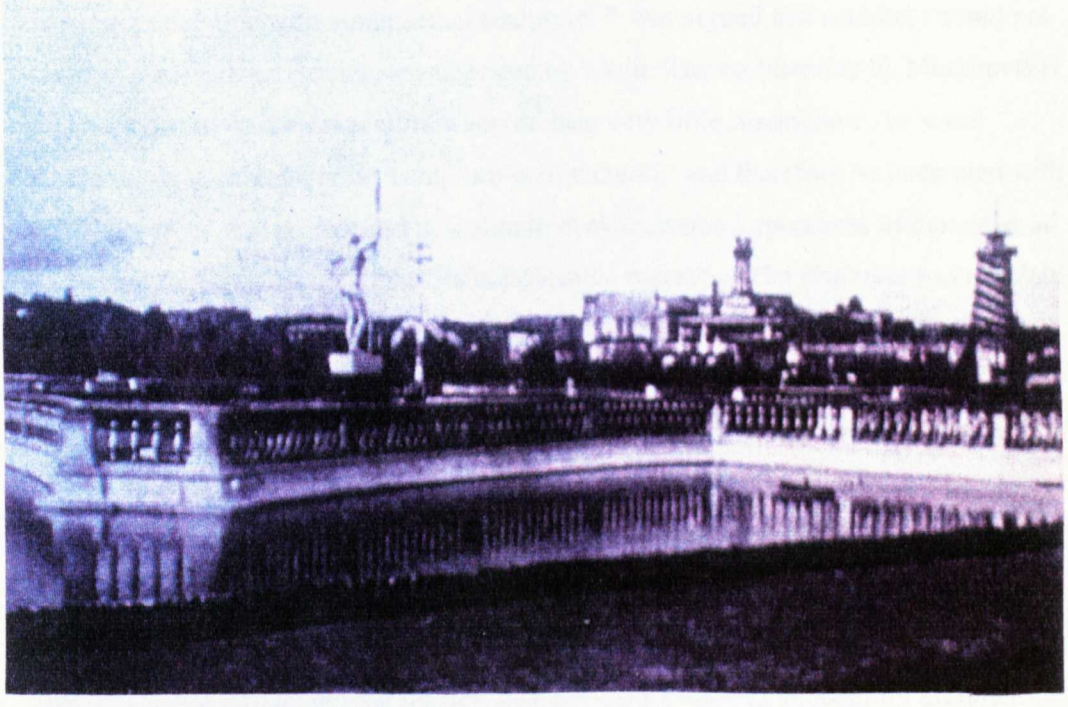


Fig. 43. Fourteenth mosaic
Fig. 44. View of Gorky Park with 'Young Woman with Oar' and parachuting tower, 1930s

could also afford it transformations, when deemed necessary, without the sign loosing its value. This is how Soviet iconography was constituted during the first years of Socialist Realism.

Shadr's young woman depicted by Deineka is clad in a garment that seems to be a hybrid between a bathing suit and a classical drapery. The illusionary cloth reveals the young woman's navel, her muscular stomach and her nipples. In this, Deineka's image differs from the sculptor's nude athlete placed in Moscow's Gorky Central Park of Culture and Rest in 1935.

In parks, statues played more than an ornamental role. They provided both examples of bodies to be emulated, and their use of space, as well as introducing the public to art as a feature of everyday life. Shadr proposed that:

> In those parks, statues have to be placed, but not just any statue, those that are authentic aesthetic works. I would unload all our museums carrying sculptures from the reserves to the parks where they can be constantly accessible to viewers. And not only contemporary, but also classical sculptures, made of good materials, in metal, in marble.[76]

Bringing art into the public sphere generated a debate on monumental space, and its eventual population with monumental sculpture. It was argued that sculpture could not simply be transported outside, as suggested by Shadr. The art historian N. Mashkovtsev proposed that monumental sculpture should bear very little resemblance to 'easel sculpture.' It should rather be 'sculpturo-architectural,' and therefore be integrated with the whole space that surrounded it. It should obey the same imperatives as monumental space, and fully participate in the Socialist Realist narrative. The sculpture had to relate to the expanse of land and the height of the sky. Mashkovstev was not satisfied with Shadr's monumental work:

> The figure by Shadr 'Young Woman with Oar,' incredibly lovely and refined, if seen frontally, has nevertheless not been completely liberated from after-tastes of easel sculpture and, what is much worse, from the art salon.[77]

Although the statue is no longer in Gorky Park, pictures remain, depicting it with the aforementioned parachuting tower in the background.[78] It served as a symbol for parks of culture and rest throughout the thirties, just as Gorky Park was a model for all other parks. The representation of the athlete functioned in a synechdochic manner, referring to

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[76] Shadr, 'Moskva' (1934-35), in Shadr, p. 133.
[77] Mashkovtsev, 'Zametki o Monumentalnoy Sculpture,' in *Tvorchestvo*, 7 (1937), p. 14.
[78] Both the statue and the tower were eventually destroyed. About the tower, see the second and eleventh mosaic.

the larger space of the park, just like the park functions as a synecdoche for Moscow, and the socialist capital for the rest of the Soviet Union.

Soviet parks of culture and rest had two aims. First, they were to compose, within their bounds, small 'hyperplaces:' multi-dimentional spaces, synthetic spaces saturated with meaning, in this case, mimicking a perfect socialist world. Secondly, because they were open to the public, they aimed at initiating the average citizen to living in such spaces, therefore transforming the artificial hyperspaces into what should be regarded as the norm. The spatiality of the parks and that of the city, transformed by the General Plan, were meant to eventually coincide.

> The captain of the 'Chelyuskin' V. I. Voronin[79] told the author of these lines about a Copenhagen park. He went there with his son. The boy was blinded by the brightness of the lights and fireworks, geysers of different colours of fire, to the point that Voronin had to devote his visits with him to the street slums of the port area, - neighbourhoods of tremendous poverty, where he could see the genuine life of the country. From Gorky Park, there is no need to go anywhere. It doesn't blind the visitor with the illusions, which in the bourgeois countries visitors need to forget about the difficult and damned life they live outside the park. No, in our parks the workers - master of their own life, do not seek sacred fires or intoxication. Here, in the park, the Moscow proletariat rests in a civilised manner, and here beats the pulse of the same life, which seethes past the doors of the park.[80]

'When you are really tired and want to rest, the first and foremost thing that appears in your memory is the wonderful view of the Moscow River from Crimea Bridge [...]'[81] This is how I. Eksler brings about the depiction of the Gorky Central Park of Culture and Rest. It is possible that the Mayakovskaya user, tired after a long day at work, glancing above her head at the mosaic, would be instantly transported to the 300 hectares of green space, nested along a seven-kilometre segment of Moscow River. In the thirties, Gorky Park was the prototype of what achieved communism should be, a spatial projection of life occupied mostly with the culture of the mind and the body.

However, this spatial projection might have exacerbated the inadequacy of the everyday life aspects of Moscow, by not coinciding with them. It certainly responded to a real need to get away from the mad construction site, which Moscow had become since the beginning of the General Plan. Yet, it provided hope. If this representation of space

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[79] For a brief description of the epic of the Chelyuskin, see sixteenth mosaic.
[80] I. Eksler, ' Parki Kul'tury i Otdykha' in Kovalev, p. 513.
[81] Eksler, p. 508.

was possible on a small scale, it was perhaps possible on a larger scale. The same could be said about spatial practices within the park, which could be seen as a promise for their extension into the city, beyond the gates limiting the space of the park. This point reiterates the problem of differential spaces.

The park was stocked with all kinds of attractions: cafes, exotic plants, theatres, lecture halls, dance places, etc.[82] Many areas of everyday life were represented:

- Work: in the museum of work, a permanent exhibition centred on the stakhanovist movement.
- Family: family recreational activities were organised, as well as kindergartens, lectures on child rearing, etc.
- Culture: theatres, concert halls, art exhibitions and various games were accessible to all.
- Science: 'townlets of science and technology' had been built in the park. Children and adults could listen to lectures on Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, learn how to build model aeroplanes, as well as examine plant hybrids devised by Michurin (see third mosaic), growing in the park alongside exotic trees and flowers.
- Sports: for reasons discussed at length in the previous chapter, sports were a prominent feature in the park. 'Millions of workers come here to rest. Over 100 thousand Muscovites fulfil the GTO requirements here.'[83] Swimming, canoeing, volleyball, were among the sports played here. Amateur parachutists could jump from the parachuting tower, while less intrepid workers could stroll in the alleys bordered with statues, discussing their artistic merit. At one end of the park, on Lenin Hills a ski jump was set up during the winter, while most of the central section of the park was transformed into a six square mile skating rink.
- The park also hosted some of the more banal features of everyday life, such as a post office, inter-city telephones, and a hairdressing salon.

Over seven million people visited Gorky Park every year. They were the envy of fellow travellers; H. G. Wells wrote in 1934: 'When I die in the capitalist world, and am reborn in Socialist heaven, I would like to awake immediately in the Park of Culture and Leisure'[84] It would probably have been hard to find a single Muscovite who, by 1938 had not visited Gorky Park or another park of culture and rest (the Stalin Park in the North of the city, the Krasnopresnensky Park, Luzhniki, etc.). Although they were slightly more

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[82] These activities and facilities were accessible from 10:00 to 23:00. The entrance charge to the park was 30 kopecks.
[83] Eksler, p. 508. About the GTO movement, see the ninth mosaic.
[84] Eksler, p. 512.

modest, most parks of culture and rest, whether in Moscow or in other cities of the Soviet Union, were built on this same model,[85] the parks being as reproducible as the statues.

> 'Parks of culture and rest,' recently opened in many cities across the Soviet Union, were intended to offer a new kind of cultured leisure to the masses. They were parks with attractions, rides, dance-floors, pavilions and kiosks. The prototype was Gorky Park in Moscow, planned and directed by an American, Betty Gan For the opening of the park, [...] more than 10,000 people arrived in the first three hours. Every foreign visitor who went to Russia visited Gorky Park and left a description of it, variously emphasising the entertainment aspect, like Ferris wheels, bowling alleys, dance-floors, and cinemas, and the educational aspect of newspaper readings, agitational corners, and so on. (Almost everyone mentioned the parachute jump.)[86]

Fifteenth mosaic; Farther, higher, faster

'Soviet pilots must, and will fly farther than all, higher than all, and faster than all.'[87] This slogan in white hand-written letters is printed on the back cover of *Ogonek*, a popular journal, under an image identical to the one on the fifteenth mosaic; a long-winged U-2, a training plane used by the *Komsomol* and various workers' unions.

The U-2 in the mosaic is red and white, its white belly acquiring the red and orange tints of the clouds above it. The clouds represented in broad strips resemble a Suprematist backdrop set for the aeroplane. The unity of colours in this mosaic flattens the image and suggests that the plane and sky are equally affected by the hues of the setting sun; in the 'Sovietised' sky, there is no distinction between planes as man-made objects and the clouds.

In the second chapter of this study, an important shift in conceptions and projected uses for the sky was described. It was argued that celestial space needed to be redefined once Soviet citizens, professional and amateur pilots and sky pedestrians of all kinds, inhabited it. The sky was thereafter understood not as an empty place above the

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[85] For a comprehensive description of the several Moscow parks already in operation by 1936, see *Parki Kul'tury i Otdykha Moskvy*, Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1936.
[86] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 94.
[87] *Ogonek*, 22 (1936), back cover.

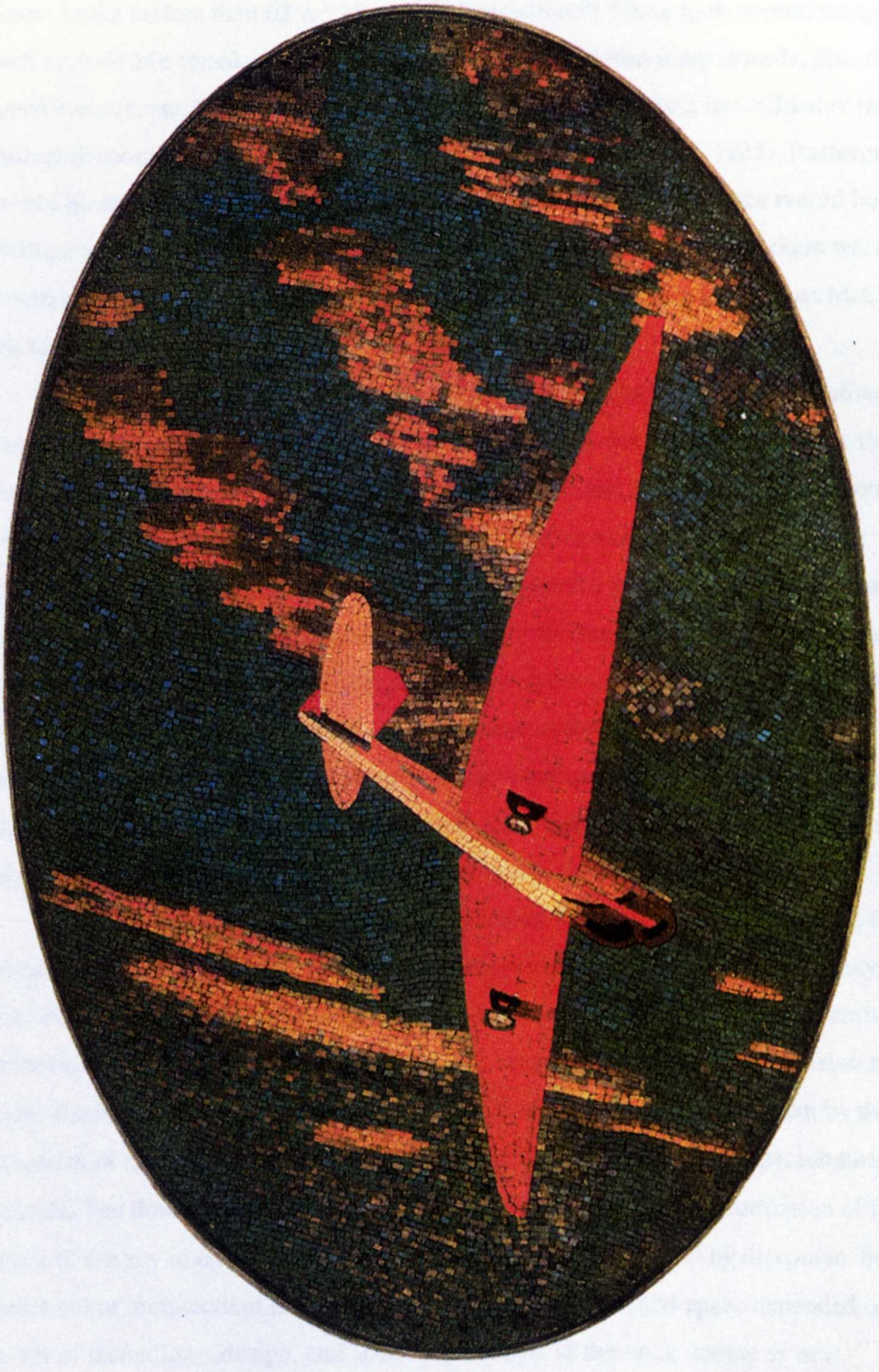

Fig. 45. Fifteenth mosaic

heads of ordinary workers, but as another space of self-development, both for private human beings and for citizens anticipating the needs of their country, by training for all eventualities.

In *Red Arctic*, John McCannon noted that between 1933 and 1938, the Soviet Union broke no less than 62 world records in aviation.[88] These span several categories, such as male and female glider records, parachuting and free-jump records, distance and speed records, etc. The names of celebrities were on everybody's lips: Chkalov (see thirteenth mosaic), Ratsevskaya (first female glider record holder, 1935), Rastorgnev (world glider record holder, 1937), Zelenova (first female long-distance record holder, 1935), etc. Furthermore, in the late thirties, over 13 million ordinary workers were members of Osoaviakhim and other flying clubs. This whole climate is what McCannon has termed the 'air-mindedness' of the inter-war period.

The space of the sky is ruled by a specific set of spatial practices, whether engendered by the regime that exploits it, or imposed by the law of gravity. But there is a further tension between discourse on the sky as a 'national space,' spread out over the national land, and a more abstract space, understood as a category, which can be mastered. In the thirties, Soviet technology had created a world where gravity could be dominated, as in the aforementioned *Victory over the Sun* by Kruchenykh. Furthermore, distance stopped being a purely geographic concern, but instead became a strategic one, or a matter of prestige. In any case, it had become a mental category more or less removed from immediate practical use. This was the space of records, the sky used for national prestige and ideological propaganda. Like Lissitzky's *prouns*, abstract mastering of space could at a later time be adapted to concrete spatial needs.

The purpose of record setting, for example, had little to do with space in the material sense. Height and distance were conceived as expressions of power; they served the need to impress populations inside and outside the Union. This logic was embodied in this specific spatialisation of the sky, in the exaggerated horizontal dimension referred to by distance records (measured in the convention of kilometres rather than by the necessity of flying from point A to B) and in the abstract verticality of parachuting records. The domination of the sky could be understood as the transformation of the space of the sky into a representation of space, by occupation and by discourse, but not structural or architectural means. The production of this mental space depended on high levels of technology, design, and specific practices, to the same degree as new constructions on the ground and underground might require.

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[88] McCannon, p. 68.

> Proponents of strategic bombing argued that 'air power' would be the key to the wars of the future, and the widespread currency of their ideas led a broad consensus that an aeroplane's most desirable attribute was its range - its ability to cover and affect as much territory as possible. The result was to make distance-flying records the most sought honours in the world aviation community. This was the case in the USSR, as elsewhere; of the three elements of the nation's aviation motto - 'faster, higher and farther' - 'farther' became the most important. Soviet pilots strove as earnestly as their counterparts in America and Europe to capture distance records for their country.[89]

Throughout the thirties, the sky alternatively expanded and shrank, as Soviet citizens established more records. The spirit of competition and record setting needed to be maintained, for the USSR to keep its position in record books. Consequently more pilots and parachutists were trained and encouraged to push the limits of the explored sky; this is, indeed, the logic of record breaking. Therefore the limits of the sky, the celestial dome, were constantly pushed, deferred, as pilots and parachutists reached higher and farther. The sky became flexible, it stretched with every new human victory, with every new advance of technology or extraordinary display of human will. The sky was no longer a backdrop for the stars, an unoccupied region, or inhabited by witches, angels or a benevolent God. This was a strategic, theoretical sky.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this concept of sky implies a total break with physical space and an entry into purely conceptual space, philosophical space and ideological space. The slogan 'faster, higher and farther' would therefore imply a domination of natural space, if it weren't constantly brought back, by means of rhetoric, to correspond to strategic needs, like Lissistzky's *prouns*. This disregard for geography, the pure exploration of distance and speed, was justified by the regime in the very last instance by the interests of the motherland and the protection of the national borders. Indeed, as the record setter Chkalov mentioned after his 1937 long-distance flight: 'May our enemies know that at the first word of our government a thousand of Stalin's Eagles, instructed by you [Stalin], will rise to the sky, and will shield the country with their breast.'[90] Gromov made a similar pledge:

> In 20 years, our airforce has become a power, which at a moment's notice can smash any enemy that dares to attack our country... But we, the Soviet people,

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[89] McCannon, p. 70.

[90] Valery Chkalov, *Vysoko nad Zemley*, Moscow: Detskoy Literatury, 1939, p. 96.

> are not content with this, and we are moving in rapid strides toward communism.[91]

The sky has rarely been theorised by Western scholars interested in the 'production of space.' Indeed, as a space not readily subjected to private property, it deviates from the constructed terrestrial space of the capitalist world. Although it is used for transportation and defence, it serves no immediate production interests.[92] It could, however, be argued that in the Soviet Union of the thirties, where the production of national pride was as important as, and often indistinguishable from, the production of goods, the production of the sky can be examined within a similar theoretical framework as the production of ground space.

Sixteenth mosaic; The Pole is ours

The sixteenth mosaic represents a twin engine bomber night flight. The sky is stormy; the flying conditions appear dangerous. Two planes are flying in parallel paths. Bright security lights, represented in the mosaic by white dots light up their tail and wings. The silhouette of two other planes appear through the brownish clouds. They are barely visible. This image (one of the two mosaic configurations repeated in the station) could refer to a number of events, real and imaginary. It is possible to link this to the general theme of Arctic exploration. In 1938, the planes depicted here were top of the line Soviet technology. However, they were not the types of planes used for flying long distance or to break speed records. They were slow and somewhat clumsy. Being bombers, they had the possibility to carry massive cargo or large groups of people. This was necessary for setting up research stations in the great North, but also for rescue missions.

One such operation, by far the most famous, was the rescue of the Chelyuskin crew. The Chelyuskin maritime expedition attempted to go through the Northeast Passage in efforts to turn it into a viable commercial and communication seaway. Four mariners had attempted this feat before; none had managed to get through the passage

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[91] Part of Gromov's address at a school for collective farmers on November 16, 1937. In *USSR in Construction*, 4 (1938), n. p.

[92] The rare studies dealing with air space usually focus on military occupation of the sky and on the strategic arms race, rather than on the 'production of the sky.' A noteworthy example is Vincent Mosco, 'Strategic Offence: Star Wars as Military Hegemony,' in Les Levidow and Kevin Robins (eds.), *Cyborg World: The Military Information Society*, London: Free Association Books, 1989, pp. 87-112.

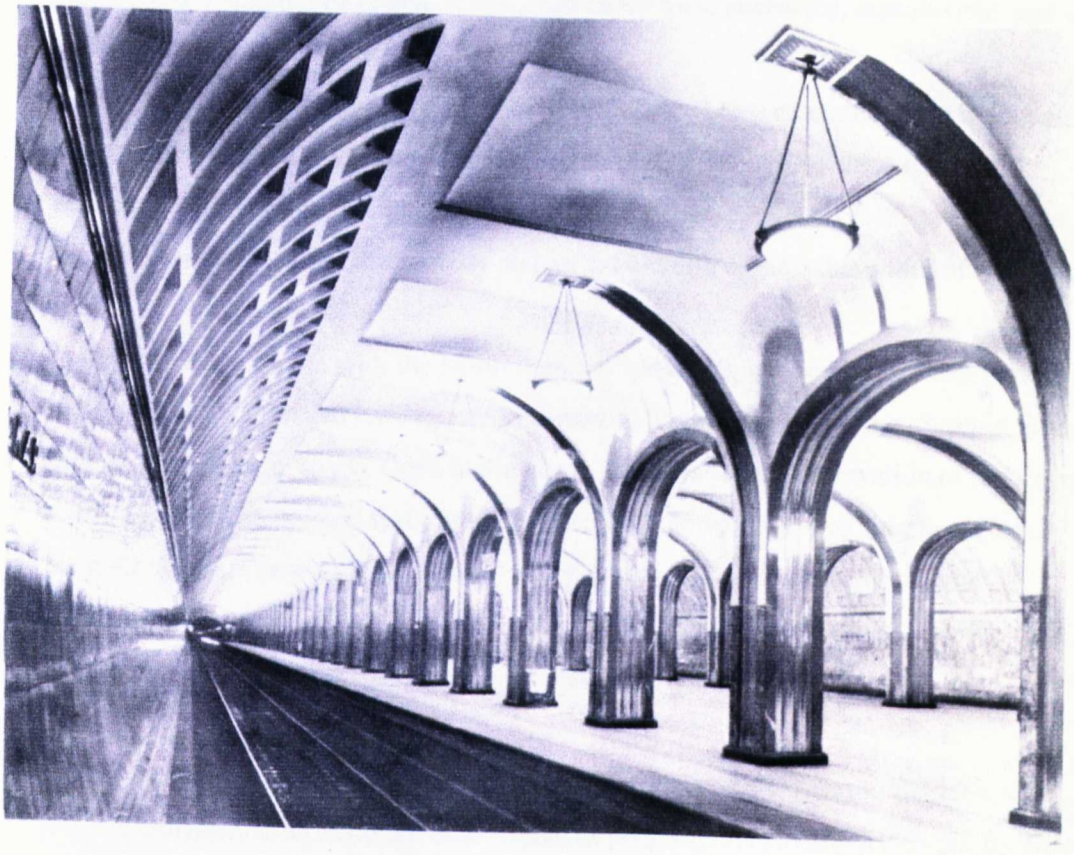

Fig. 46. Sixteenth mosaic
Fig. 47. View of Mayakovskaya, 1930s

without spending at least one long winter locked in the Arctic seas. Unfortunately, the Chelyuskin was also trapped in ice flows with a crew of 104 (including a little girl and a baby born during the expedition) during the winter of 1933-1934. In February 1934, the ship sank. The 'Chelyuskinites,' as they were to be known, established camp on the ice, and immediately set to building makeshift airfields, in view of their rescue. The focus in the press coverage of the event was transferred from ship to aircraft, from sea to sky.

'For almost a month, the pilots braved the Arctic winter, trying to force their way through blizzards and fog banks to Camp Schmidt, but to no avail.'[93] Over a dozen aviators, some famous for setting records, made attempts to locate the camp. The entire country was in suspense as it waited for daily radio updates on the rescue efforts of the Chelyuskinites.

The Arctic seems to have occupied the Soviet imagination as a space that couldn't be conquered as readily as the space of the city. Constructed space could be manipulated formally and ideologically, but nature was standing its ground. Even while Michurin was transforming nature through genetic manipulations (see third mosaic), the Great North could not be tamed. It remained capricious, uncharted, inaccessible, and of an indeterminate dimension.

This conception of the mysterious North bears some resemblance to the magical constitution of Medieval space. Indeed, the fascination exerted by the unchartered territory reflects neither the hostility towards unruly nature of the 1910s, as expressed in *Victory over the Sun*, nor the socially and architecturally organisable space of the 'great plans.'

The fascination with the North is somewhat of a spatial oddity for that period, which generally seems to have ignored the natural. Indeed, very little was written in the thirties about natural space. Until Stalin wrote a decree on the preservation of nature in 1952, nature, as something that might resist organised planning, was simply excluded from discourse. The concept of nature, which is part of Stalinist imagery, is the productive land of the Soviet *kolkhoz*, or that transformed by technology. For example, when referring to painted Socialist Realist landscapes, Matthew Cullerne Bown noted that:

> Painted landscapes were called on, above all, to bear witness to Soviet transformation of nature in the name of progress. As Arkady Rylov put it, 'Never has man interfered so actively in the life of nature as the citizens of my socialist native land. How could this remain unnoticed by an artist?'[94]

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[93] McCannon, p. 65. Camp Schmidt was named after the leader of the expedition.
[94] Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist*, p. 161.

However, Arctic exploration, and more specifically the rescue of the Chelyuskin crew, prompted different responses to uncharted territories, unsocial and uncivilised. For example, Anna Sushkina, a Chelyuskinite, noted her impressions as she was about to be evacuated and brought back to Moscow:

> That sunny day, the wild beauty of the primeval chaos about us looked especially brilliant... thick ancient flows in emerald blocks; icy grottoes and caves burning with a deep sapphire blue; and the crystals of snow glittering like dazzling diamonds. There were hardly any of the dull grey and white tones in which the Arctic is usually painted.[95]

It might therefore not be surprising that Deineka could have alluded to the Arctic in this representation of unruly, perhaps hostile sky, the only one in the cycle. At any rate, it is very probable that viewers might have established the link. The enchanted land of the Russian fairy tale, what was earlier defined by the term 'Medieval,' is the space where people lose and find themselves. It alters destinies, and permits those who are strong enough to emerge transformed by the magic spatiality, to be inscribed. This process was described in the previous chapter. Conversely, travellers, explorers, and settlers typically configure the new lands they encounter in terms of the preconceptions they bring with them from their own world. They inscribe and reshape nature by charting it, by describing it with ideologically motivated language, or by building upon it, using its resources, or exploiting it in any other way, for the benefit of their society. This induces that nature is as constructed as the space of the city. That any space, even the apparently most natural and the wildest, is, in fact, composed by signs and the ideology that there is no *a priori* authenticity of space, even in the Arctic nature.

After returning to the capital, the leader of the Chelyuskin expedition, the famous bearded Otto Schmidt, who is featured in several photographs alongside Stalin, declared:

> Nature subordinates herself to man when he knows how to arm himself for a fight and when he does not come out alone, but in a large group supported by the warm love of millions of citizens. And in this case, nature had to yield and sign an honourable treaty of peace with man.[96]

John McCannon has argued that the Arctic has a strong hold on the Russian mindset. As he points out in his introduction in *Red Arctic*, the term Arctic is vague. It is an abstract place, whose migrating borders are defined less by geography than by climate, danger factor and myth. While political economy was perhaps one of the most determinant

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[95] Quoted in McCannon, p. 86.
[96] Quoted in McCannon, p. 87.

factors in Arctic exploration, incentives also included strong considerations of prestige and myth-making.

As opposed to the hero-building trend, which was almost exclusively active within the borders of the country, the mastering of strategic space had both national and international repercussions. For example, in 1937 the USSR became the first nation in history to land an aircraft at the North Pole. In fact, the play *A Pilot's Dream* opened at the Variety Theatre in Moscow on May 21, 1937. It told the story of the first squadron of Soviet pilots landing at the North Pole. Remarkably, it coincided with the actual landing.[97] From this incursion into the Arctic space, the country also took the opportunity to build the first scientific observation post at the North Pole. Otto Schmidt, the leader of the Chelyuskin expedition was in charge of the station. This (incomplete) integration of the North Pole into Soviet spatiality had implications in terms of the assimilation of nomadic lifestyles, the acquisition of new resources and knowledge, and the seizure of a strategic territory. This particular occupation of space was farther reaching than that of record setting.

DANGER! - Do not stand at the edge of the platform

She stands exactly at the centre of the platform, equidistant from the first step of the escalator on one side and the blind wall, which concludes the space. This is where she likes to stand every morning, waiting for her train. On the grey wall made of square panels in a grey-green diorite, a white strip displays the train's trajectory: Falcon, Airport, Dynamo, Belaruskaya, Mayakovskaya, and Ploshchad Sverdolva.[98]

The train rushes in. She steps backward, suddenly afraid of its speed. The doors slide open, people gush out, others hurry to occupy seats in the wagons. An older lady in a light sweater slips in front of her. She leaves behind a smell of onions, work and alcohol. Children run in as the doors close: 'Be careful!' A voice hovers.' Doors are closing. Next station Belaruskaya...' She remembers the small booklet given to her a few years back at the opening of the first line of the Metro: *What the Passenger of the Metropoliten Should Know*.[99] Inspiring words, by comrades Stalin and Kaganovich, were printed in red and black letters on the first few pages. Inside, small photographs of the stations and maps of the neighbourhoods they serve, statistics on the dimensions, speed,

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[97] McCannon, pp. 100 and 117.

[98] See map of the Moscow Metro in September 1938, drawn by Marcus Hill, in Karen Kettering, 'An introduction to the Design of the Moscow Metro in the Stalin Period: "The Happiness of Life Underground,"' *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 2 (2000), p. 3.

[99] The aforementioned booklet by Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen Znat' Passazhir Metropolitena*.

and efficiency of the metro, and finally, in bold letters, the rules of behaviour for the users of the system:

Entrance into the Metro is prohibited to:

passengers in a drunken condition,

with cumbersome baggage,

in soiled clothing, or carrying hand luggage releasing foul smells,

or which could spoil other passengers' clothing and dirty the wagon,

with sharp or cutting tools,

rifles or hunting weapons,

animals or birds.[100]

In the Metro it is forbidden to

smoke,

spit,

produce loud noises,

sing and play,

dirty the cars and stations,

soil the floors, walls, furnishings, etc.[101]

Most of the time these rules were obeyed. However, she had, herself, been known to chirp the occasional tune picked up from an Aleksandrov musical.

She might be thinking to herself that these practices are somewhat similar to how one behaved in church. She might remember the feeling of respect, which seemed to be a natural response to the cold marble floor, the high groin vaults and the colourful frescoes representing the saints. These new spaces were not entirely unlike the spaces of the old regime, at least with respect to their monumentality.

Although Dushkin never mentioned specific influences of his architectural designs for Mayakovskaya, many parallels might spring to mind. With its ribbed square buttresses, its semi-circular transversal arches, its high vaults, and its platform constructed as a nave flanked by two aisles, Mayakovskaya is a definite inheritor of the Romanesque. It certainly owes much more to Western European Christian architecture, than to the Byzantine tradition.[102]

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[100] Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, p. 23.

[101] Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, p. 24.

[102] Western, classic tendencies in architecture became popular in Russia during the 18th century and reached their peak popularity in the middle of the 19th century. An important example of the tendency would be the Andreevsky hall in the Kremlin (by K. Ukhtomsky,

Aside from the Cluniac influence, Mayakovskaya also reminds one of mid-nineteenth century 'glass-and-iron' architecture. Constructions such as the Halles Centrales de Paris had been discussed in Russia, as almost everywhere else in the world, for the engineering and aesthetic possibilities they unveiled. The iron-framed pavilion, roofed almost entirely in glass, might have been a source for the stainless steel structure and mock skylights (the mosaics) of Mayakovskaya. Furthermore, the glass-and-iron architecture of the Haussmann reconstruction was made of pre-fabricated pieces. Similarly, for the construction of Mayakovskaya, Dushkin appealed to A. Putilov, aircraft engineer, frequent Tupolev collaborator, and himself inventor of the *Stal-2*, which was the first all stainless steel aircraft.[103] The beams were designed and shaped at the State Aircraft Factory, before they were integrated into the structure of the station.

Another possible link would be Tatlin's monument designed, yet never constructed, for the Third International meeting of 1919. The famous communication centre[104] was to wear its metallic skeleton as a skin, referring to its own materiality as well as its inherent modernity. Similarly, the stainless steel arches in Mayakovskaya are simultaneously ornamental, referential and structural.

Had the user been fully aware of these architectural links, and others, she might have seen contradictions in the use of certain forms that were displaced for different architectural applications: from a 12th century catholic temple, Paris' main wholesale market, or an utopian Bolshevik design to a Stalinist Metro station.

The ceiling of the station displays 35 cupola, which nest Deineka's representations. Each copula is fitted with 16 hexagonal lamps. They alternate with small stainless steel hammers and sickles at the periphery of the mosaic. The light fixtures provide lighting for the mosaics and by the same token, they bathe the platform in a white artificial glow. From a certain angle, they resemble suspended chandeliers.

The floor and grey wall panels were cut from coloured marble imported from various parts of the Union. According to Dushkin the reddish and black square patterns on the floor refer to Malevich's non-objective art, and are a testimony to Mayakovsky's Futurist past.[105] Although this is an interesting parenthesis, the allusion most certainly

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1849), which sports thin piers, high arches separated by oval ornaments on its ceiling. Mayakovskaya station bears resemblance to this hall.

[103] *Stal* means steel. The *Stal-2* was awarded the Order of Lenin in 1932.

[104] The kinetic structure was to contain a radio station, conference rooms and fulfil a variety of propagandistic functions.

[105] Natalia Dushkina, p. 61. There was already abundant use of marble in the first stations of the Metro. Discovery of several new mineral deposits throughout the thirties diversified possible uses of stone for decorative purposes. Architects of the second phase of the *Metropoliten* were not refused any material, however rare or costly. Marble,

went unnoticed by most users, who were, for the majority, unaware of recent art historical developments, especially iconoclastic Futurist ones. While only few would understand the Suprematist allusion, many would have felt the spatial distortions caused by the floor patterns, contributing with the succession of arches to emphasise the perspective of the underground construction.

There is no place to sit down in Mayakovskaya. The architects of the first two lines did not seem to think that sitting was a proper way to use the space, or a proper spatial practice for it. The only exception to this rule was Ploshchad Revolutsii station, also designed by Dushkin (1938).[106] The long hall of the Mayakovskaya underground platform ends on a blind wall. Originally, two entrances had been planned for Mayakovskaya. The construction process unfolding on Gorky Street delayed the piercing of the second opening, and the plan was never completed.[107] This *cul-de-sac* orients movement in a very specific way. Users waiting for other users tend to cross the whole length of the station and congregate by the wall, where there is less traffic. The middle of the platform hosts a mixture of people walking and standing, boarding and exiting trains. At the origin of the platform, users pour out of the escalator, or hop onto it. They constitute a dense and chaotic mass. It is easy to imagine how the whole dynamic of the space would be transformed, if the second access to this station were ever built. This change would transform the space, and would be disorienting for its regular users.

At the open extremity, near the escalators bound upward and downward, a Metro attendant stands, supervising the use of the underground space. He or she preserves order:

> The staff of the *Metropoliten* has been specially trained to keep order in the station and safety when entering and exiting of the passengers; to give them explanations, information and provide help if necessary. The passengers must comply with all the rules of the *Metropoliten*.
>
> **Passengers are required to keep order and follow the instructions of the Metro staff.**
>
> **Enter the car only after disembarking passengers have left it.**
>
> **Leave the car after complete halt.**

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rhodonite and diorite were used in Mayakovskaya. See Akademiia Arkhitektury SSSR, *Arkhitektura Moskovskogo Metropolitena*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Arkhitekturnoe Izdatel'stvo Akademii Arkhitektury SSSR, 1941, pp. 4, 49 and 111.

[106] There is now one wooden bench in the station. It has been placed by the exit. From the 1940s, most stations were fitted with seats. The history of Metro benches is detailed in Ekaterina Morozova, 'Lavochka Imeni Kaganovicha,' *Taburet*, 4 (1999), pp. 128-131.

[107] The construction of the second entrance/exit is still in project today.

Travelling in the tunnel on the external surface of the wagon could be fatal.

DANGER! - Do not stand at the edge of the platform, do not leave the platform for the tracks.[108]

These rules on how to behave within the space and interact with other users contribute to the monumentality of the space.

Seventeenth mosaic; And it started to chime the 'International'

A small, yet distinct sign added to a space might force it to leap from one symbolic system into another. As it has been mentioned before, each society produces its own spaces. Indeed, Soviet spatiality, in spite of its obstinacy to carry its Russian past within it, is inherently distinct from tsarist Russian spatiality. This means that spaces have to be either created (built) or re-created (appropriated). For example, even if the confectionery, owned by the Khludov merchant family before the Revolution, worked in a different system of production after 1917, it only truly became 'red' when it was re-baptised 'Red October.'[109] Similarly, the *Kremlin* appropriated as the seat of the government by the Bolsheviks in 1918 was only fully occupied under Stalin, when the double-headed eagle, symbol of the Russian tsarist crown, was taken down from the tower peaks and replaced by ruby-coloured stars in 1937.

In the seventeenth mosaic, Spasskaya tower reappears (see seventh mosaic), with its gold-rimmed clock and the ruby-red star crowning its pointed roof. This time, the tower is set against a dark reddish sky, spotted with small, yet plump and curvaceous clouds. The illuminated star shines brightly, its colour echoed by a red flag floating at the right of the tower. Assuming the viewer occupies the same position as in the seventh mosaic, a gigantic *dirizhibl* (dirigible aircraft) hovers right above her head...above Red Square.

What might first strike the viewer are the shiny gold rim of the clock and the ruby red star. In 1917, the clock had been damaged during the Red Guard attack on the *Kremlin*. It is said that Lenin, personally, had it repaired. The chimes were then altered. 'The clock, after the move of the Soviet government from Petrograd to Moscow, was fixed by Lenin's order by the metalworker Berns, and it started to play the International.'[110] The gilding of the clock was also restored in the thirties. This is

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[108] Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, p. 21-22.

[109] The factory, situated on the banks on the Moscow River, less than two miles away from the *Kremlin*, was responsible for most confectionery available in the Moscow region, both before and after the Revolution.

[110] Dlugach and Portugalov, p. 14.

Fig. 48. Seventeenth mosaic
Fig. 49. 'Happy New Year,' postcard, 1939

Fig. 50. Military parade on Red Square, 1938

the only use of golden smalto in the station, along with the previous image of Spasskaya, of course.

The *Kremlin* previously symbolised both the secular and ecclesiastic power of the State. All financial and commercial activity had been carried on outside its walls. Red Square, adjacent to the *Kremlin* wall, had been the main Moscow market. There are 18 towers to the *Kremlin* wall. Spasskaya tower is the tallest and the most intricately designed of the towers; it always performed a major symbolic function, even during the pre-Petrine period. The Spassky gate, adjacent to the tower, was used as the entrance and exit for the tsars and other important subjects. During the reign of Peter the Great, old believers refusing to shave their beards were executed at the feet of Spasskaya.

During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, a gothic spire was added to the earlier tower. The original structure had been erected by the Italian architect Antonio Solari in the fifteenth century, under Ivan III, in a mixture of Gothic and Italian Renaissance. The architecture of the *Kremlin* wall and towers is ambiguous. It is a hybrid of representations of space, referring to different historical periods. What does this imply? Simply, that the transition between architectural styles is gradual, and part of a long elaboration of an ever-changing spatiality. Therefore, many codes of space can coexist in a construction. Style can be borrowed from different historical times and spaces, to suit specific spatial needs. In this sense, strict formal issues are of relatively minor importance. Form is only important inasmuch as it conveys effectively spatial relations, such as monumentality, security, religiosity, etc. How has this tower become a symbol of the Soviet Union? By neighbouring government buildings, chiming the Soviet anthem the 'International,' framing all popular events held on Red Square, appearing at the centre of maps illustrating the Plan of Reconstruction of Moscow,[111] and by wearing the illuminated five-pointed symbol of Soviet communism high for everyone to see from a distance.

The process of appropriation of space is complex. The red star can function metonymically and stand in for the occupation of the Spasskaya tower by the Bolsheviks, or of any other tsarist space. The tower, with its red star, appeared often in all kinds of publications and on small objects, such as cutlery, cigarette boxes, hand towels, etc. Quite often, a black and white line drawing of the tower was printed, topped by a red full-block star. It appeared in films and books, on candy wrappers from the Red October factory, even on postcards. For example, a 1939 postcard represents the tower against a starry sky. The whole tower is as red as its star. At the bottom of the image, the hand-

[111] In the thirties, Spasskaya tower, crowned with its star, was the symbol of the *Kremlin* to be found on maps.

written greeting *C Novym Godom!* (Happy New Year!) The clock in the postcard representation marks midnight, as does the one in the seventeenth mosaic. The small, white five-pointed stars dispersed in the sky seem to echo the larger red one. This seems to be a promise of dissemination of the spirit of socialism, and of its representational spaces.[112]

The idea of dissemination is thought provoking. In fact, if the substitution of the double-headed eagle for a red star marks a radical, yet incomplete, appropriation of the space, the dissemination of this image in discourse and representations is much more important. However, resistance to the dissemination occurs because of the persistence of mental images and inner discourses. The tension expressed here is similar to what happens in an ambigramme, the optical illusion that consists of two images juxtaposed on a single page, which allows the viewer to only perceive them in turn. Both images are materially present on the page, yet only one can be perceived at a time. A classical example of this is the representation of two profiles, nose to nose, which alternates with the representation of a candle perched on a candle sick, appearing in the open space left by the black profiles, forcing the former to disappear momentarily. Other examples are spaces that alternatively recede or jump out of the page. As any recently appropriated space, Spasskaya was involved in a similar dance, at least in the mind of Muscovites, who may have witnessed the rather long process, when scaffolding went up, the double-headed eagle was taken down, the star was put in its place, and the scaffolding was taken down.

According to a photographic display published in the journal *Arkhitektura SSSR*,[113] the stars were set atop five towers of the *Kremlin* wall between September 29 and October 23, 1937. Probably published a few months after the installation of the stars on the *Kremlin* towers, the 1937 guidebook *Osmotr Moskvy* describes the new addition to the towers.[114] Yet there are a few important discrepancies. First, the authors of the guidebook counted only four towers crowned by stars. Second, they predated the transformation by two years. Third, they erroneously stated that the stars had been crafted from semi-precious stones. Most Muscovites would still argue today that the stars atop the *Kremlin* are made of rubies imported from the Urals. This is indeed the version proposed by *Osmotr Moskvy*. The book description further claimed that the stars are studded with 1,300 semi-precious stones. This metaphor-become-fact can be related to

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[112] The artist responsible for this representation is O. Eiges. For a history of Russian and Soviet postcards, see M. Chapkina, *Khudozhestvennaia Otkrytka*, Moscow: Galart, 1993, p. 236.

[113] *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 12 (1937), p. 12-17.

[114] Dlugach and Portugalov, p. 15.

the symbolic use of marble from all republics in the Metro. They signify the participation of all the Union in the construction, and suggest the general wealth of the country.

While *Osmotr Moskvy* complies with the official narrative, *Arkhitektura SSSR* seems a more reliable source for technical information about the materiality of the space. The stars were, in fact, made of ruby-coloured glass. The sheer size of the stars (each between 3 and 3.25 meters across) would have made it difficult to find slabs of ruby large enough to fit that frame. Indeed, one has to reflect on the properties of the material before accepting the popular version. This differential space between discourse and material space is significant in this example; as it has been noted before, mental space was often more important to the Stalinist regime than empirical knowledge and practice.

Just as every tower is architecturally unique, every star differs from the next. Their structure was made of gilded steel, which echoes the golden frame of the Spasskaya tower clock. The steel frames were moulded at the Central Institute for Aero-hydrodynamics. At the centre of each star, the hammer and sickle, symbol of the regime was added. It is barely visible at street level. The stars rotate on an axis, following the whims of the wind.

In the eleventh mosaic, the juxtaposition of the *dirizhibl* and the red star of Spasskaya tower are markers of both space and time. The *dirizhibl* had been used in WWI as a bomb launch and anti-submarine patrol aircraft. However, the configuration including the Spasskaya tour star sets the representation in the thirties, or more precisely, after 1937, and on Red Square. In the inter-war period, the *dirizhibl* was mostly used as a symbol of appropriation of the space of the sky, in the way described with relation to the thirteenth and fifteenth mosaics. As a gigantic floating object during peacetime, it seemed more something to be marvelled at than an offensive weapon.

Made of duralium, a light alloy based on aluminium, the first Soviet *dirizhibl* designed by Tupolev in 1931, was officially presented to the population of Moscow on May Day 1932. There are many representations of public displays of the aircraft, such as Aleksandr Labas' '1st Soviet *Dirizhibl*,' an impressionistic representation of the aircraft floating low above a red-flag-waving crowd, painted in 1931. Many photographs also document the *dirizhibl* flights. Along with flypasts and parachuting events, it served the symbolic inscription of the sky, as a space mastered/inhabited by the Soviets.

Of course, the *dirizhibl,* like all aircraft during that period, can shift in meaning between war and peace because it is subjected to the ambigramme effect referred to earlier. Yet, in the thirties, it was used mostly as a means of charting the sky. It also participated in the record setting trend. For example, the SSSR-V6 appeared on the cover

of *Ogonek* in June 1935, after having returned from a record breaking 40-hour non-stop flight, from Moscow to Archangelsk and back to Moscow on May 18.

Eighteenth mosaic; Night as space

The eighteenth mosaic depicts a solitary parachutist engaged in a night jump. Folds in the canopy indicate that the parachute has just recently been opened. It is not fully extended. Yet, there is no plane in sight. As in a previous representation of a solo jump (the sixth mosaic), the sex of the sky pedestrian is impossible to determine. It is also difficult to say whether this is a civilian jump or a military one. The parachuting gear bears no identifying feature. There is no plane in the sky to provide the viewer with a clue.

A night jump might seem to be too dangerous to be a sport jump. Indeed, most amateur jumping occurred during the day. However, *USSR in Construction* offers illustrated foldout graphs of records in parachute jumping as well as free fall jumps, undertaken both during the day and night.[115] There were many disciplines associated with skydiving. They included solo and group jumps, precision jumping toward a target, aerial acrobatics during free fall, etc.

In 1935, the Soviet Union broke all world records for height and length of free fall. M. Zabelin established the male free fall record. Dropped at 7,397.5 meters, he seared through the dark sky for 7,252.4 meters, before opening his parachute at 145.1 meters over the ground. Other famous night divers include N. Kamneva. She established the first female free fall record in 1934 with a 3,048 meters total jump, with 2,697.5 meters of free fall.

The conception of the sky as an abstract space, measurable in terms of records and prestige, rather than practical use, has already been explored. Everything already written in this study about the space of record setting applies to the eighteenth mosaic, with the difference that the axis of exploration of space is vertical, rather than horizontal. Just as the long-distance flights, sport jumps had a symbolic function, rather than a utilitarian one:

> [...] their dizzy but cool-headed leaps are the reflection of our Stalinist striving forward, our urge to soar higher, our desire to widen the horizons of life, to make it brighter, bigger and more joyous.[116]

I have so far avoided tackling one of the conceptions of space hinted at in the title of this chapter: night as space, rather than as a temporal category. Indeed, night possesses a spatiality of its own, or rather, it is a temporary state of spatiality. A space can be

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[115] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n. p.
[116] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n. p.

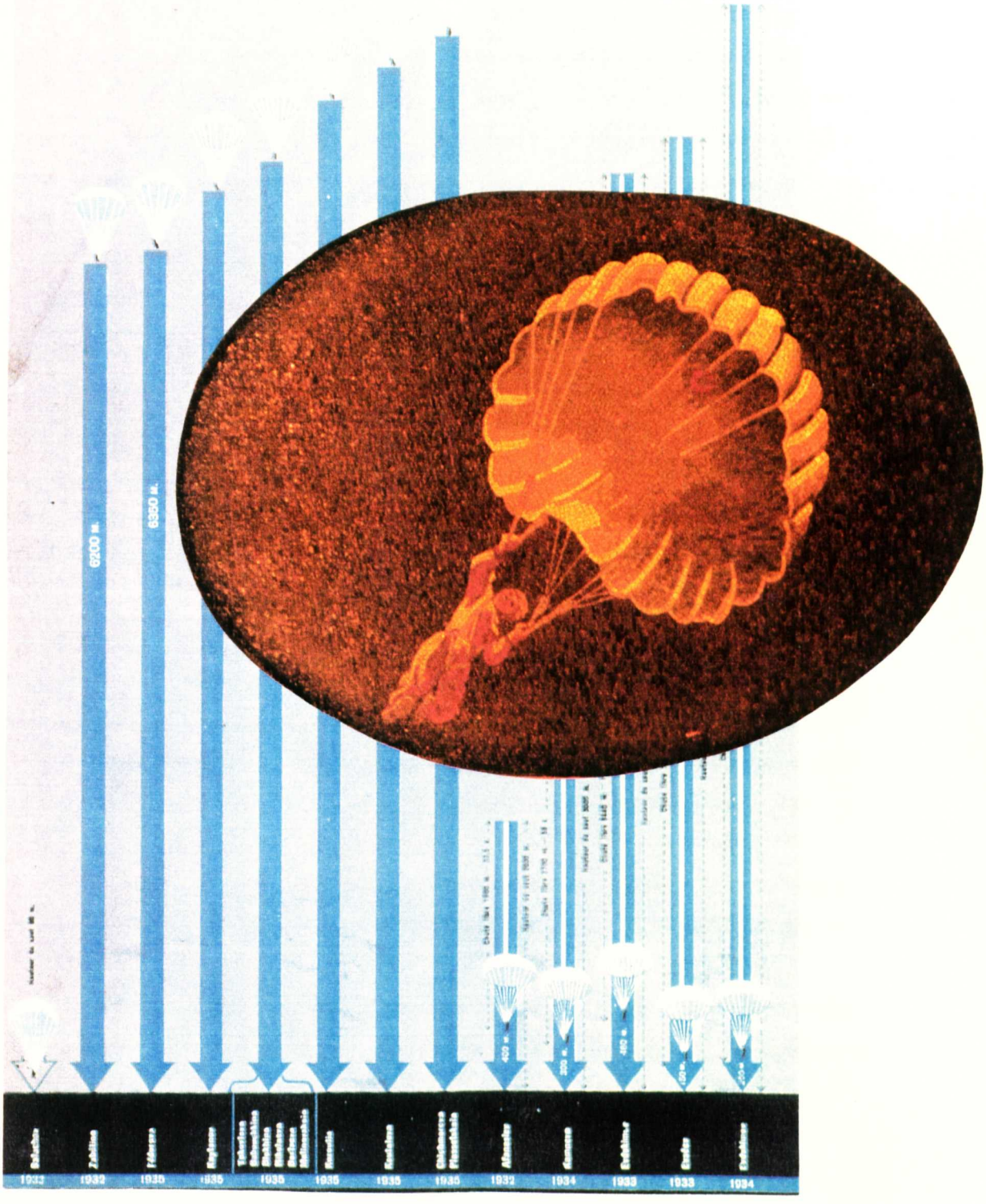

Fig. 51. Sky diving records from *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935)
Fig. 52. Eighteenth mosaic

appropriated and mutated by being renamed or adorned in a specific way. Space is also transformed in its temporal transitions between day and night, or throughout the calendar year. Night transforms perception, changes the aspects of things, the relation between objects, etc. Most importantly, it commands different spatial practices. For example, issues of security arise when one is walking alone at night. The pedestrian is, therefore, likely to avoid certain spaces, modify her pace, adopt a specific body posture, or think specific thoughts. This ultimately implies that night projects a different spatial structure.[117]

The jump represented in the mosaic seems dangerous for a civilian jump. This is because night, whether terrestrial or celestial, while it offers different possibilities, also hides different dangers. Night is the ultimate mysterious, uncharted space, even more than the Arctic. It is unlimited, chaotic, and unpredictable. Night is populated with all kinds of phenomena, which rarely make their presence known during the day. By their 'cool-headed leaps,' the sky pedestrians mentioned in *USSR in Construction* are meant to scare away Medieval night demons. Therefore, this night jump might convey the effort to gain victory over night, as well as master the vertical dimension.

Nineteenth mosaic; Unidentified aircraft

Three rays of light expose a white, schematic representation of an aeroplane. The jay black sky is speckled with white stars formed by shiny pieces of white smalto. It is also slashed by chalky intersecting trajectories. The light rays widen and lose their intensity as they travel through the space of the night. Their orientation can be deduced. This organisation of space by rays of light recalls the Rayist work of Larionov and Goncharova, or the specific kind of Suprematism developed by Lyubov Popova. These artists were influenced by turn of the century popular-scientific explanations of light as matter, and as a space in itself.

The white biplane is not marked by red stars, letters, or any other symbol, which would permit to identify it. If the viewer concludes that this is an enemy plane discovered after entering the Soviet sky zone, then the image refers to air defence, and therefore includes discourse about the motherland, nationalism, geography, and ultimately war.

Yet, it might also refer to other kinds of unidentified aircraft; perhaps planes flown outside of the official plan, and therefore outside official discourse, and into differential space. An example of this can be found in the biography of Valery Chkalov, the aforementioned long-distance record setter. Chkalov was unequivocally the favourite pilot of the thirties, equally popular with the public and the government. He was,

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[117] The issue of the spatialisation of time will be examined in the following chapter.

however, a somewhat ambiguous figure, as an individual who constantly broke the boundaries of what was permitted by the Soviet system, as well as breaking records for the prestige of the Union. One episode of his life was told in this way:

> Chkalov was a brilliant instinctual flyer, preferring to rely on hunches and reflex rather than standard methodology or flying instruments. He was also a daredevil who disdained authority. As a cadet pilot, Chkalov gained a reputation as one of the most undisciplined aviators in the country. He repeatedly flew out of his school's training zone without permission and performed outrageous stunts. In what became his most famous breach of regulations (later immortalised in Mikhail Kalatozov's 1941 film *Valery Chkalov*), the brash young pilot looped and wove over the city of Leningrad, then swooped under one of the low bridges spanning the Neva River.[118]

Chkalov was routinely punished for being undisciplined. He was later condemned to a year in the stockade after putting the life of other pilots in danger in 1929. After serving only 19 days of his sentence, he was released. By the same token, he was discharged from the airforce. Yet, because he knew the sky exceptionally well, and could navigate better than anyone in the newly colonised space, Chkalov was reinstated as a test pilot in 1930.

After his celebrated return from North America, Chkalov spent a lot of his time touring and visiting schools. One can assume that the content of his public talks corresponded to what was published in the many books authored by the pilot during 1937 and 1938. In *Vysoko nad Zemley*, Chkalov confessed his early risk taking inclination. He repentingly contextualised pushing limits as something that should be guided by knowledge and praxis, and which should follow the Stalinist discourse.

> This idea became clear when, in the *Kremlin*, I heard the words of Comrade Stalin:
>
> -Courage, as they say, 'saves the town.' But this is only when courage, bravery and readiness to take risk are matched by excellent knowledge.[119]

The knowledge of space referred to by Stalin is in contention with the space of knowledge, or ideology. Several examples spring to mind. They all express the differential space that existed in the thirties between knowledge and discourse, or between a subjective position and that of the Party. Examples of scientists, educators, artists and others who were excluded from Soviet spatiality (discursively and/or

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[118] McCannon, p. 69.
[119] Chkalov, *Vysoko*, pp. 15-16.

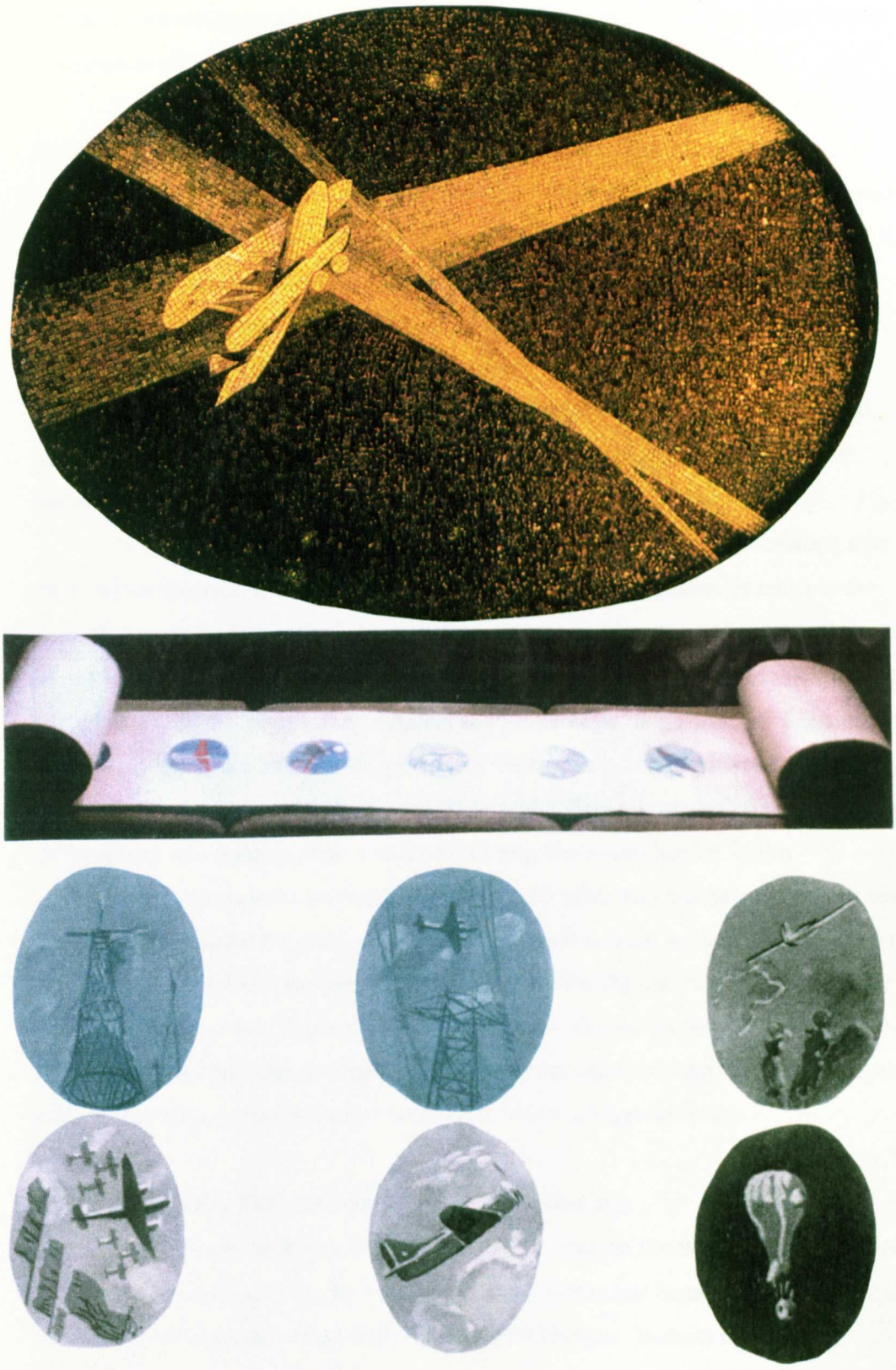

Fig. 53. Nineteenth mosaic
Fig. 54-60. Aleksandr Deineka, sketches for the Mayakovskaya mosaics, 1937

materially) abound, and eventually were erased from history. This attempt to erase dissidence would cause a general collapse of knowledge into discourse. It can also be described as a bid for myth, or the eradication of differential space.

The represented particles of light travelling at unimaginable speed originate from an unknown source outside the frame of the mosaics. They cut through the space of night. They disseminate through the infinite space of the sky. This is more than a spatial metaphor; it points to the production of representational space. As Rayism revealed, light is not just an objective function of any space. Admitting that night is a space (see eighteenth mosaic), light, as a property of this space, qualifies it. Light can, therefore, organise and distinguish successive spaces. In Mayakovskaya, light fluctuations contribute to telling a story. Indeed, in the overall series One day in the Soviet Land, light acts as a discreet narrator, organising a chronology of sorts, pressing the user through the hours of the day.

Yet, in the nineteenth mosaic light is more involved in the representation than in the previous mosaics. It structures the space formally and it signifies, as much as the plane that occupies less space in the sky than the rays of light. 'Light is a typical parergon: both outside, illuminating the object represented, and outside, constituting the very visibility of that object, it is marginal and yet centrally important.'[120] The particles of shiny matter would tell more of the story if their source could be identified, or if their origin outside the frame could be traced. They might place the viewer on an airfield, on the periphery of a training zone, in the city, or near the Soviet border. In this representation, the rays do not constitute the kind of light, which simply makes one see, it does not merely direct the gaze. It is what sees, as well as what is seen. It participates in both narrative and visual rhythm. It also reveals how the sky can be inscribed, literally written upon like paper. This resembles how Tatlin's Monument for the Third International was intended to project slogans onto the night sky, and how flypast pilots formed broad letters spelling the name of their leader among the clouds.

Twentieth mosaic; The synthesis of art and architecture

There are only slight variations between this mosaic and the sixteenth. The configuration of the clouds slightly differs; the intensity of dark browns and black has slightly shifted; the security lights on the wings of the planes seem brighter. There is no apparent narrative reason for the repetition.

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[120] Mieke Bal, 'Light in Painting; Dis-seminating Art History,' in Peter Brunette and David Wills (eds), *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 49.

A scroll kept at the Kursk Regional Museum[121] shows that Deineka had no shortage of ideas for the iconography he could use for the station.

> Thirty-five cupolae, 35 ceilings. A wealth of themes spring to mind. Images succeed one another: the country is being built, tractors and combines tread over immense *kolkhoz* fields, gardens blossom, fruit ripens... The youth work heroically and rest well, preparing for labour and defence. The pulse of life in the USSR beats strong, 24 hours a day.[122]

In order to preserve the integrity of the cycle, all that was required from the artist was that the representation be set against a dark sky. He could therefore have used his images of flypast in a moonlit sky, balloon flight or Shabolovskaya tower,[123] which he had sketched in small water-coloured ovals on the paper scroll. There are no documents to show what caused the repetition. Therefore, I can only advance a hypothesis. The originally planned representation, sketched in gouache on cardboard at the scale of the projected mosaic (none has been preserved), could not be successfully transferred from painting to smalto. The short period allotted the artist and the artisans to complete the whole cycle, six months in total, would have prompted the mosaists to use a successful, and sufficiently generic, mosaic twice.

Perhaps surprisingly, the effect of the mosaic is different than that of its predecessor. This is probably due to their contiguity to different images. While the sixteenth mosaic was inserted between a sky marked with the red and orange stripes of the sun soaked clouds and the calm firmament over Red Square, this one neighbours the darkest skies in the series, striped with artificial light beams, and a sky obstructed by chimneys spouting black and white clouds of smoke. Furthermore, if the parergon affects the core of the representation, so does its material frame. This means that the niche, which contains the representation, the 16 lights around its periphery, the perspective of the user on the architectural ensemble into which it was inserted, the immediate neighbours of the representation, and the users' bodies below, modify its content.

Lefebvre notes that wall enclosures, in general, give the false impression that there are separations between spaces.[124] In fact, there is an ambiguous continuity between contiguous spaces. For example, the user of Mayakovskaya brings her experience of the construction site of Gorky Street along when she walks into the vestibule of the station. But in a centrally planned city, this phenomenon is extended to

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[121] In Deineka's hometown.
[122] Deineka, 'Khudozhniki v Metro'(1938), in Sysoev, p. 141.
[123] The tour erected in 1920 (architect A. Shukhov) was Soviet Russia's first radio mast. The spiral metallic construction refers to Tatlin's Monument for the Third International.
[124] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 87.

everything that has been produced by, or appropriated by, the Socialist Realist plan. This is also the effect produced by the juxtaposition of Deineka's 33 visible representational spaces with the architectural space of the station, and the mosaics neighbouring one another.

History also leaves traces on the production of any given space. The space of Mayakovskaya is further contaminated by the outside world, by contiguity, and by its constant invasion by users carrying various spatial practices with them. These mutual influences, some consciously orchestrated by Dushkin, were central to the process of the creation of this space. Indeed, the 1930s were the theatre of a vast debate about the synthesis of art and architecture, which no architect or artist involved in the reconstruction of Moscow could have ignored.

Deineka occupied a cardinal position in the Moscow Union of Artists (Mosskh) debate on the integration of art and architecture into the new Soviet space. He believed that the highest form of art, in any medium, was its monumental, public form. His opinions, found in fragments in the Union's minutes,[125] are more coherently elaborated in a series of articles devoted to his own work, or to general questions of monumental art and propaganda.[126]

As early as 1934, in a collection of statements, published in the journal *Iskusstvo*, by different artists, sculptors and architects about monumental art, Deineka sketched a brief history of the participation of sculpture and painting in architecture. For example, he pointed out that icons placed in Russian churches did more than decorate the site. Instead, they contributed to forming meaning with (in) the built space. The artist continued with the idea that Moscow artists had had the opportunity to rebuild their city, as the world's only socialist capital. Because the mandate was not simply that of erecting buildings, but also of creating codes for Socialist spaces and Soviet culture, architects and artists were under the obligation to pull together:

> In any case, the artist needs to be equal to the task of the architect. On the other hand, in the project phase, the architect has to consider all means of widening the overall potential and using all possibilities, which lay in painting and in three-dimensional representations.[127]

In another article, focusing on his own ceiling panels for the Mayakovskaya station, Deineka traced the history of mosaics, as a medium which has played an important role in monumental spaces, back to the days of the Roman Empire. He noted that, as opposed

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[125] Kept at the Russian Archive of Art and Literature (RGALI), Moscow.
[126] All articles published by Deineka were gathered in the aforementioned *Aleksandr Deineka* by Vladimir Sysoev.

to large-scale painting or sculpture, a mosaic is always built *in situ*, therefore, fully participating in the creation of meaning through a site. Deineka's mosaics, set on concrete maintained by a steel carcass, inserted in Mayakovskaya were the first representational underground mosaics in Russia, and possibly in the world: 'Mosaics in the Metro – this is the first attempt to revive this wonderful material in our Soviet Art.'[128] After this experiment, many other sites were completed with smalto representations, created by Deineka himself (for example, Novokuznetskaya station, by the architect V. Frolov, 1943) and other artists.

> The task was exceptional: the Metro had to be beautiful, both structurally and aesthetically. The style of the Metro was born through the synthesis of the labour of scientists and workers, engineers and architects, sculptors and artists.[129]

In this text, Deineka acknowledged the collusion between representations of space and representational spaces. Deineka's views on monumental art were upheld by the painter's homologue in the Union of Sculptors, Ivan Shadr:

> We must create our own new Soviet environment built from the junction of:
> architecture
> sculpture
> engineering
> as a new well-co-ordinated, harmonic system, meeting the requirements of Socialist Realism!
>
> What role did the art of the past serve? Monumental sculptures of the past served to instil religious symbols, established by the ruling class for the working classes, in order to preserve power.
>
> Monumental sculptures of our time must serve all humanity to become the powerful weapon of the idea of communism! It must affirm the greatness of the free people, building its own fate.[130]

The synthesis of the arts in the urban development of the Soviet Union organised living space. It fixed and revealed its rhythm, outlined its internal structure, oriented movement within it, carried essential information, and attempted to dictate behaviour. Finally, it spoke as directly as it could (within existing forms) to the population, providing it with an adequate sense of scale and informing its inner world, its inner conception of the lived, conceived, and perceived space it evolved in.

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[127] Deineka, 'K Voprosu o Monumental'nom Iskusstve' (1934) in Sysoev, p. 111.
[128] Deineka, 'Khudozhniki v Metro' (1938) in Sysoev, p. 144.
[129] Deineka, 'Khudozhniki v Metro' (1938) in Sysoev, p. 140.
[130] Shadr, 'Monumental'no-dekorativnoe Iskusstvo i Vopros Sinteza' (1934), in Shadr, p. 118.

Twenty-first mosaic; The smoke of the factories has not shut out the sky

At first glance, the twenty-first mosaic might resemble laboratory works, such as Lissitzky's *prouns* or Malevich's *arkhitektons*. The dark mosaic in a *camaieu* of browns and beiges represents the geometric architecture of a red brick factory. Only the clouds, some black, some white, introduce curves into this configuration. These are the result of night fusion.

This would have been a familiar scene for the underground traveller. Indeed, during the Second Five-Year Plan, many factories started producing at full capacity. This meant the broad introduction of night shifts. After an unemployment crisis, which affected women most seriously, the rapid growth in industry and a general shortage of workers augmented the demand for skilled, as well as unskilled, labour. This challenged the traditional demography of the work force. In the late thirties, about 40% of all paid workers were female. They had infiltrated traditionally male domains. In 1935, 38% of the workers in heavy industry were women.[131] This provoked the creation of new spatial practices. It caused, among other things, a revision in the labour laws.

The whole debate about labour laws tells of the ambivalence toward the increased level of industrialisation and the cost of development to other areas of life. The negative expense of industry was not measured so much in terms of ecology, but more in terms of working conditions, and the short term effects of certain types of work on health. For example, research conducted into the employment of young workers in industrial loading jobs pointed to physical damage, which could be caused to the bone structure of the worker. One focus of this study was the impact of work on women's reproductive functions. It was argued that women employed in such jobs recorded high levels of miscarriages, menorrhagia and dysmenorrhea.[132] Similar research led to the regulation of tasks involving harmful substances, underground work, as well as night shifts. These concerns and the legislation that accompanied industrial work for women, reveal the correlation between spatial practices and the construction of the productive and reproductive body.

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[131] Melanie Ilič, *Women Workers in the Soviet Inter-war Economy: From 'Protection' to 'Equality,'* Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999, pp. 36 and 185.
[132] Ilič, p. 114.

Fig. 61. Twenty-first mosaic

In theory, the Five-Year Plans should have bridged the gap between the educated and the non-educated, between city and country (industrialisation of the *kolkhoz* transforming peasants into proletarians) and between men and women. In fact, research was also directed to adapting technology in the work place and to modify work practices once women had entered industry. For example, new spring technology was mobilised for the improvement of 'seating arrangements for female machine-operators and drivers in order to minimise the impact of vibration and to relieve the congestion on the internal and reproductive organs.'[133] Technology transformed the workplace and work tools in order to integrate more women into the work force.

Industrialisation was proposed by the government as a tool to promote general progress. It affected all sectors of society. It linked all kinds of activities into the broader socialist narrative. This aspect is exemplified by slogans such as 'Water smelts steel, water helps us fly!'[134] It established the relationship between the mastering of natural resources, the electrification projects, heavy industry and the protection of national borders. Because industrialisation was seen as a product of Soviet society, Soviet spatiality, and not something that had emerged from the previous regime, slogans similar to 'We didn't have a Metro [before the Revolution], now we have one!' were invented for practically all branches of industry.

The ownership of Soviet means of production by the workers transformed the factories into whole new spaces altogether. They were appropriated by the working class, when renamed 'workers' palaces.' In discourse, alienation was no longer possible because of this seizure of the spaces of production. This relates to the discourse on stakhanovism discussed in the previous chapter. The workplace became theoretically a site for emancipation of both male and female workers. The factory was also the space that defined the proletarian, and served to assert its membership in Soviet spatiality. The union one belonged to contributed significantly to her social status, in terms of both prestige and material rewards. The appurtenance to a union determined where workers would shop, study and vacation. Paradoxically, some unions were privileged over others. This contradiction, which was previously discussed in relation the stakhanovist movement, created a favoured minority.

Many films use the space of the factory as a spatiality, which can transform bodies. One example is Aleksandrov's *Svetly Put*.[135] This musical film comedy is a socialist remake of the Cinderella story, in which a peasant girl is transformed into a

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[133] Ilič, p. 139.
[134] *USSR in Construction*, 6 (1936), n. p.
[135] *The Shining Path* (1940), was released in the USA in 1942 under the title *Tanya*.

proletarian princess, a stakhanovite worker and engineer, through acquiring literacy, gaining technical skills and finding her way to the factory. This follows the argument, used in the elaboration of the Soviet Labour Protection code, that the best way to protect women was to raise their skill level.[136] In the film, the factory is represented as a palace with shooting towers. It is not unlike the one represented in Deineka's mosaic.

The equation of the factory and the palace is a recurring theme. An example is this optimist quote from *USSR in Construction*:

> In an extremely brief time, the Soviet Union has become one of the foremost industrial counties in the world. We have learned to make wonderful machines, the roar of our aeroplanes sounds menacingly in the sky. The country which but yesterday was a land of huts and cabins is being clothed in iron, concrete and marble. The smoke of the factories, the high towers of the worker's palaces, have not shut out the sky, however, but have opened it up. We have sky to our heart's content.[137]

Before the introduction of the 1935 General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow, the main reference points in Moscow were the gilded onion domes of the Byzantine churches. Their height, their visibility from a distance and their cardinal role in the community, made them important markers of space. Before the Revolution, the church was one of the main social and political indicators. By the late thirties, the factory had usurped this place. It had transformed the skyline, and had become one of the main organisers of spatial practices. The workplace located the proletariat in terms of leisure, social status, neighbourhoods, etc.[138]

Twenty-second mosaic; Victory over the stratosphere

Right at the centre of the twenty-second mosaic, the Soviet *stratostat* hovers. The neologism *stratostat* combines fragments of the words stratosphere and station, bound together like the pieces of smalto in the mosaic. The Soviet *stratostat* was designed to continue the work of the Russian balloonists, the first group of sky explorers to define the stratosphere, an atmospheric layer situated between the troposphere and the mesosphere. In this zone of the sky, the temperature generally raises with altitude. One of

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[136] Ilič, p. 35.

[137] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n. p.

[138] This corresponds to official discourse. As it has previously been mentioned, religious spatial practices did not evaporate with the appropriation of building for anti-religious or administrative purposes.

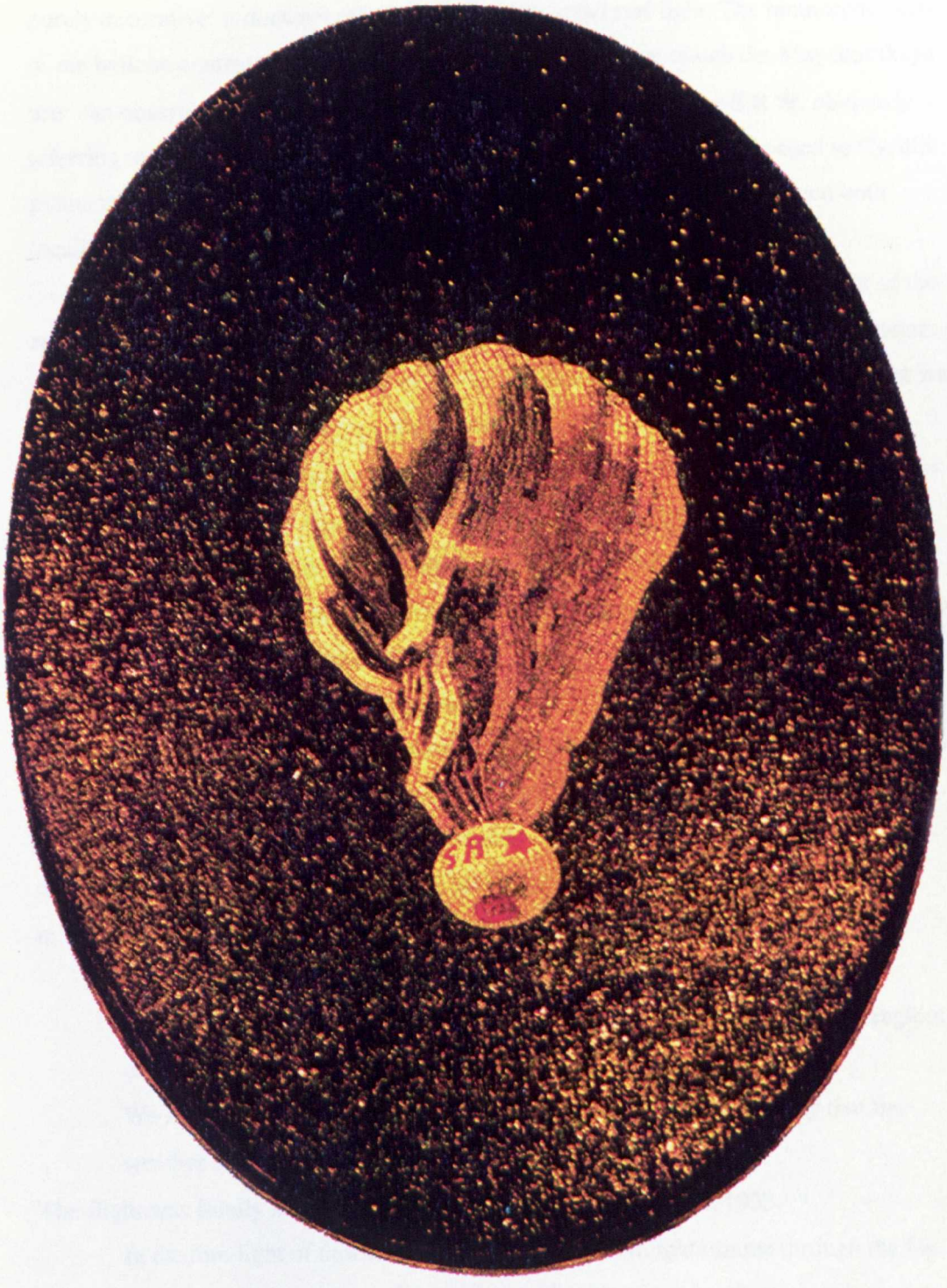

Fig. 62. Twenty-second mosaic

the roles of the *stratostat* was to measure variations in the stratosphere's temperature, as well as analyse its gas composition.

The balloon of the *stratostat* is filled with gas. It has a soft, plump aspect. The folds in the material define dark and bright zones. Deineka's use of light in this image is purely decorative; it does not refer to any possible source of light. The biomorphic shape of the balloon contrasts with the perfectly spherical cabin, on which the Mayakovskaya user can observe the bright red imprint of the following characters: S R ★, obviously referring to the abbreviation 'USSR.' The use of the Latin script, as opposed to Cyrillic, points to the fact that the space charting expedition was meant to be observed both locally and internationally.

The first *stratostat* flight was set for the early spring of 1933. The height of the *stratostat*, from the cabin to the upper valve was 72 meters. It held 25,000 cubic meters of gas. It was a major achievement of Soviet engineering. For several days, the flight was delayed because of inadequate weather conditions. Nature, once again, was resisting revealing its secrets. People in all parts of the Union, and abroad, followed the progress in the same way that they would later follow the transpolar flights or the Chelyuskin rescue operations. As Leon Trotsky noted in 1937 from his Mexican exile, 'The Arctic flights and flights into the stratosphere are known to everybody. These high points speak for a whole mountain chain of achievements.'[139]

Growing impatience from the population was manifested in all sorts of ways. People started sending letters to Moscow. Indeed, according to the official discourse, the whole Union participated in, and benefited from, all the spatial events occurring in Moscow. It therefore seemed ridiculous to hold off on the expedition because of local muscovite weather conditions. Tension between centre and periphery was hence manifested. Schoolchildren wrote to the national paper *Izvestia*:

> To the editor of *Izvestia*.
>
> We, the scholars of the sixth grade [sic] of Baladin school, lower Volga region, wish to inform you that the weather is good here.
>
> We ask for the *stratostat* to be sent up here, because our papers say that the weather in Moscow is unsuitable.[140]

The flight was finally launched, from Moscow, on September 30, 1933.[141]

> In the dim light of dawn, on September 30, search lights shone through the fog and the enormous shape of the *stratostat* hanging in folds like the curtain of a

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[139] Trotsky, *The Revolution*, p. 195.

[140] *USSR in Construction*, 2 (1934), n. p.

[141] The crew consisted of G. Prokofev, K. Godunov and E. Gurnbaum.

> theatre, began to grow into the sky as it was filled with hydrogen. The morning broke calm and clear.[142]

The *stratostat* set a height record of 19,000 meters.

> On the evening of the same day, without jarring a single piece of apparatus, the Stratostat descended at Kolomna, literally into the hands of the proletariat of the Kolomna factory. Picard's world record was beaten by three kilometres.[143]

The event was celebrated in the characteristic Stalinist way: parades, speeches, children's books, songs, etc. This triumph over space, with the assistance of the technology produced during the Five-Year Plans, corresponded to yet another victory of the Soviet regime over its precedent spatiality. The Poet Yury Olesha recorded his warm feelings about the *stratostat* expedition in a letter first printed in *Izvestia*:

> This is a day filched from the future. This whole day says that our government is wonderful. Maybe this very day, September 30, 1933 was the first day of classless society. As a poet, let me be permitted to think so.[144]

A series of further ascendance records were set. In 1934, the *stratostat* climbed up to 22,000 meters, and every year thereafter surpassed itself. In 1935, it was finally used in accordance to its genuine purpose: the qualitative mapping of the space of the stratosphere in order to eventually use it, or colonise it. In fact, a June 1935 issue of *Ogonek*[145] is entirely dedicated to explaining in laymen's terms the *SSSR-1 bis* expedition. The stratospheric station flew from Moscow, up to 16,000 meters, where it performed a series of scientific experiments and measurements before landing in Tula, South of Moscow. The participants in this expedition received the Order of Lenin, the highest award of that period.[146] The *stratostat* then left the space of record setting for the space of knowledge: it performed empirical analysis of material space. The findings were aimed at socialising space by transforming it, and mapping it out. Theoretically slicing the atmosphere into zones and measuring its properties also abstracted space, rendering it a mental category by fragmentation.

The following quote refers to many of the concerns of space previously discussed in this chapter: record setting, appropriation of unexplored spatiality, optimism in spite of nature's resistance to technology and the eventual victory of the Soviets over space with the help of technology. All these are part of the contribution of the *stratostat* to the multi-layered understanding of Soviet spatiality.

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[142] *USSR in Construction*, 2 (1934), n. p.
[143] *USSR in Construction*, 2 (1934), n. p.
[144] Olesha quoted in *USSR in Construction*, 2 (1934), n. p.
[145] *Ogonek*, 19 (1935).

> Fast flying is high flying. This requires a study of the stratosphere. In this study participate many of our research institutes and numerous prominent scientists. Two flights into the stratosphere have enriched our store of knowledge concerning this unexplored region. The crashing of the second *stratostat* has not daunted or dampened our will for victory over the stratosphere. We are preparing a third *stratostat* for flight [...] the Soviet Union holds the first place in the world in the general study of the stratosphere.[147]

As with Avant-Garde 'laboratory art,' it was assumed that the data collected by the *stratostat* could eventually be used in concrete applications. Indeed, '[...] humanity will not eternally live on earth, in its pursuit of the world and space, it will first timidly pierce the limit of the atmosphere, then concern itself with all the space of the solar system.'[148]

Maps of Mayakovskaya

In this chapter, I did not seek to analyse things in the space of Mayakovskaya Metro station, but rather the space itself, and its code. I hoped to map out some of the social relationships embedded in it. At this point, it is, nevertheless, imperative that my reader forms a broader mental picture of the station. The description of Mayakovsky Square printed in the 1937 guide-book to Moscow, roughly a year before the opening of the station, will serve this purpose:

> Today, Mayakovsky Square is part of the main road system in the city of Moscow, linking the vast Northwest region and the northern port of the Moscow-Volga canal to the centre of the city.
>
> Mayakovsky Square, like most squares in Moscow is being rebuilt and widened. On this site, the V. E. Meyerkhold theatre is in construction process, according to the project of A. V. Shchusev, from the Academy of architecture, and the architect D. N. Chechulin; the building of the theatre will be completed by a statue of V. V. Mayakovsky. The Meyerkhold theatre, as well as the other

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[146] K. Zille, Yu. Prilutsky and A. Verigo.

[147] *USSR in Construction*, 6 (1934), n. p.

[148] Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935), father of Russian Cosmonautic theory, in N. Mironov, *Po Ekspositsiam Tsentral'nogo Doma Aviatsii i Kosmonavtiki imeni M. V. Frunze*, Moscow: Tsentral'nii Dom Aviatsii i Kosmonavtiki imeni M. V. Frunze, 1991, n. p.

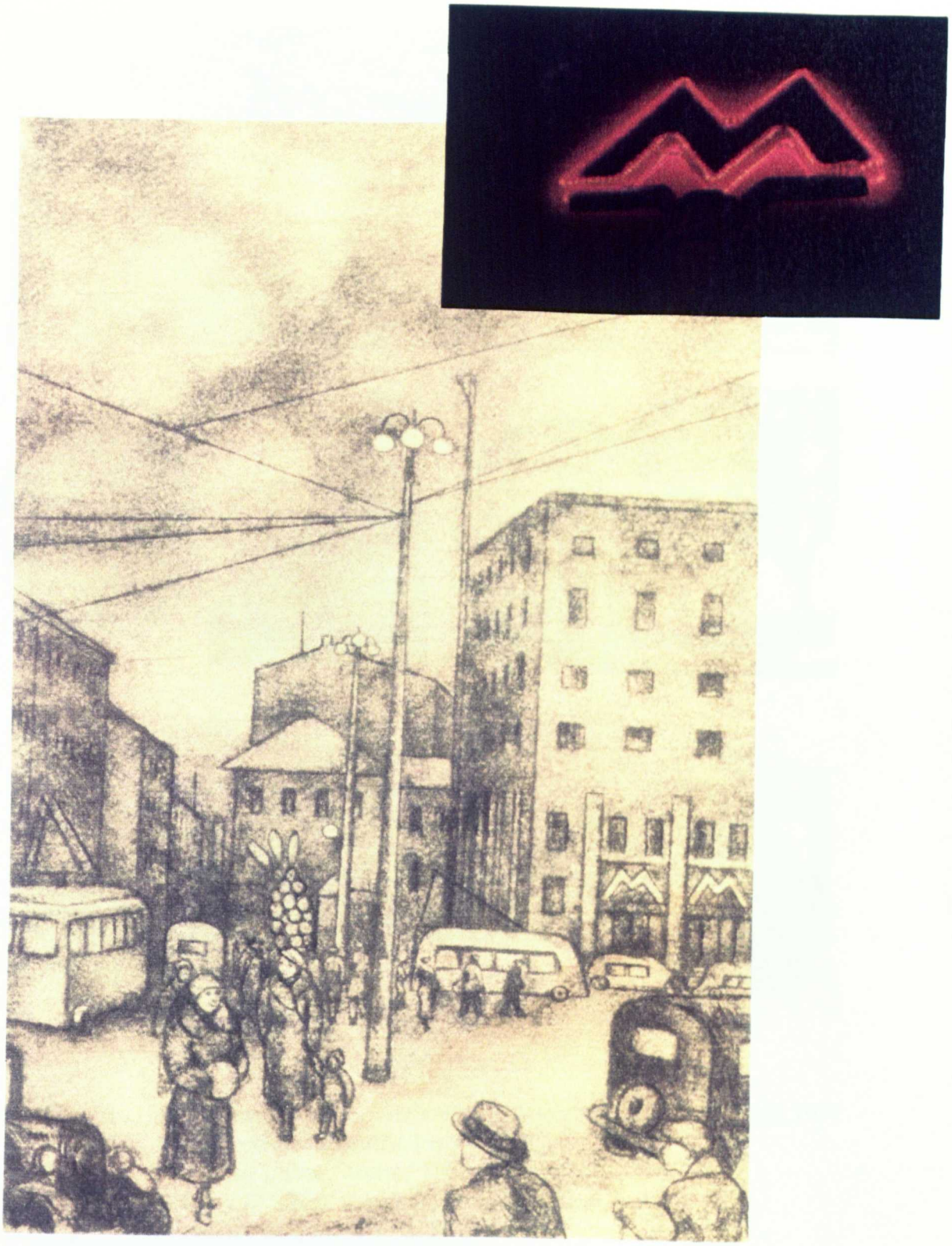
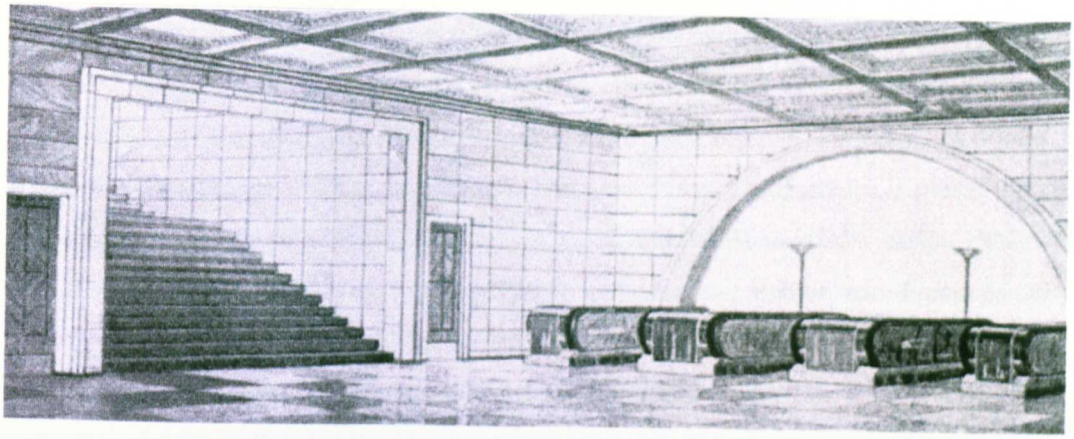
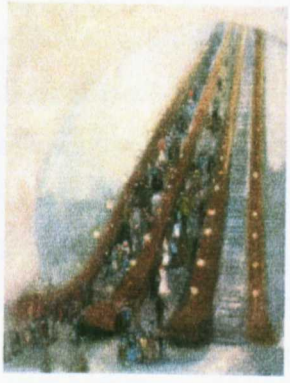
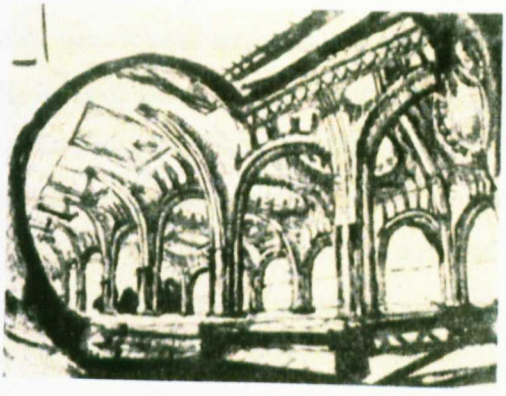


Fig. 63. Metro emblem at night
Fig. 64. M. Sinyakova, 'Mayakovsky Square,' 1940







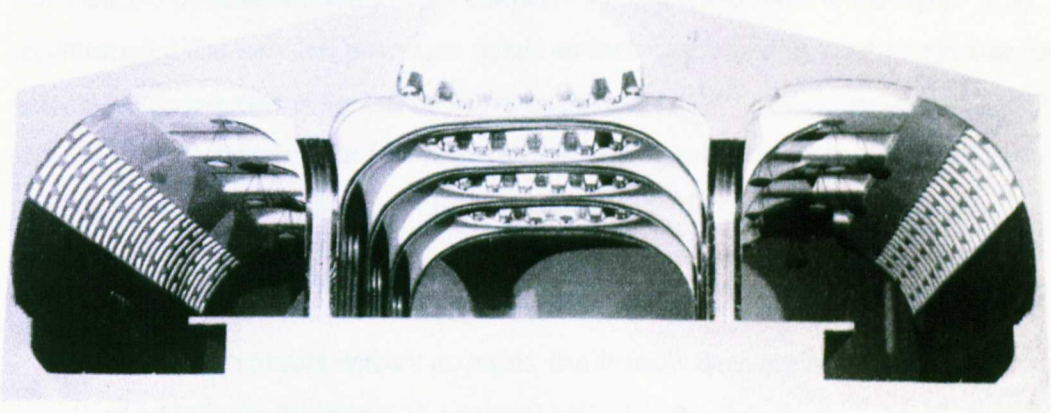


Fig. 65. Yu. Afanasev and Ya. Likhtenberg, Mayakovskaya station hall, 1937
Fig. 66. Metro workers' honorific badge
Fig. 67. Aleksandr Labas, 'Metro,' 1935
Fig. 68. Aleksey Dushkin, sketch for Mayakovskaya, 1937
Fig. 69. Model for Mayakovskaya, 1937

> theatres established on the Square - Realist, Satire, Folk, and the Operetta Theatre - compose a unique architectural group.[149]

The main entrance to Mayakovskaya station is situated at the Southeast intersection of Gorky Street (Tverskaya Street until 1936) and Mayakovsky Square (Triumfalny Square until 1936).[150] It can be seen from a distance, due to the bold red '**M**' above its doors, which is illuminated every night when the sun goes down. The entrance is part of the structure of the adjacent Chaykovsky concert hall. The vestibule of the station, designed by architects Yu. Afanasev and Ya. Likhtenberg, is vast and almost bare. It echoes the sober architecture of the neighbouring building. The high ceiling, decorated with large square caissons, seems to reflect the grid pattern of the granite floor. Tellers sit behind the glass panes of their booth. They charge passengers 30 kopecks to use the underground palace.[151] A wide corridor channels users toward steps made of grey stones, which time and millions of feet have eventually eroded. The mechanical turnstiles clatter. On the wall hangs a map of the city, displaying the plan of the existing Metro lines and the additional stations soon to be built. The three escalators adapt their direction to accommodate the flow of users during peak times. Escalators are separated by a row of mushroom-like lamps. The shaft gives the impression of a long endless tunnel, evocatively represented in the painting 'Metro' by Aleksandr Labas (1935). The handrails are made of soft red leather. Users are summoned to stand to the right. 'It is recommended that only one passenger stands on each step, and only on the right side, in order to allow passage on the left for hurrying passengers.'[152] It takes one minute and 20 seconds to reach the platform from the vestibule. The speed of the ride is difficult to imagine for a reader who has never ridden the Moscow Metro. Finally, the platform appears:

> And then the platform - a word which only defines the function of this space, from which people embark on trains. But it really does not have the appearance of a platform. It is closer to a palatial hall...height, cleanliness, magnificence of

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[149] Dlugach and Portugalov, p. 48.

[150] On the 1935 plans of the second line of the metro, Mayakovskaya metro station figures as Triumfalnaya station. See map in Kovalev, p. 244.

[151] Users were sold cardboard tickets. The price surprisingly declined in the first year of exploitation. From May 15, 1935, one passage cost 50 kopecks. This fee was lowered to 40 kopecks on August 1, 1935 and to 30 kopecks on October 1, 1935. It was raised again to 40 kopecks on May 31, 1942.

[152] Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, p. 12.

> the pale-grey or pink columns, the even milky light of the sharp chandeliers and polished walls.[153]

At 34 meters underground, Mayakovskaya was the deepest station in 1938. The design of the underground hall differs sharply from that of the other deep stations of the Moscow Metro. The main difference is the following: the weight of the station does not rest on bulky walls, but on thin steel columns forming nine meter high flying transversal arches and 4.20 meter side arches. Thus, the central hall can be perceived as a large room. The atmosphere is airy and much less claustrophobic than in the other deep stations formed by three corridors with low ceilings, isolated by thick walls. From every point of view, users in Mayakovskaya could see the whole breadth of the space through the unobstructed structure. Apart from the impact on spatial perception and the resulting ambience, there are other advantages to Dushkin's design. In other stations, passengers hearing the noise of the incoming train while still on the escalator would have to run to the middle of the central hall in order to find out if her train was coming in. In Mayakovskaya, the user knows immediately if she needs to rush. Furthermore, the open design of the station makes it quicker for passengers to exit the platform, since movement is freer.[154]

How many maps would be required to deal exhaustively with this space? As it has been argued, there are many layers to any spatiality: concurrent, and perhaps conflicting, representations of space; representational spaces; spatial practices; as well as a panoply of features inherited from the past. Indeed, every space includes a multitude of superimposed spaces, all of which may vary if the maps' legend (the code of space) is altered by history again, which is inevitable. Maps generally focus on movement and spatial practice. Indeed, on a map of a city, houses are never represented; streets are. Just like the spatial organisation of the city, the station's spatiality guides the movements of the bodies. Representation of this site should recognise how it is used, and how bodies circulate within it. So what would a map of Mayakovskaya look like?

- First layer: The invisible underground structure of the station. Representations of space.

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[153] *Pravda*, 1935, February 8. This is a general description of the halls of the first line of the metro. It however equally applies to the later Mayakovskaya.

[154] The construction of Mayakovskaya differed from that of other deep stations. The architect was not faced with problems associated with certain types of soil or proximity to water. Furthermore, tunnels in the second line of the Moscow Metro were no longer secured with stone and concrete, but with metal shields, a technology borrowed from the London Underground. See Akademiia Arkhitektury SSSR, pp. 3-4 and 45-46.

- Second layer: The Malevich inspired floors, and the rails onto which the trains glide in and out of the station. Representational spaces and representations of space.
- Third layer: The users of the station, and their movement in and out of the trains. Spatial practices.
- Fourth layer: The architectural structure around users and above them. It guides bodies as well as the user's gaze. Representational spaces and representations of space.
- Fifth layer: A series of maps of the sky represented by Deineka, and the spatialities they refer to. Representational spaces (which refer to representations of space and spatial practices).
- Sixth layer: The structure between station and street. Representations of space.
- Seventh layer: A map of the city street, including the constructions above Mayakovskaya. Representational spaces and representations of space.
- Eighth layer: Cars, tramways, buses, pedestrians, etc., circulating on the adjacent streets, as well as the neighbouring buildings' users. Spatial practices.
- Ninth layer: A sky map, including air corridors and planes possibly circulating. Representation of space and spatial practices.

There could be a multitude of added layers, including weather maps, demographic maps, economic maps, ideological maps, and ultimately the smaller maps of bodies present in the space, and identity maps of the users interacting with it, being transformed by it, and, conversely, transforming it.

Chapter Four

Dawn; Rational-charismatic Time

Just two decades in history made up of thousands of years is a very short period, almost unnoticeable. But 20 Soviet years transfigured the life formed over thousands of years.
M. Ilin[1]

Hence Socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science.
Joseph Stalin[2]

The distinction between past, present and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one.
Albert Einstein[3]

'When I stand still in the station, the train moves before me,' she might think. 'When I sit in the car, it is immobile. Then, after the doors close, it is the station which appears to accelerate before the train and I are engulfed in the tunnel.' She might be sitting on a red leather seat in a yellow, brown and silver car, and the train might have just left the platform.[4] She might be passing time by reading, as so many users do in the Moscow Metro. Or, she might be staring through the window at the dark void while she thinks of the speed of the machine carrying away her static body. Travelling at this speed is a new experience for her.[5]

Speed is an expression of time. Movement and narrative structures also denote temporality. Indeed, time becomes visible through motion. Yet, if representations and impressions of time vary so much, time, itself, must also be mutable. Different cultures define or experience time in different ways. Several recent books are preoccupied with comparative studies of time as it manifests itself within various geo-political regions of the globe or historical periods, or through different narrative forms.[6] Most of these

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[1] M. Ilin, *O Gerbakh i Narodakh*, Moscow: Vsesoiuznyi Radiokomitet, 1938, p. 9.
[2] Stalin, *The Essential Stalin; Major Theoretical Writings 1905-1952*, London: Groom Helm, 1973, p. 312.
[3] Quoted in Paul Davies, *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution*, London: Viking, 1995, p. 70.
[4] The dimension of each car: 18.4 meters in length, 2.7 meters in width, 2.5 meters in height. About the underground trains, see Katsen, *Metro Moskvy*, pp. 130-136.
[5] The Metro trains travelled at 26.5 km/hour, compared with 15 km/hour for buses and trolleybuses and 13.5 km/hour for tramways. Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, p. 15.
[6] See for example the richly illustrated catalogue for the exhibition celebrating the Millennium at the Greenwich observatory. Kristen Lippincott (ed.), *The Story of Time*, London: Merrell Holberton, 1999.

studies have concluded that how time is understood within a culture has profound influences on a population's relation to nature, space, bodies, work, the cosmos and spirituality. Hence, it is natural that the Stalinist regime, in its attempt to create a socialist culture, would have understood time as a privileged site for social transformation. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on composing the daily experience of time in Soviet Russia.

Besides its multiple purposes in everyday life, time was a dimension of crucial importance in the development of the Five-Year Plans. It was also a serious concern in monumental art production throughout the thirties. This is because important issues regarding temporality are directly linked to modern, industrial production. Consequently, the transformation of Russian time through the industrialisation of the Soviet Union has been examined by scholars in more details than has the production of Soviet bodies and space. This chapter will examine the originality of Stalinist time management and its influence on production, as well as on the production of space and bodies. It should be assumed that time was managed in a homogenous way throughout Moscow's industry, which was ruled by central planning. Evidence shows this was usually the case.

However, the time structure used in factories spread only marginally to other spheres of human activities. Therefore, different realms of time (social time, mental time and biological time) need to be conjointly discussed. The structure of this chapter will slightly differ from the organisation of the previous two chapters. Because different time structures seem to correspond to different activities, instead of developing conceptions of time according to the subject and later linking them to activities, conceptions of time will be explored within the activities that foster them.

Few would dispute that clock time and subjective time are different. This difference can be understood in relation with the discussion of space, which took place in the previous chapter. Like space, time is constructed from a complex mixture of 'lived,' 'perceived' and 'conceived' features. For example, temporal structures, which rule harvests or biological functions are distinguished from, yet coexist with, the abstract time frame of modern production. That is to say that throughout any day, every citizen would use different concepts of time to manage her life. The clock screwed to a person's wall, or even her 'biological clock', would be governed differently from those dictating her work schedule. This is less true of concepts of bodies and space; subjects tend to see the world through personal, and a more or less unified, spatial lens or body conception. Notions of space and bodies could not be as readily imposed as time management, for example. In the case of time, the search for a universal theory would be pointless. Concepts of time are limited to the activity or state they are related to and not uniquely to

the subject. The experience of time also varies according to different social or cultural frameworks, such as the Medieval, the Bolshevik or the Stalinist categories used above.

The notion of time differs according to a scale; whether personal time, social time, or the time of the cosmos is addressed. Just like speed is relative,[7] subjective time is also relative according to the mental or physical position of the subject. For example, a young child's concept of duration will be different than that of his mother's. Six months might seem like an eternity to him, and might amount to a significant fraction of his short life. Conversely, in *The Master and Margarita*, the 1937 novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, the Devil, who appears disguised as an Englishman, explains to the poets Bezdomny and Berlioz that a thousand years is an insignificant amount of time in the great scheme of things.[8] The satiric novel about Soviet bureaucracy further provokes two divergent reflections related to temporality. First, that socialism has managed to compress time to propel Russia to the teleological conclusion of the Marxist conception of history; and second, that Stalinist bureaucratic institutions caused extreme time wastage. Both thoughts imply that time is both relative and malleable.

Certain assumptions about time, which underlie this chapter, need to be discussed before the historical composition of Stalinist 'times' and time functions are explored, with regards to representations of space, whether it be in random Socialist Realist spaces, in Mayakovskaya as a whole or in individual mosaics.

Regardless of history and science, in visual representation space is a category developing in actual time.[9] An image is presented to the viewer as an immediate whole, even if its associations, connections or implications can ultimately be located in the future or the past. For example, the depiction of an ideal world implies that the representation is not located in the present, but in a promised future or a golden past. This means that possibility is a constant condition of present time in Socialist Realist representations of a communist society. It is the spatialisation of this ideal in a representation that makes it accessible in the present. Conversely, representations of past and future challenge the present. They provoke institutions and citizens to adjust the present situation to fit the ideal. This refers to the aforementioned allegorical structure, a constant deferral of meaning. Furthermore, the 'now' can only be measured with

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[7] According to Einstein's theory of relativity.

[8] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1967, p. 20.

[9] This refers to representations unfolding in two or three-dimensional space. Film, dance and other types of representation which require duration (the fourth dimension) for their completion can not be included in this model.

hindsight. From this, one could draw two conclusions: that there is no time (the present, like a geometric point possessing no dimension), or that time is synchronous.

Throughout this study, the latter interpretation is privileged. Considering time in Socialist Realism seems necessary because temporality accounts for movement, progress and ultimately possibility. The absence of time, or movement, would ultimately signify the imposition of limitation to possibility and will, which would be incompatible with the notions of artificial selection and teleological thinking. Furthermore, a conception of representational time based on synchronicity, a temporal hybrid, respects the notion of empirical movement, such as the human traffic experienced daily by bodies in Mayakovskaya.

This general framework is based on the works of turn-of-the-century mathematicians who, by deconstructing Euclidean space, formulated a concept of time understood as the fourth dimension in a universal space-time continuum. For some of these thinkers, such as Nikolay Lobachevsky, the implications were mostly mathematical.[10] For others, such as Pavel Ouspensky, the result was the foundation of a system geared to the expansion of psychic faculty.[11] In a more materialistic mind-frame, one could see the space-time continuum not as a state, but as a process during which the user adapts her vision to see beyond the appearances of the present and into a world of possibilities. Artists such as painter Kazimir Malevich, composer Mikhail Matyushin and poet Velimir Khlebnikov, some of the most influential artists of the pre-Revolutionary period, were not only aware of these mathematical-spiritual concepts, but discussed them explicitly in their theoretical texts and attempted to find resolved representations of these models in their own media.[12]

Velimir Khlebnikov described time as a plane (as opposed to a direction), similar to the other three dimensions of the empirical world.[13] This means that, theoretically, an object could glide on time, like on any other surface, toward four cardinal directions. Past, present and future would therefore coexist on the time-plane. Consequently,

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[10] N. I. Lobachevsky, *Geometrical Researches on the Theory of Parallels*, La Salle: Open Court, 1914.

[11] P. D. Ouspensky, *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.

[12] About the use by the Avant-Garde of new conceptions of time, see M. Biomig, 'Vremia v Prostranstve; Khlebnikov i Filosofiia Giperprostranstva,' in E Arenzon (ed.), *Vestnik Obshestva Velimira Khlebnikova*, Moscow: Obshestvo Velimira Khlebnikova, 1996 and Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

[13] For example, in the short story 'Ka' (1915), the narrator travels with equal ease through time and space. Velimir Khlebnikov, *Izbrannye Sochineniia*, St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 1998, pp. 176-196.

heterogeneous temporal events should be visible to the four-dimensional viewer, like different objects scattered on a surface. Similarly, in representation, one can travel through time, without the help of the mechanical apparatus described in science-fiction novels such as H. G. Well's *The Time Machine* (1895).[14] One can also travel to the past, in order to correct or alter it, so that anterior events can better fit a present discourse. The strategically linear time line of the narrative, or of the teleological structure, passing through the non-dimensional point of the present, is also a device used in representation. Yet, in art, time has nothing to do with the rigid linear time of history. It only uses it, in a limited way, for narrative purposes.

This by no means signifies that human beings have created time outside themselves in order to perceive the outside world. The previous chapters should have already established the unavoidable link between the inside and outside, exemplified by Lefebvre's triad. The 'lived', the 'perceived' and the 'conceived' are united by sign making and the interpretation of sign configurations. Indeed, the previous chapters argue that bodies and space are produced, socially constructed from a mixture of empirical elements and semiotic matter. Yet, very few would contest their empirical existence. The same applies to time.

In the four-dimensional model, space and time are connected, as if they were different folds of a single world cloth. The space-time continuum implies that alterations on time will immediately influence space and bodies, and vice-versa. This also means that the transformation of perception of either time, space or bodies influences the other categories.

> Time is distinguishable but not separate from space. The concentric rings of a tree trunk reveals the tree's age, just as a shell's spirals, with their 'marvellous' spatial concreteness, reveal the age of the shell's former occupant - this according to rules which only complicated mathematical operations can 'translate' into the language of abstraction. Times, of necessity, are local; and this goes too for the relations between places and their respective times.[15]

Socialist Realism is generally understood as the representation of an idealised future set in the present. This idea can be reinterpreted in relation to Lefebvre's definition of everyday life, understood not as the banal, but as the typical exception. This merging of present and future can only be effective in cases that meet two conditions: first, when the public is familiar with the 'typical exception,' perhaps through different media; second,

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[14] Wells' *The Time Machine* was popular in Russia at the turn of the century. The idea of travelling to the future (in a teleological time structure) is particularly attractive in the context of Socialist Realism.

when the viewer has developed a gaze which lets her see, at least for a fraction of time, life as it will become rather than as it is. This point has already been touched upon in different parts of this study. Suffice it here to reiterate that these conditions had not yet been fully met in 1938, but that monumental art actively contributed to this possibility. The multi-temporal quality of visual representation is, of course, not an exclusive feature of Socialist Realist images. However, one cannot conceive Stalinist art of the thirties outside this model.

> At the level of reception, the meaning of all products of contemporary culture tend to be cut from much the same cloth: woven from intertextuality, interrelated but institutionally heterogeneous strands of sense, originating in disparate times and spaces.[16]

In the previous quote, Victor Burgin addresses post-modern culture. His thoughts on reception correspond to what has already been said about the reception of Stalinist monumental space, which did not distinguish high art from mass culture, popular tradition or folk.[17] This idea is especially fertile in the context studied here, where 'fake folk' coexisted with futuristic projections, and the creation of a mythical past in the present and the simulation of future achievements coincided with censorship, suppression and alteration of a historical past, as in doctored photographs.

Certain of Deineka's visual strategies, such as suspending objects in the air, immediately imply movement, and hence time. A parachutist, a plane, a diver caught in mid-air can never be understood as stationary or u-chronic objects. There is not a single static representation in the cycle. This phenomenon is echoed on a larger scale in the cycle as a coherent work of art. Not only does the transformation in the hues of the sky in the background indicate a progression in time, the mosaics' limited accessibility through Dushkin's 'periscopes' forces the viewer into movement and torsion of the body. It is impossible to see the whole cycle at once. The user is made to walk five or six steps in order to place her body under a mosaic, stretch her neck upwards and repeat these steps if she chooses to continue the fragmented experience.

The organisation of time in Mayakovskaya is different than in a narrative painting, where causes and effects would be visible at a glance and ordered through composition. There are few causal links in individual representations, and none linking the different mosaics. The cause for the representation can be found only in a parergonal link establishing a relationship between the mosaics and the Five-Year Plans. The cycle

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[15] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 175.
[16] Burgin, p. 20.

groups unrelated events in a succession justified only by a vague temporal position, denoted by the lighting of the sky. The organisation is closer to the juxtaposition of fragments in a photomontage. It connotes the random assemblage of events simultaneously present in visual culture, but emerging from different sources, having separate origins, duration, rhythm, etc.

One of the major criticisms conferred to the cycle is that the whole work (35 fragments) cannot be encompassed all at once by the user's eye.[18] Hence, the narrative flow is constantly being broken. What might be seen as a problem of time in another context of narrative visual art, an error in the narrative or lack of topical link and visual continuity, is compensated by perception and memory, as well as the movement imposed upon the body by the spatial structure. Furthermore, the fact that users randomly get on and off trains at different places in the station causes them to access the cycle at different times in the representation. A user walking down the platform, glancing upwards sporadically might catch only a glimpse of the morning hues and re-integrate the narrative at night. Being approached in this way would not compromise the narrative integrity of 'One Day in the Soviet Land.' Whatever the viewer holds in her memory of subjective experiences of every day life in the Soviet Union certainly fills the gaps.

As it has been mentioned before, different experiences coexist on the temporal plane of the fourth dimension. Experiences past, present and future therefore influence each other. The same can be said of the representational content of each individual mosaic, as well as the viewer's memory, serving as the canvas for her own palimpsestic representation of the world. Indeed, the past and the future are always present in the experience of viewing Mayakovskaya.

> No space ever vanishes utterly leaving no trace [...] Were it otherwise, there would be no 'interpenetration,' whether of spaces, rhythms or polarities. It is also true that each new addition inherits and reorganises what has gone before; each period or stratum carries its own preconditions beyond their limits.[19]

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[17] Boris Groys has argued that by slipping from the modernist narrative, Stalinist art had entered a realm somewhat similar to that of post-modern art. Groys, p. 8-13.

[18] 'The most vexing error in architectural conception consists in the concealment of the mosaics in cupolae, reserving them as surprises, and revealing them only from a certain point of view.' Kravets, p. 65. Incidentally, Kravets was the architect originally chosen to design Mayakovskaya, before the project was taken away from him and given to Dushkin.

[19] Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 164. This quote refers to Marx's conception of time.

Finding the time

Agreeing on a measure to define time can be a problem. Clocks seem to be the most popular indicator of time today, as were the sun and the moon in previous eras. Yet, both indicators only indicate frequency. Movement and speed also define time, as well as different narrative structures, such as history and schedules, which confine time to a conventional grid.

For the purpose of this study, time structures will be briefly examined in relation to the following categories: representational time, representations of time and temporal practices, which loosely correspond to the concepts of the 'perceived,' the 'conceived' and the 'lived.'[20] As when they are applied to space, the limits of these categories tend to overlap.

1. *Representational time:*

Representational time, embodying complex symbolic systems, sometimes coded, sometimes not, is linked to the unofficial or spiritual sides of life, as well as to story-telling and narrative structures in art. Representational time can be understood as the underlying code of the great social narratives. This category of perceived time is composed of two distinct yet coexistent categories: cyclical time and linear time.

Cyclical time:

This conception of time is tied to the experience of nature. It is measured by the sun's position in the sky, the shape of the moon, and the cycle of the seasons. Within this conception of time, birth and death are not considered as a beginning or an end. There is no real distinction between one day and the next. Rather, they are phases in a larger life cycle. This notion can be linked to the Bakhtinian Medieval body and space previously discussed. This conception of time organises periods of labour and rest in accordance to weather, light availability, harvests, etc.

Cyclical time was still widely accepted by the soviet population in the thirties, since the majority of Muscovites had been born in an agrarian culture and still had strong links to it. This temporal conception had a major influence on everyday life. What foods were available in the state stores or in the farmers' markets depended on the harvest. Similarly, what sports and leisure activities were accessible varied in accordance to the seasons. This correspondence between certain aspects of daily activity under Stalin and

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[20] The definitions of representational time, representations of time and temporal practice refer directly to Lefebvre's categories of representational space, representations of space and spatial practices, which were described in the previous chapter. Lefebvre does not use these categories with regards to time.

cyclical time has to be understood within the aforementioned incomplete victory of the 'new one' over nature.

Linear time:
This concept of time relies on historical duration. A product of the Enlightenment, the period when God retired from his position as the centre and organising force of the universe, it follows the flow of events. Darwin's evolutionary theories, extremely popular in the thirties, demonstrated the evolution of the species in terms of beginnings and ends. In fact, evolution was understood as tracing a time line. Linear time is also the structure of history, or rather of historical writing. This structure is still largely used straightforwardly, even if it can't account for several historical phenomena, such as periods of revolution. Notions of technical, social and political progress seem to be inherent to this time structure, which implies that the present is the causal seed of the future.

Judeo-Christian time is a mixture of these two: daily experience is cyclical, yet life is linear in its absolutes, evolving towards the final judgement, in relation to the notion that God's plan for the universe unfolds according to a temporal sequence. The shift between purely cyclical and cyclical-linear time required political, cultural and intellectual adaptation. Cyclical pagan time was tolerated and integrated by the Russian Orthodox Church, which ruled according to linear time. For example, pagan rituals linked to harvest predating Christianity are still celebrated today. Easter, coinciding with the pagan celebration of spring and renewed fertility, is a good example of this. The 'one day in the life of...' narrative model used for the Mayakovskaya ceiling is also a symptom of this linear-cyclical concept. Many Soviet works of art followed this bicephallic temporal structure: the '*kinopravda*' experiments (1922-25) by Dziga Vertov, which documented the specificity of proletarian daily life; the photographic series by Maks Alpert and Arkady Shaykhets entitled *One Day in the Life of the Working-Class Philippov Family* (1931), and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), showing the repetitiveness of daily existence in the Stalinist labour camps.

2. *Representations of time:*
Representations of time, which are tied to the pursuit of 'order' and the elaboration of a code of time, subject temporality to formal knowledge and sign systems. They serve to describe other manifestations of the material world through the use of time. This category of the 'conceived' is made up of scientific or philosophical models of time.

This category occupies a particular place in this study since the Soviet inter-war period is set at the critical point in a shift from the Newtonian model of time to one designed by Einstein to fit his theory of relativity. Einstein gained world recognition in 1919 for ideas he had developed over a decade before. By the late thirties, Einstein's model was well known in Russia, as in the rest of the industrialised world, even if it was greatly misunderstood.

Universal time:

The concept of Newtonian time corresponds to an all embracing universal time. This model was based on empirical knowledge of the material world. For Newton, time was simply there. Objects or events could not influence it. This means that impressions of variations would be interpreted as a misreading caused by a subject's lack of understanding of the world or faulty measuring tools. According to this model, the whole universe was conceived as sharing a common 'now.'

Relative time:

Einstein's theory of relativity proved that time is inherently flexible, without relying on un-scientific notions about subjective and personal time. Relativity demonstrates scientifically that there is no universal time, no master clock. Time is relative, modified by motion and gravitational forces. Einstein abolished the absolute division between the past and the future, separated by the universal moment described as 'now.' Relative time is nevertheless experienced as an inescapable direction. Time can be diluted or compressed, yet it always moves 'forward.'

> Before Einstein, scientists and philosophers thought of time as simply *there*. Physics was about the behaviour of matter and energy *in* space and time. The idea of *manipulating* time didn't make much sense.[21]

During the Stalinist regime, scientific models were readily transposed onto the social sphere, as social engineering was considered a legitimate scientific practice. As Stalin noted: 'Socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science.'[22] Einstein's time, malleable by technology (generating speed) and knowledge (generating technology), was especially appropriate for the elaboration of artificial selection.

In Newtonian time, the future can not exist for two reasons: it has not yet come into existence; and different times never coexist. 'Now' is distinct and universal.

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[21] Davies, *About Time*, p. 233.
[22] Stalin, p. 312.

However, in Stalinist discourse and art, the future is already present. Furthermore, the coexistence of different times is necessary to justify the backwardness of certain social elements within the fiction of achieved Socialism. In this system, time needed to be flexible. The stable, regular time of Newton's model could not account for dozens of years of social or technological progress that were being achieved within during two first Five-Year Plans. As the artist Ilya Erenburg remarked:

> The boundaries of our country travel not only through space, but also travel through time. Our foreign guests are now accomplishing a trip in a time machine. They are seeing the country of the future. Together with remains of the past, with our profound backwardness, with our provincialism, they see the foundations of a new world.[23]

Under Stalin, universal time had dissolved in the same way that precise and universal notions about space and bodies had disappeared and were replaced by self-consciously constructed categories. Stalin's regime used Einstein's ideas in conjunction with Darwin's theory to dominate nature. The arrow of time propelled the Soviet Union toward technological and social progress and fully constructed communism, at an increasing speed.

3. *Temporal practice:*

Temporal practice, which embraces production, reproduction, as well as the particular temporal patterns of different events, ensures order, continuity and, to some degree, cohesion. In terms of collective activity, temporal practice establishes each member of a given society's relationship to a general time frame. This organisation implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance. Within this category, a mixture of time manifestations is found: civil time, biological time, revolutionary time, free time and time management.

Civil time:

In 1937, every Muscovite having access to a phone could dial up the 'central Soviet clock' and be told the exact local time by a recorded voice. One could also find out the day of the week and date. This service might have been more important than one would

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[23] Erenburg quoted in Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist*, p. 142. The backward elements the artist refers to are peasants, speculators and superstitious minds, among other categories. Another example of this coexistence is the presence of a socially advance Soviet Union on backward, capitalist Earth. This was a theme developed in science fiction works, such as Bogdanov's aforementioned *The Red Star*, where the hero experiences two worlds, Mars and the Earth, which embody very distant social times.

think. Indeed, it appears that there was still, in the thirties, a certain amount of confusion caused by the recent change in the conventions of the calendar and the structure of the week. The concepts of the week and the number of hours constituting a day seem to be based on common sense. They should, therefore, have been 'natural.' But when the Soviet government tinkered with these structures, they shattered the transparency of these conventions, and rendered time opaque.

In fact, the 1918 change in calendar from the Gregorian to the Julian calendar revealed that dates are different from time. It was explained to the population that the Earth didn't keep good time. For example, the Easter festival was gradually getting warmer, the calendar year slowly sliding away from the seasons. The collection of 1930s memoirs, *Intimacy and Terror,* illustrates this phenomenon in the chronicle introducing the work. In the first part of the book, textual fragments from the newspaper *Izvestya* are interwoven with a peasant's personal diary. The entries have been matched using clues of weather and the mention of certain events. Yet, the dates are always mismatched by the 12 days, which separate the former calendar from the Julian calendar. The peasant who wrote the diary was simultaneously living within two calendar structures.[24] The welcome decree on the seven-hour workday[25] and the reportedly confusing five-day week (*nepreryvka*, 1928), and the later six-day week (*chestidnevnik*, 1931), also contributed to the increasing opacity of time.[26]

Biological time:

The idea of an internal clock was discovered in 1729 by the French Jean-Jacques d'Ortous de Mairan. The scientist left his heliotope plant in the dark for several days, but it continued to open regularly on schedule. D'Ortous concluded that the plant was not simply reacting to light, but had some kind of internal clock regulating its movements.

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[24] Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), pp. 11-65.

[25] According to the 1937 textbook by Shestakov, before the Revolution, the work day lasted 13 to 14 hours, and in certain circumstances, up to 17-18 hours a day were required from the worker. Toilers worked on holidays and there were no such things as vacations. Shestakov, p. 131.

[26] The *nepreryvka* was primarily designed to keep factories running continuously during the Five-Year Plans. It also aimed at eliminating the traditional sacred days of Christianity and Judaism by eliminating both the Saturday and the Sunday. Workers complained about the impossibility of conducting normal family life in a context where only 20% of the population had any weekday off. The six-day week was introduced in response to these complaints. In 1940, Stalin's efforts to reach some kind of peace with the Orthodox Church led to the reintroduction of Sundays and the seven-day week. See Stephen Hanson, *Time and Revolution; Marxism and the design of Soviet Institutions*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997, p. 234, note 49. This work

The human brain's 'central clock,' a region called the 'superchiasmatic nucleus,' was located in 1972. But its existence was suspected long before, and was discussed widely in the thirties.[27]

The body is run by a series of 'clocks,' within the 24-hour day, the circadian cycle. There are more than 1,000 different circadian rhythms, which have been detected in the human body. The menstrual cycle spans over 29.5 days; the heart beats 75 times per minute; the human sleep/wake pattern follow a cycle 28.8 hours long; the production of adrenaline is at its lowest at 4:00, while asthma is at its worst; hay fever is most tormenting in the morning; kidneys are most effective at midday; alcohol is least toxic to the body around 17:00, cocktail hour.[28]

The rhythm of menstruation periods and sleeping patterns were researched in the Soviet Union at several medical research institutes throughout the twenties and thirties, as well as at the Central Labour Institute. It was understood that some activities were better done at certain times of the day, and that people were more efficient at different times of the day or month. These studies served as the main justification for the aforementioned protective labour legislation. As a result, menstrual leaves were instituted, and night shifts were shorter than day shifts. Technology did not have any influence on the body cycles themselves. However, with knowledge about the circadian structure, transformations in work organisations were designed to minimise certain effects on production and workers' reproduction. Additional remuneration was also offered to those transgressing the laws of chronobiology.

Revolutionary time:

As Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all observed, the experience of time is altered in Revolutionary periods. Since the Revolution, and especially since the beginning of the Five-Year Plans, a time-space compression had occurred. This had a disorienting effect upon Soviet social and cultural life, as well as in the workplace. This was caused by new organisational forms and technologies of production.

> In an extremely brief space of time, the Soviet Union has become one of the foremost industrial countries in the world. We have learned to make wonderful machines, the roar of aeroplanes sounds menacingly in the sky. The country

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maps out a detailed history of time management in Soviet industry from Marx to Gorbachev.

[27] 'The Tyranny of Time,' *The Economist*, 8150 (1999), p. 87.

[28] Lippincott, p. 213.

> which but yesterday was a land of huts and cabins is being clothed in iron, concrete and marble.[29]

The historian Stephen Hanson has remarked that a mixture of technological progresses, and perhaps over-optimistic rhetoric, contributed to accelerated the tempo of production. In fact, 'Fulfil the Five-Year Plan in four years!' was one of the most prominent slogans of the industrialisation drive.

> After all, the usual Russian term for 'Five-Year Plan,' *pyatiletka*, literally means 'five year period.' To fulfil a *pyatiletka* in four years thus meant not only to achieve a high growth rate but actually to compress five years' time into four.[30]

The first Five-Year Plan was completed in four years and three months, the second in a little under five.

Free time:

Relying on propaganda disseminated through journals of that particular period, it could be presumed that the ideal worker of the Five-Year Plans period would have attended meetings, extended her work hours in order to fulfil quotas, joined evening classes, waited on her family, etc. According to this model, free time was simply not an option. Ironically, free time became fetishised in the thirties as a new condition of life reflected by the slogan 'Life has become better, life has become merrier!' However, leisure was immediately regimented with the implementation of the Ready for Labour and Defence (GTO) badges and other similar mechanisms. Indeed, the sports education movement, previously discussed in relation to the ninth mosaic, organised free time according to a productivity grid. This trend points to governmental efforts to impose an industrial time management model onto every aspect of daily existence.

This idea was not new *per se*. Suffice it here to refer to the utopian city models devised in the twenties by Moysey Ginzburg. The structure of these architectural spaces had been elaborated in relation to a rigid schedule, organising in temporal slots every activity and event meant to take place in a proletarian day. This structure resembled that of monastic life.

Time management:

Because of the importance of this question for the Stalinist thirties, the next section will be exclusively devoted to time management.

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[29] *USSR in Construction*, 12 (1935), n. p.
[30] Hanson, p. 152.

The tempo must not be reduced !

The problem of how to organise labour time in socialist industries became one of central focus in the Party debates during the NEP period. Indeed, the Revolution concretely signified a transformation in the culture of work for the proletariat, that is of work in industry. Immediately after the Revolution, Lenin's government built several research institutions to deal with this issue. However, the civil war and the post-war economic climate prevented widespread reforms in work organisations until the thirties. Three models of time discipline were put forth and debated before one was wholly adopted for the massive industrialisation thrust, which characterises the first two Five-Year Plans, when Russia made a definitive leap toward industrial modernity.

It has been argued that Russia followed the inevitable path, although at an accelerated pace, of any industrialising country on how it organised the use of time in the factory:

> Industrial production requires precise scheduling in bringing together the diverse elements entering into the production process. The requirement is most evident with the assembly line, since it rigorously imposes the necessity that everyone start and stop at the same time, that each step be completed as scheduled. according to the socialisation principle of exemplification, men working in factories should come to internalise a concern for orderly advanced planning and precise scheduling.[31]

In *Time and Revolution*, Stephen Hanson argues that this process did not transfer directly to Russia. As it has already been mentioned in this study, the Soviet Union's transition from an overwhelmingly agrarian country to an industrial force meant the invention of purely socialist values, as well as of practices. Indeed, the Soviet Union aimed at 'catching up and overtaking the West.'[32] But it was not interested in being productive in accordance with liberal capitalist parameters. Therefore, while borrowing technology and some production methods from Western Europe and America, the Soviet Union fashioned a 'production time' quite different than that of other industrialised countries.

Assembly lines do not induce a tempo. They do not preclude rush work to meet quotas, nor variously motivated breaks. The relative independence of tools and processes from the speed of work is especially important in relation to Soviet factories, which were not bound to fulfil market demands, or depend on profit for their survival. If the managers of industries were not convinced that the strict adherence to the assembly line

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[31] Alex Inkeles and David Smith, *Becoming Modern*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974, p. 160.

[32] Slogan used by Stalin's government during the Five-Year Plans.

tempo was the ultimate objective, they were very unlikely to make reforms that would push workers to internalise the values of liberal capitalist production.

The Central Labour Institute (TsIT) was founded in 1920 with the help of Lenin. Overseen by Aleksey Gastev, it promoted Taylorism as a legitimate way to organise socialist labour and increase productivity in Russian factories. Gastev's conception of 'scientific organisation of labour' was based on abstract measures of time, a grid made up of hours and minutes directly corresponding to levels of production. Human beings were to be subjected to the rhythm of the machine.[33] There was severe opposition to this mode of production in intellectual circles. Many argued that Soviet-type Taylorism represented the same form of alienation and proletarian exploitation from which socialism promised to liberate workers.

Platon Kerzhentsev, leader of the Time League, proposed another view.[34] Kerzhentsev, former member of the *Proletkult*, advocated purely proletarian practices, based on enthusiasm and spontaneous actions in culture, as well as in the workplace. The Time League, which recruited members mostly among *komsomols* and young enthusiasts,[35] relied upon personal rhythm and record breaking. It depended on workers' 'spontaneous time discipline' and referred to a continuously revolutionary time discipline, which was meant to become the cultural norm under socialism. In other words, workers were meant to transcend conventional time by means of communist consciousness, like the *subbotnik* during the civil war.[36] The Time League was disbanded under Stalin in 1926.

In his discussion of time management, Hanson borrowed from Max Weber's sociological vocabulary, and characterised TsIT time as 'rational' time, and the Time League's use of time as 'charismatic.'[37] The concept of time management, which played

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[33] There is no need to define here the principles of 'scientific organisation of labour' (NOT). They are detailed in Aleksei Gastev, *Kak Nado Rabotat': Prakticheskoe Vvedenie v Nauku Organizatsii Truda*, Moscow: Ekonomika, 1966.

[34] Kerzhentsev, head of the KDPI from 1936 to 1938, has already been mentioned in relation to the campaign against formalism. See chapter one.

[35] At its height, the league included around 25,000 members, 40% were *komsomols*. Hanson, p. 125.

[36] From the Russian *subbota*, Saturday, a *subbotnik* was the voluntary donation by a worker or a whole brigade of their day off (Saturday) to the State. In the thirties, the voluntary nature of the *subbotnik* was compromised. Indeed, people who did not participate in them became perceived as enemies of the regime. One could therefore say that although unremunerated, the *subbotnik* became *de facto* compulsory.

[37] According to Weber, rational practices depend on a mixture of common sense and compliance with the law, while charismatic practices rely on faith in the legitimacy of a new order or of the leader. See Max Weber, *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, London: Peter Owen, 1962, pp. 82-83.

a central role in the elaboration of the first two Five-Year Plans, is then defined by the historian as 'rational-charismatic' time.[38] This concept was developed throughout the twenties by the economist Stanislav Strumilin who worked alongside Gastev at TsIT. Rational-charismatic time corresponds to Stalinist time, not because it permeates all aspects of life under Stalin, but because it defines some of the most determinant aspects that characterise the period: work, defence and organised leisure during the Five-Year Plans.

Strumilin put forth the following position: in order to realise its full productive potential in a socialist economy, industry could not simply rely on workers' enthusiasm, which would be difficult to maintain at a stable level. This concern was important with regards to periods of famine, war, or adversity. This consideration was especially significant in a period when war was imminent, and anterior periods of combat and famine were still fresh in popular memory.

Strumilin considered that it would be a scientific error to over-rely on overtime. He demonstrated there were human biological limitations past which speeding up the work process, or extending it, would only lead to injury and exhaustion of the workers. The biological clock was hence introduced into abstract production time. Conversely, a socialist form of Taylorism was unsatisfactory for Soviet production, because it limited individuals to the preconceived potential of technology. To counter the limiting effect of a strict correspondence between a unit of time and a unit of work, Strumilin advocated the benefits of the elasticity of human labour energy. He proposed that this approach would provide socialist production with an advantage over capitalist production. This rational-charismatic conception of time underlies the following statement by Stalin:

> It is sometimes asked whether it is not possible to slow down the tempo a bit, to put a check on the movement. No, comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced! On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our powers and possibilities... To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind.

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[38] Although this might seem a contradiction in terms, the 'rational-charismatic' points to a conception that simultaneously uses abstract structures of time in order to transcend time itself. It is Hanson's argument that this concept of time was already present in Marx's work and periodically used by Lenin as a strategy (especially during the civil war). This concept of time management is the signature of work organisation of the thirties. Christel Lane also agrees that Weber's categories do not fully correspond to the Soviet situation of the thirties. She defines a new type of legitimacy, 'goal-rational,' which is dictated by a number of intermediary goals and tasks in order to reach the overall charismatic goal of communism. See Christel Lane, 'Legitimacy and Power in the Soviet Union Through Socialist Ritual,' *British Journal of Political Science*, 14 (1984), p. 209.

> And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse to be beaten!...
>
> We are 50 or 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in 10 years. Either we do it, or they crush us.[39]

In practice, the 'rational' component of this time management strategy is easy to outline. In most workplaces, the workday lasted seven hours, with a number of breaks planned by the factory manager. The assembly line method was used in many factories in order to save time and make use of non-qualified labour. Simple factory rules, necessary in order to turn a largely peasant society into proletarians, were explained to workers by means of rule books, formation classes and workshops, as well as through propaganda poster campaigns explaining safety, hygiene and moral principles associated with industrial work.

Concurrently, workers were encouraged to take the initiative to propose new ways to use tools, or delegate work within a worker's brigade. Many films of the thirties, set in the factory, provided workers with practical advice: self-discipline and personal responsibility; advanced knowledge of the technology; ingenuity in adapting tools to a context of constant change and increasing speed; closer collaboration with other workers.

> The Stakhanov method sets the goals of maximal exploitation of the machinery, maximal utilisation of the work day, the optimal division of work between members of a brigade [...] Very often a worker at the height of his profession accomplishes secondary work (a tunneller loading and hauling rocks, a lathe operator sharpening the blades, etc.), but when these tasks are accomplished by auxiliary workers, this arrangement significantly lengthens the time of optimal work and largely increases productivity.[40]

Encouragement to adapt production procedures and reward schemes, such as the stakhanov movement or medals awarded to brigades and factories for exceeding set quotas, partly fostered the 'charismatic' work habits required by Strumilin's model. Several examples of schemes fostering socialist pride and record breaking have already been discussed in this study, with relation to parachuting and flying, for example. It has also been established that heroisation of individuals encouraged workers to transcend quotas. Although it can be assumed that money

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[39] Stalin, p. 199-200.

[40] Upravlenie Metrostroia, *Sputnik-stakhanovtsa Metrostroevtsa*, Moscow: Upravlenie Metrostroia NKTP-SSSR, 1935, p. 21.

incentives played an important role in motivating the work force, these were rarely discussed in Soviet propaganda.

> The progressive-piece-rate system of remuneration for work should stimulate growth productivity, ensuring the maximum tempo, it should eliminate wage-levelling in work remuneration, provide better work organisation and reduce waste of workers' energy, as well as guide us in the struggle for understanding work discipline and ameliorate the quality of the work executed.[41]

In Western factories organised by strict time management practices, workers were punished when they failed to fulfil quotas. On the contrary, the Stalinist model rewarded those who exceeded the set norm. In the metro project, this un-socialist measure was implemented on November 1, 1935. Bonus pay was granted starting with the first percent produced over the quota. A handbook containing tables detailing how much a worker would earn for each percentage was provided to workers as a means of incentive. For example, specialised workers such as tunnellers would earn 13.36 rubles per day accomplishing 100% of the quota. One percent produced above this quota would earn them an extra thirteen kopecks a day. At a productivity level of 150%, they would earn 20.04 rubles, and as follows: 200%=26.72 rubles, 300%=40.09 rubles, 400%=53.44 rubles, 500%=66.80 rubles. Auxiliary workers in the Metro project would earn less, starting at 5.26 rubles daily for meeting the quota, and would receive 16.30 rubles for performing fivefold. How a worker could have over-fulfilled the quota five times is beyond understanding.[42] Hanson justly observes that from the Western perspective, the plans made very little economic sense.[43] They presumably made even less sense to the peasant mind.

In order to refine his model of time management, Strumilin also theorised leisure and personal time as an important component of production efficiency. Optimisation of free time was a question that had never been formally addressed in Soviet Russia up until this point:

> The 'rationalisation of leisure,' Strumilin argued, would allow socialist planners to ensure that Soviet citizens maintained their highest level of potential

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[41] Upravlenie Metrostroia, p. 44.

[42] See tables of progressive-piece-rate remuneration for different categories of work skills in Upravlenie Metrostroia, pp. 46-73. An *anekdot* from the period highlights this nonsense:
An interview with Henry Ford: 'Mr Ford, what would you do if your American workers started speeding up production and exceeding set quotas as our Soviet stakhanovites routinely do?'
'I would fire the engineers who set such low quotas in the first place.'

[43] Hanson, p. 151.

> productivity - without squandering their energy on 'irrational' free-time pursuits such as drinking, idling or performing mindless household chores.[44]

From 1923 to 1925, Strumilin's team charted the most effective ways to work and achieve daily chores. Routine activities performed by Soviet workers, peasants and professionals were timed and computed. Calculating in minute detail the average period spent by the Soviet citizen on productive and non-productive activities, Strumilin's team tried to optimise time on and off the factory floor. The data collected aimed at ordering and structuring work time in a more efficient way, as well as creating an environment tailored to foster enthusiasm, and, therefore, encourage workers to transcend simple rational time. Hanson assesses Stalinist time management in these words:

> Early liberal capitalist regimes forced nearly urbanised workers to adjust to the idea that the rule of abstract time is inexorable; work must therefore be steady and disciplined and 'free time' kept within strict bounds. The Soviet regime held out a different promise: that if work was done intensively enough according to the Party's direction, time could actually be compressed and the conflict between labour and leisure ultimately overcome.[45]

The production of time

All the models previously discussed reveal that time was considered as a malleable commodity, and not as an essential category. Time was understood as a representation used by people to arrange their activities. By an example of how the nature of time was described to Soviet children in the late thirties, this section should further establish the opacity of Soviet time.

A number of innovations, which changed the practice of production and everyday life, revealed how time could be either expanded or contracted. The Metro and various other examples of timesaving devices served this purpose. Although it was understood that people could not live outside of time, transcending temporality was encouraged in work and leisure. The emphasis on record setting testifies to this matter. All this challenged the myth of universal and immutable time, and produced a conception of temporality as opaque as the ideologically saturated space discussed in the previous chapter.

An article entitled 'Time,' published in 1938 in the children's journal *Pioner* will serve as an example of the constant leap between scientific theories of time and revolutionary practices as a strategy used during this period to eclipse the 'natural' from

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[44] Hanson, p. 127.
[45] Hanson, p. viii.

time.[46] In the first part of the article, the author brings attention to the fact that the year is a representation.

The Julian calendar used in Russia until 1918 considered a 365-day year, Zelikovich writes. Yet, it ignored the further 0.2422 days in the cycle of rotation of the Earth. In order to catch up, one day was added ever four years. Nevertheless, 0.2422 of a day consists in 11 minutes and 14 seconds less than a quarter of a year. This meant errors of a full day every 128 years. As it has been previously mentioned, the Gregorian calendar was adopted after the Revolution (on January 31, 1918) and was referred to as *novy stil*, the new style. It corrected this error by adding three days to the yearly cycle every 400 years. Yet the calendar year still did not exactly correspond to nature, as it permitted a one-day error every 3,200 years. It was nevertheless a more efficient representation of time. The term 'representation' is emphasised in the *Pioner* article.

Although both calendars are conventions, the transfer from the Julian calendar to the *novy stil*, must have shocked most individuals, already having to adjust to new concepts of space, body, nation and production. Indeed, with the signature of a decree, the whole country 'lost' 12 days. Holidays and all kinds of events were either pushed along or disappeared altogether. This explains how the October Revolution actually happened in November, according to the old style. Memoirs of the time demonstrate how people resisted, or were simply unable to adapt to the new time structure.[47]

The *Pioner* article provides another example of the constructed nature of time. At this point, it questions the sequence of days. The author retells Edgar Poe's account of how the latter witnessed a week that contained three Sundays:

> Two captains arrived in London. The first claimed that Sunday was yesterday, while the second insisted that it would be tomorrow. But Londoners all knew that Sunday was 'today.' What is most remarkable is that they were all right.[48]

If this was possible in Europe, spread out over three time zones, the phenomenon of the simultaneity of different local times would be all the more impressive in the USSR, which occupied 11 time zones in 1938. When it was noon in Moscow, it was therefore already 22:00 in Chukotsk. This also meant that different parts of the day could happen simultaneously in the Union, as in the representation of time displayed in Mayakovskaya. The cycle could in fact be understood as a synchronous 'now' experienced in different time zones throughout the Union, rather than a succession of moments.

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[46] E. Zelikovich, 'Vremia,' *Pioner*, 3 (1938), pp. 106-114.

[47] See for example the aforementioned chronicle printed in Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), pp. 11-65, which cleverly juxtaposes a diary written in old style with events printed in *Izvestia*.

[48] Zelikovich, p. 110.

A further argument proposed by the author of the article to prove that time is a construction refers to a historical episode already discussed with regards to the thirteenth mosaic. The 1937 Chkalov expedition, linking the spaces of Moscow and North America by flying over the North Pole, provides convincing proof that time zones do not correspond to a continuous experience of time. Indeed, by flying over the point where meridians meet, the pilots did not dash through time zones one by one, but rather through 11 time zones at once. They were immediately projected 11 hours in the past, in relation to Moscow.

The article ends on a short explanation of Einstein's theory of relativity, written in the fiction mode. Based on the concept that time slows down in altitude, the author proposes that with the help of technology, one could travel through time and live longer.[49] This refers to the 'twins effect' elaborated by Einstein in 1905 to illustrate the phenomenon of time warps.[50]

It is irrelevant that, according to Einstein's theory, the example given in the article is flawed. What matters for the present study is that the article sought to inculcate in young minds the notion that time is constructed, as well as being an empirical phenomenon, which can be tinkered with. While in the Newtonian world, everything could be measured exactly according to immutable space and time co-ordinates, the presence of the observer changes both space and time in Soviet time. According to Einstein's theory, space and time are in constant dialogue in a relative space-time continuum. This model represents a process more compatible with the generally dynamic Stalinist world-view. Indeed, when the author of the *Pioner* article described time warps, he asked a leap of faith from the children similar to that demanded from the general population reading the inverted allegories of Socialist Realist art, material culture and discourse.

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[49] This is an error. The author of the article mistook the time-compressing effect of speed for that of altitude. According to Einstein's theory, time speeds up when an object removes itself from large gravitational bodies such as the Earth or travels at great speed.
[50] On the 'twin effect,' see Davies, *About Time*, p. 59-67. This metaphor demonstrates that relativity is a mismatch between two people's 'now' when in distant places, affected by different gravity forces and/or speed. When their bodies are brought back together and subject to the same material conditions, their present coincides again. Unfortunately, it is impossible to exploit time dilatation to delay one's own ageing process. It is also impossible to leap into one's own future or past, as is suggested by the article, since this would mean travelling at a speed faster than light, which is impossible according to the General Theory of Relativity. The idea of living for hundreds of years is a mistake that often appears in early vulgarisations of Einstein.

Twenty-third mosaic; Future aviators

The twenty-third mosaic represents two *pioners* playing with model aeroplanes. The children seem to be standing on opposite edges of the oval opening in the Mayakovskaya ceiling. They are both dressed in their *pioner* uniforms: the boy wears a blue-grey short-sleeved shirt and short pants; the girl is in a blue-grey dress, also with short sleeves. Both wear a red scarf around their neck, the symbol of the communist youth movement to which the great majority of children belonged in the thirties.

Their bodies seem excessively muscular for those of children. Their legs are sturdy and athletic. The girl's bust seems fully developed. This strange mismatch of adult bodies and clothing reserved for children produces the effect of the condensation of two ages...of two times. The activity they engage in seems to reveal a future possibility. By playing with model planes the children are transfigured and become the aviators of the future. This illustration borrows directly from Deineka's own work, 'Future Aviators' (1932).

Apparently running, each child holds up a model plane about to be launched from his or her right hand. The girl's aircraft is a pink and red glider, the boy's is a red and white four-engine monoplane, equipped with large wheels under the fuselage. As if predicting the flight of the model planes, another grey silhouette flies toward the blind wall of the station. It is not entirely clear whether the third plane is a model or an actual aircraft, its scale optically reduced by distance. Its rendition is minimal. Therefore, it is impossible to decipher which kind of aeroplane it might be. The ambiguity in this representation does not lay with the interpretation of indefinite codes, nor with the perception dictated by different conceptions of bodies, space or time, but rather with the formal proximity of flying objects of equal size, their actual scale possibly distorted by perspective.

During the thirties, representations of children playing with model planes are ubiquitous. In view of the general air-mindedness of the period, which has already been discussed at length in the previous chapters, this should not surprise the present reader. Slogans such as 'Let's add 1,000,000 pilots to our fleet' indicate that children, as future aviators, were encouraged to join the air proficiency movement. The back cover of a 1938 issue of *Ogonek* even shows a baby strapped in a parachuting contraption, suspended in mid-air, wearing nothing but a diaper.[51] Sky training, in representation at least, started young.

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[51] *Ogonek*, 27 (1937), back cover.

Fig. 70. Twenty-third mosaic
Fig. 71. 'Young Inventors,' postcard, 1920s

Since its inception, the Aviation Day celebration always included model plane workshops. This is illustrated in the January 1935 issue of *USSR in Construction*, which devoted its fold-out centrefold to a photomontage documenting the popular aviation holiday by juxtaposing balloons, parachutes, children crafting model planes and others playing with diminutive aircraft.[52] The very first Soviet model plane competition was held in Moscow in 1926. In 1932, the first motorised model plane competition took place. These yearly events rapidly expanded to include a variety of categories, which considered the age of the builder, the type of plane, craftsmanship, etc. These competitions aimed at promoting general involvement in aviation, and especially targeted children.

> Thousands of children take an interest in aviation. They dream of becoming airmen, of building 'steel birds,' and these dreams are rapidly being converted into great creative reality. They make models of aeroplanes, airships, stratosphere balloons. They go up into the air on gliders.
>
> The Soviet model aeroplane makers have won world fame. They have broken all world records. Day by day their practical work brings ever-new victories. The newspapers had hardly had time to speak of the model of George Goponemko from Krasnodar when the model of Vasya Kupreichik in Minsk set a new world record.[53]

All means were made available to promote air-mindedness in children. The journal *Pioner*, as well as several other children's journals, regularly printed instructions on how to build different kinds of flying toys, which recreated in minute details the larger aircraft displayed in Gorky Park's Townlet of Science and Technique. According to the 1938 edition of the yearly annotated bibliography *What Should School-Children Read?*,[54] two books no Soviet child should have been without were E. Mikirtumov's *Flying Model Planes* and *Atlas of Flying Models Designs*.[55] The first book is referred to in most children's journals during 1938. It is an easy step-by-step guide to making model planes and small mechanical motors. The illustrated book contains a full-scale blueprint for constructing a monoplane with an elastic-propelled motor, the '*rezinmotor*.' Only common materials, most of which could have been obtained in the typical Soviet home,

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[52] *USSR in Construction*, 1 (1935), n. p.
[53] *USSR in Construction*, 6 (1935), n. p.
[54] *Shto Chitat' Shkol'nikam.*
[55] E. Mikirtumov, *Letaiushchie Modeli Samoletov*, Moscow: Detizdat, 1937, and E. Mikirtumov, *Atlas Chertezhei Letaiushchikh Modelei*, Moscow: Glavnaia Redaktsiia Aviatsionnoi Literatury, 1938.

were needed. The second book contains dozens of patterns and instructions for crafting a variety of parachutes, seaplanes, gliders and numerous other flying toys.

The issue of *USSR in Construction*, printed at the end of 1937, features a poll quizzing four children about their future aspirations. The children were picked for being 'representative' of Soviet Children.[56] This claim has to be understood within the general pattern set up in this study for understanding Socialist Realist configurations as 'typical exceptions.' The children polled were representations of Soviet youngsters as they should/would be. Two out of four children imagined their future career as unfolding in the sky. Misha Kiselev, a 14-year old, wanted to become a sky explorer, while Nina Minaeva, 13, aimed for a career in parachuting.

The *USSR in Construction* photomontage, which includes text and images, was meant to provoke identification by establishing a norm in the children's ambitions. Indeed, Soviet children's conceptions of themselves were formed within the Socialist Realist world-image. They were formed within the codes of the 'future set in the present.' Their experience of everyday life differed from that of their parents; they were not required to juggle pre-Revolutionary and Leninist worldviews with the Stalinist world in representation, as were the older generations. Furthermore, it was understood that children's primary role in society *is* to become socialised through school, play and other activities. The poll is also significant because it was meant to direct children's interest to strategic fields of production and professional activity. It must be stressed that the publishing house, which printed the aforementioned 'DIY' aviation books, the committees organising model aeroplane competitions and the institutions training young pilots were all tributaries of the centralised Soviet government.

Indeed, forming a generation proficient in aeronautics had foreseeable consequences, in terms of preparing the workforce for the scientific sector and the defence industry, according to the objectives of central planning. Soviet schools also contributed to forming the children in view of future needs, by a course of education propagandist in nature.[57] From 1934, children from the age of nine were already taught about, and quizzed on, matters such as planned economy and heavy industry.[58] Furthermore, great pilots such as Chkalov and Gromov spent much of their time touring

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[56] *USSR in Construction*, 9-12 (1937), n. p.

[57] Education strategies were set by the Commissariat for Education to fit the overall educational needs of the Union. From the Revolution until WWII, there were constant reorientation of the *curriculum* and teaching methodologies, preventing children and teachers to get accustomed to the new methods. This might have made the propagandist nature of the taught material all the more obvious.

[58] See the aforementioned textbook by Shestakov, and Timasheff, p. 207.

schools and writing books dedicated to children, after setting their respective flight records.

Several other institutions directly contributed to this educational role. The *Pioner* movement was one of them. In the thirties, when appurtenance to the movement was almost universal, the state started building '*pioner* palaces.' These were the equivalent of the worker's clubs. The palaces were designed to provide the *pioners* with a space where they could rest and play, while establishing a frame propitious to the acquisition of interests and skills in the arts and science. In the palaces, children could play chess and other games; learn about botany in the palaces' gardens; conduct supervised experiments in physics and chemistry; access film and photography workshops; learn skills in music and the arts; and study model plane building. An article in *Ogonek* describing all the marvels, which could be accessed, is illustrated with a photograph featuring a group of *pioners* about to launch a model aeroplane. On the back wall of the room, a painting of aeroplanes hangs, while a model of the *stratostat* rests in the corner. Several children are working on their own model planes; plane skeletons are scattered on the tables.[59]

Ever since the Revolution, children were seen as the first group who could fully participate in the new world. Having been immersed in the values of the regime, and being in a position where they could accept newly imposed conventions as legitimate. They were not detracted from official discourse by their personal experience of the past. Theoretically, they could read propaganda with the appropriate frame of mind, and using the proper codes. In the twenties and early thirties, Soviet children were asked to re-educate their parents.[60] The tragic story of 'Pavlik' Morozov provides a good example:

> Pavil Morozov, the legendary young *pioner* who denounced his father to the authorities as a hoarder of grain and was subsequently murdered by angry relatives, was another name on the 1937 list of heroes of Soviet Youth. Pavil, an odious figure to Russian intellectuals in the waning years of the Soviet Union, was a real hero to many young people in the 1930s, symbolising youthful bravery, self-sacrifice, and willingness to challenge unjust authority at the local level, whether parental or that of other adults.[61]

However, by the late 30s, the period Timasheff calls the 'great retreat,' children were encouraged to show respect to their parents.

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[59] L. Panteleev, 'Dvorets Pionerov, ili Novoe Puteshestvie v Stranu Chudes',' *Ogonek*, 13 (1937), p. 9.

[60] Timasheff, p. 194. This mandate was given to children through schooling and various publications.

[61] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 73.

> Young people should respect their elders, especially their parents...the respect and care of parents is an essential part of the *Komsomol* morals... One must respect and love his parents, even if they are old-fashioned and do not like the *Komsomol*.[62]

Stalin himself sets an example, by his famous visit to his own mother in Tiflis. Detailed accounts of the visit were printed everywhere. The coexistence of two generations (two different times) could not be clearer than in the juxtaposition of the Leader with his elderly mother, a devout catholic. Shortly after this visit, Stalin appeared in one of Moscow's parks with his own children, something he had never done before. According to Timasheff, until that day, the majority of Soviet youngsters did not even know that Stalin had any children.[63]

Eternally young, and always represented in his pioner uniform, the popular Pavlik became an anachronistic figure, just a few years after having been granted the status of hero. His ambiguous features, nevertheless, persistently kept appearing behind every red scarf.

Twenty-fourth mosaic; Patriotic nudity

A white ball, striped with red bands, lingers in mid-air, almost at the centre of the twenty-fourth mosaic. Three young men dressed in short pants emerge from the sides of the frame. The first wears white, the second, red, and the third, black. As in the previous mosaic, the bodies seem to be standing on the outer edge of the make-believe opening in the ceiling. One of the men is closer to the edge. He is represented at a larger scale, and longer sections of his thighs are represented. The muscle modulations visible on the men's bare torso and legs are represented in contrasting pieces of pink and brown smalto.

Their bodies are contorted; their arms are extended upwards as if ready to catch or push the ball. They might be practising volleyball, playing 'pushball,'[64] or training with a weighed ball. Deineka's free use of scale throughout the cycle does not permit the user to determine what type of ball is represented. The men's location is also impossible to ascertain, as Deineka has depicted no attribute of place. The sky is bright blue, and pinkish clouds fill the gaps between the bodies distributed at equal distance along the oval's periphery.

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[62] Komsomol'skaia Pravda, June 7, 1935, quoted by Timasheff, p. 202.
[63] Timasheff, p. 203.
[64] This was popular game in the 1930s. It was played with an enormous air-filled ball. See the painting by Pavel Kuznetsov entitled 'Pushball' (1931).

Fig. 72. Twenty-fourth mosaic

The representation of nude or semi-nude figures in Soviet public art is a problematic issue, which few historians have discussed.[65] The twenty-fourth representation, which might be read by the present viewer as homoerotic, could not function as such within the official discourse of Stalinism. In the material context of the Mayakovskaya station, the image should be read according to debates on nudity and sport activities, which were her contemporary. It might be useful to link this image to Deineka's own 'Lunch Break in the Donbass' (1935), which represents a group of five nude youths playing football in the Don River Basin.[66]

The representation of the uninhibited group activity represented in both 'Lunch-break in the Donbass' and the twenty-fourth mosaic engages with a specific discourse, prominent in the propagandist visual and textual culture of the 1930s. It refers mainly to the social disapproval and apprehension of young men's individualistic attitudes, attributed to the NEP period, and therefore anachronistic in the late thirties. This social problem was presented as a recent crisis. It was brought to the attention of the general public in a national drive. A literary description of the individualistic nepman type is brilliantly sketched in the character of Prisypkin, in Mayakovsky's 'The Bedbug' (1928), shown regularly in Moscow theatres from February 1929 to May 1930. The play describes the predicament of a man synchronously experiencing two historical times, when a hung-over Prisypkin awakes in a laboratory of the 'Resurrection Institute' in 1979, and is examined as one of two rare specimens from an obsolete past, along with a bedbug.

The 1935 campaign of information and indignation about juvenile delinquency was used as a means of justification to crush all remnants of non-communal organisation or independent communal enterprises. This was discussed in the media as an emerging phenomenon, in relation to the socially threatening dissolution of family ties. It had been part of the Bolshevik program to loosen family ties, weaken the church, transform schools, etc., a trend which continued even after Lenin's death, during the NEP. The public stance against hooliganism (the Soviet word for anti-social behaviour and disruptive activity) announced the aforementioned 1936 reforms in family law, which

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[65] This issue has already been mentioned in relation to the second mosaic. Nudity in Socialist Realism is perhaps dismissed simply because it is such a rare occurrence in the whole corpus. It however frequently appears in Deineka's work, in painting as well as in the form of large mosaics destined for public buildings. For example, the paintings 'Playing Ball' (1932) and 'Gymnastics on the Balcony' (1935); the monumental mosaics 'Morning' (1949) and 'A Fine Day' (1959-60).

[66] This work might refer to Aleksey Stakhanov's feat accomplished in the Donbas (the Don River Basin), just a few months before the painting was executed.

many perceived as a betrayal of the civil rights granted to the population by the Bolsheviks in the years immediately following the Revolution.

The peasant Arzhilovsky's diary, partially reproduced in *Intimacy and Terror* refers to a list of hooligan actions enumerated in a 1934 journal: insults, fist fights, breaking windows and other destructive actions, shooting guns in the streets, challenging passers-by, breaking up cultural events in the workers' club, smashing plates in the cafeteria, and disturbing the peace late at night.[67] From this list, conflicting discourses about child rearing, relationships, family values, consumption of alcohol, health and sex unfold.

Parks, railway stations and public markets were privileged places for hooligan gang activity. Teenage hooliganism, along with homelessness in children, was among the biggest problems associated with the breakdown of the family. It was considered a serious challenge to the edification of socialism, as well as the creation of a Soviet culture, bodies and space. Precautions had to be taken so that the youth would not be contaminated with hooligan practices and values such as alcohol consumption, promiscuity or laziness.

However, as Sheila Fitzpatrick notes, 'criminal and hooligan behaviour was still surrounded by a "romantic aureole"'[68] during the thirties. The publicity campaign, to which many artists contributed, was accompanied by more severe sanctions imposed on hooligans. After 1935, the basic penalty for hooliganism was a five-year jail sentence. Rehabilitation was preferred to imprisonment in the case of young offenders. Serious offences, such as vandalism in industries or tampering with the transport infrastructure, could bring a 10-year sentence or even execution in some cases.[69] People accused of being hooligans were sometimes persecuted in show trials, which rarely resulted in prosecution.[70]

In the inter-war years the Stalinist regime often used rewards, or set positive images to emulate, rather than deterrence in order to induce proper practices. Stakhanovism, 'planned heroism' in science, industry and sports and the GTO movement

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[67] In Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), p. 118.

[68] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 171.

[69] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 151. According to Article 131 of the 1936 Constitution, vandalism of Soviet property was one of the most serious crimes. 'Persons attempting to infringe upon public socialist property are enemies of the people.' Central Executive Committee of the USSR, p. 38.

[70] This agitational genre performed by mobile theatres had gained extreme popularity during the civil war period. Most often, types were persecuted, rather than individuals, for example: the *kulak*, the wife-beater, the clergyman, the industrialist, etc. Deineka might have participated in the elaboration of such mock trials while working as a set designer for the Red Army mobile theatre in 1919-20.

produced such representations. The *Komsomol* and other organisations promoting group activities during free time were the main alternatives proposed by the regime to counter hooliganism. Hooliganism and socialist group activities seem to be the flip side of one another in the 1930s.

Absolutely opposed to the ascetic a-sexuality of the cyborg created by Avant-Garde artists such as Lissitzky and Malevich, the bare bodies painted by Deineka also exemplified what Matthew Cullerne Bown has described as 'patriotic nudity.'[71] This construction, which superficially denotes freedom, honesty and community spirit, permits the sensual enjoyment of voyeurism while the representation officially remains ideologically sound. In this context, the near nudity of the young men can no longer be straightforwardly understood as eroticism in the mainstream sense of the word. This is especially important in a context where homosexuality had recently been re-criminalised (in 1936) and the dissemination of pornography entailed a five-year sentence. Instead the twenty-fourth mosaic becomes an example of what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick defines as homosocial desire, a complex and unstable network of relationships derivative of patriarchal social, political and sexual organisation, which here includes homophobia.[72]

Twenty-fifth mosaic; Free time

The twenty-fifth mosaic closely resembles the eleventh image. The composition is identical; there are just a few chromatic differences. The depicted plane is made up of dark pieces of smalto instead of being white. The colour of the two sets of smaller parachutes is inverted. I can only propose the same hypothesis as with the previous repetition (mosaics 16 and 20). It can be assumed that Frolov's mosaic studio judged that the representation here intended was not transferable to the medium of smalto. A successful mosaic would then have been repeated, the lack of time preventing Deineka from producing another image.

This image complements the two previous descriptions of Stalinist leisure time well. During the Second Five-Year Plan, leisure was brought back as an important feature of every day life, only after several years of hardship. The success of the First Five-Year Plan had become manifest with the abolition of the ration cards and the appearance of full employment. This advance contributed to making organised leisure desirable, in order to secure social stability. Furthermore, the original Marxist texts indicated that a socialist society would permit its citizens to develop their minds and

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[71] Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Art under Stalin*, Oxford: Phaidon, 1991, p. 113.
[72] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

bodies, not only through labour, but also by the judicious occupation of their free time. This shows a shift in the practice of the Party, toward stability rather than revolution.

The 1935 slogan 'Life has become better comrades; life has become merrier,' comprised of implications for the distribution of consumption of goods. For example, the lifting of bread rations corresponded to a discourse of plentifulness, in direct contradiction with many people's experience of every day life, such as the inevitable queuing and scarcity of merchandise in shops. The slogan also had direct consequences on free time. In general terms, the new attitude toward leisure implied a shift from general asceticism to a new tolerance of enjoyment and pleasure. All kinds of leisure activities were organised and promoted by the State for the masses from then on.

> Citizens of the USSR have the right to rest and leisure. The right to rest and leisure is ensured by the reduction of the working day to seven hours for the overwhelming majority of the workers, the institution of annual vacations with pay and the provision of a wide network of sanatoria, rest homes and clubs servicing the needs of toilers.[73]

Most activities were free and accessible to the urban population. These included parachuting, air-shows and other aerial sports, but also access to numerous parks of culture and rest, dancing, carnivals, car races, etc. The scientific research conducted at TsIT under the supervision of Strumilin concluded that after a certain number of hours in labour, the worker was no longer fully productive, and accidents were more likely to occur. Leisure in free time was therefore encouraged as an integral part of the production process, and therefore entered the realm of work time disciple. As Sheila Fitzpatrick explained:

> This almost seems to be in contradiction with the principles underlying stakhanovism. Indeed, stakhanovism was the extension of work practices, or work temporality to other areas of life. [...] Theoretically, very little time was left over for leisure, except perhaps for the elite.
>
> But it was not only elite members who profited from the relaxation of mores and encouragement of leisure culture of the mid 1930s. Sound film was the new mass cultural medium, and the second half of the 1930s was the great age of Soviet musical comedy. [...] Dancing was also in fashion, for the masses as well as the elite. Dancing schools sprang up like mushrooms in the towns, and a young working class woman describing her cultural development mentioned

[73] Article 119 of the 1936 Constitution. Central Executive Committee of the USSR, p. 34-35.

> that not only was she going to literacy classes, but she and her stakhanovite husband were learning to dance.[74]

In the thirties, free time acquired a singular character, since the regime produced the modes of recreation, as well as the modes of production. Books, for example, were printed by state publishing houses, which privileged Socialist Realist works; films were state funded; and, the Soviet government was the main client for the visual arts. A large part of leisure activities took place in state run organisations (the *Pioner* and *Komsomol* movements, for example), and within the walls of spaces they controlled, such as 'parks of culture and rest,' pioner palaces, workers' clubs, etc. Most activities for adults were related to the union or professional organisation they belonged to.

Even physical activity was proletarianised and became imbued with ideology, as sports facilities became administered by the state. In the twenties, competitive sports, such as motor boat racing, equestrian sport, acrobatics and martial arts, had been discouraged as conflicting with the socialist ideal.[75] But in the thirties, the period of planned heroism, some of these sports were regaining their pre-Revolutionary importance, as record setting became a privileged way to boost national pride by challenging the natural limits of bodies, space and time. Group sports were promoted more than ever, with football and hockey as the national favourites. These also participated in the aforementioned anti-hooliganism campaign; group activities were privileged over solitary, anti-socialist ones. Sport training was linked to the workplace, and also became an extension of work, contributing to the worker's health, as well as group pride.

Free time became more regimented with the increasing popularity of the GTO movement. Not only did the Ready for Labour and Defence movement clearly indicate that leisure was a matter of production and national interest, sports started to be ordered according to the same grid of organised work. The rational–charismatic framework discussed in relation to the Stalinist workplace transfers to sports institution regulating the GTO movement. This is to say that leisure was increasingly regulated to fit the abstract time schedule necessary for the 'scientific training' of the body, and to the production of a soviet body. Mastering this science, increasing speed of production and breaking records in work and sports all contributed to transcending time.

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[74] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 93.

[75] These sports were reintroduced in 1938 and 1939. Riordan, p. 407.

The repetition of the parachuting image might hint to the capital importance of parachuting in the Stalinist discourse on leisure:

> In the realm of amateur sport, the most publicised activities were parachute jumping and gymnastics. Parachute-jumping turned up everywhere: in displays at air shows by professionals, in the paramilitary training conducted under the 'Ready for Labour and Defence' program, in photographs and cartoons in newspapers and magazines, on the vitas of stakhanovites, and in recreational parachute-jumping towers set up in parks of culture and rest. No doubt this sport symbolised Soviet daring and mastery of the air (or, to put it another way, the Soviet propensity, popular and governmental, for risk-taking).[76]

The caption below a caricature from *Krokodil* supports this argument. It reads as follows: 'The mass character of parachute sport in our country raises the challenge of servicing the parachutists without removing them from the air. That is exactly what our artist Yu. Ganf suggests.'[77] The illustration depicts a sky over-crowded with parachutists. Two biplanes hover in the top right corner. Air kiosks planted in balloon cabins 'service' the numerous population of sky pedestrians. They sell liquid refreshments, hot sausages and ice cream. One balloon hosts a post-office, another sells books, and a third is the set for a jazz band. This representation does not stray far from the empirical world. The sky represented in the caricature suggests the kind of space created in Gorky Park, hosting all the trappings of socialist leisurely living.[78]

During the thirties, the state provided the population with leisure institutions. It dictated the services offered and, therefore, the leisure needs of the population. This did not, however, preclude participants to take pleasure in the 'state of the art' leisure and sports facilities, which had been simply impossible to imagine a few short years ago, and suddenly available to the majority.

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[76] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 94.
[77] *Krokodil*, 25 (1937), back cover.
[78] See fourteenth mosaic.

The routinisation of time

She travels through Mayakovskaya regularly. She is used to the space, the smells, the sounds, and the sights it reveals. Leaning against a cold column, she gazes up at one of her favourite images, the cluster of colourful parachutists. The repetition of her strolls through Mayakovskaya has made her simultaneously more and less aware of the space. It has become familiar to her. Still, the moments of gazing at her favourite smalto image represents a special time for her, a break in her hectic day.

Revolutions are by nature charismatic (according to Max Weber's terminology). The Russian Revolution relied on Lenin and Trotsky's personal charisma to legitimate transformations in the material world and practices. If Stalin's 'discreet' accession to power is not typical of the charismatic model, one can consider that his elaboration of the Five-Year Plans fits the pattern of a society ruled by charismatic goals. The period has indeed often been described as a revolution. It proposed new ways of seeing the world and using it, which radically differed from those set by the previous Bolshevik leaders, Lenin and the tsarist regime. The shifts in policies and practices were mostly justified to the population by the authority of the leader, Stalin himself, who heavily relied on propaganda to foster enthusiasm and to achieve the goals of the Five-Year Plans.

When charisma is adopted by a society as a means of legitimisation of power, it is usually linked to the uneasy institution of a new order. The practices instigated by the charismatic leader and his followers diverge from established procedures. Both the 1917 revolution and the Five-Year Plans present endless examples of conflicting practices. The institution of Strumilin's rational-charismatic model for time management provides another instance. Indeed, when time management progressed from a representation of time to a generalised practice, it challenged the previous work habits of the newly formed proletariat, and forced it to adapt to a new kind of grid and form new traditions in the workplace.

As Max Weber notes, 'in its pure form, charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures.'[79] If practices instituted through charisma are meant to become permanent fixtures in society, a permanent set of relationships, it becomes necessary for legitimisation to rely on other mechanisms. In Weber's vocabulary, practices could become traditionalised (this would cause myth to form), rationalised or legalised. This requires a complex and lengthy transformation process.

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[79] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1947, p. 363.

> It is only in the initial stages and so long as the charismatic leader acts in a way which is completely outside everyday social organisation, that it is possible for his followers to live communistically in a community of faith and enthusiasm [...][80]

It is clear why this process needs to occur. The transformation of the charismatic into traditional, rational or legal ensures the continuation or the preservation of the values embodied in the new regime. It also determines firm practices, meant to substitute enthusiasm when the latter erodes under the daily grind. This result can be achieved through the building of mechanisms, which promote concrete self-interest in the followers of the charismatic leader so that the relationships of power can survive on the basis of interest rather than charisma or faith. This partly explains the stakhanovite strategy. The charismatic work ethics and time management based on enthusiasm were rationalised by scientific production modes, and rewarded by material benefits, such as higher pay and privileges of all kinds. In the context of the Soviet Union, this need for routinisation of the charismatic accounts for the disbanding, by Stalin's government, of several organisations relying on charisma, the *Proletkult* and the Time League among them.

When institutions are created, the routinisation process surely begins, whether hindered or helped along by the charismatic regime. The routinisation concerns all spheres of everyday life: home life, work, leisure, etc. There are several modes of the routinisation of time, which were used in the period concerning this study.

1. Charismatic goals were introduced into the economic structure of production and consumption through industrial time-management, and new modes of production, legitimised within scientific discourse. The term used by Hanson, the 'rational-charismatic,' suggests that the routinisation process had already been initiated in the thirties.
2. Charismatic justifications of different practices were transformed into sets of rules that could be understood in terms of organisational or nationalistic concerns. The importance of the bureaucracy for every day practices and the general participation of the population in defence training during their free time served this purpose.
3. Parameters were set for the participation of citizens in the new set of rules, by means of various tests of eligibility or training. Appurtenance to the *Komsomol* or the *Pioner*, for example, signified the subjection of Soviet youth to a series of rules and time discipline. Workers partaking in industrial production, qualifying as

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[80] Weber, *The Theory*, p. 367.

stakhanovites or fulfilling the GTO requirements also acquired proficiency with the established rules.

4. The education of the younger generation in relation to future social objectives. The 'traditionalisation' or 'naturalisation' of structures of power was the site where agitation, schooling and public art served their most important purpose.

The routinisation process in Stalinist society lead to the 'great retreat,' a period where the securing of power paradoxically caused a return to certain values borrowed from the system, which the Bolsheviks had sought to shatter. There are many symptomatic examples of this: the return to tsarist educational methods, tsarist military ranking and uniforms, the traditional concept of the family, etc. It seems that Weber had the Soviet Union in mind when he wrote the following lines:

> The immediate effect of charisma in economic as in other connections is usually strongly revolutionary; indeed, often destructive because it means new modes of orientation. But in case the process of routinisation leads in the direction of traditionalism, its ultimate effect might be exactly the reverse.[81]

Twenty-sixth mosaic; The Third Rome

By 1938, no single style in Soviet architecture had received official sanction.[82] There was still much experimentation, with regards to form, structure and materials. Constructivist trends coexisted with neo-classical ones, as well as with forms borrowed from the various ethnic national heritages of the Soviet Union, Slavic and Asian. These participated in the Stalinist 'fake folk' tendency.

If there was no strict prescription with regards to Socialist Realist architectural form, a general inclination, nevertheless, guided architects towards neo-classical architecture. Although the 'political defeat' of modernist architecture has been dated to 1934, modernist structures were still being erected. Several Metro stations testify to this. Mayakovskaya station is a blatant example of the hybridisation between the modernist and the classical under Stalin.

The argument put forth in the richly illustrated *Architecture of the Stalin Era*[83] is that what is understood as Stalinist architecture is not limited to the Stalinist period. The authors demonstrate that monumental, over-ornate neo-classical architecture was built before Stalin's seizure of power and the General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of

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[81] Weber, *The Theory*, p. 373.

[82] This has been established in the third chapter. See also Cooke, in Cullerne Bown and Taylor (eds), pp. 86-105.

[83] Alexei Tarkhanov and Sergei Kavtaradze, *Architecture of the Stalin Era*, New York: Rizzoli, 1992.

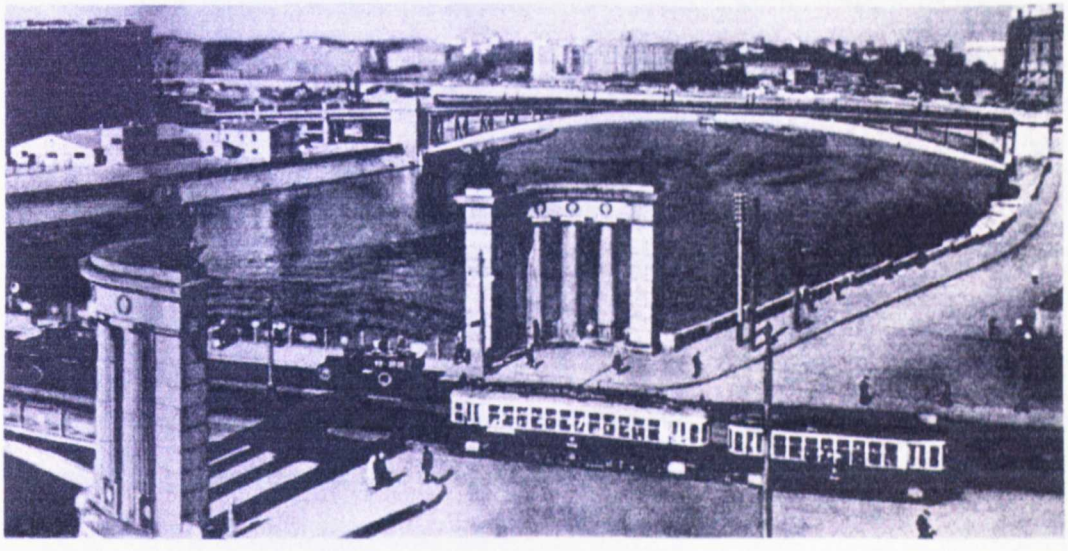

Fig. 73. Twenty-sixth mosaic
Fig. 74. Borodinsky Bridge, Moscow, 1937

Moscow, and that it still persisted after 1955, which was officially marked by a return to modernism in architecture. While numerous neo-classical structures were erected in the thirties, they still constituted one of the trends in the search for an official style. Stalinist architecture came out of a lengthy debate, not just about style, but also about function and the values associated with certain forms. The debate is outlined in the first chapter of the aforementioned book on Stalinist architecture. As with formalist painting, the debate on architectural modernism was a public one, waged in newspaper, as well as in specialised journals. Discussion primarily concerned competition projects, such as the famous commission for the erection of the Palace of the Soviets, for which 160 entries were submitted. The projects were publicly displayed in shop windows, such as those on Gorky Street.

The twenty-sixth mosaic highlights the period's juxtaposition of styles by setting a fragment of a classical monopteron, a circular architectural structure formed by one single row of columns, within the art nouveau influenced environment of the Mayakovskaya. The contrast with the modernism of the station is accentuated by the presence in the representation of a large steel twin-engine SB bomber, a plane designed by Tupolev in 1934. The steel of the plane echoes the ribbed steel of the station. The wings of the aircraft are each marked by a large red star. Only two columns of the presumably semi-circular structure are visible. This is yet another example of the parergon. In this case, however, the links with the empirical world, induced by the structure of the representation, are more temporal than spatial. The image suggests that architectural values from the past are persistently engaging within present representations of space, both outside and inside the frame.

The white construction depicted in the mosaic resembles the monopteron quarters, which frame Borodinsky Bridge (1937), adjacent to Kiev Train and Metro Station, or the circular structure depicted in Deineka's contemporary 'Sketch for the Ceiling of the Red Army Theatre' (1937). In the latter representation, all of the iconography used in Mayakovskaya has been condensed, and framed by the neo-classical monument: runners, planes, crowds of playing children, fruit-filled orchards, etc.

By the time Mayakovskaya and its mosaic cycle were conceived, the USSR was trying to establish itself within a history, in order to justify itself. In the absence of any socialist tradition on which it could rely, it had to create one. This was done partially by the erasure of past elements and the creation of a history through different types of representations, including history textbooks and paintings depicting historical events. The creation of folkloric socialist tales and songs also contributed to this process. As in 'fake folk,' stylistic accuracy was never a concern in Stalinist neo-classical architecture.

Some of the most famous neo-classical buildings constructed in this period are the column-rimmed, star-shaped Red Army Theatre,[84] and the colossal Lenin State Library.[85] Pieces of classical-faux functioned as allegories, generally referring to the concept of the 'Third Rome.'

The doctrine of the Third Rome emerged in the 15th century. It rested on a network of legends and religious-political institutions, which served to establish the prestige of Moscow and its leader, Ivan III. The legends described the advent of Christianity to Russia, introduced by the apostle Andrey. The origins of Russian princes were traced to the Roman Emperors. Indeed, the term 'Tsar' was the russified version of the Roman 'Caesar.' The phrase Third Rome was officially coined in 1515 by a Pskov monk, who established a genealogy consisting of three Romes: the fallen classical Rome, Constantinople and Moscow, the new cradle of Christian Orthodoxy. The monk proclaimed that there would never be a fourth one. The Third Rome was the final achievement of Christianity. The hegemonic political and economic implications of this doctrine are obvious.[86]

It is also obvious why several historians have made the parallel between the Third Rome and Stalin's Moscow. They most often use the analogy when referring to the post-war imperialist and expansionist attitudes of the Soviet Union. However, there are other manifestations of the Third Rome, in the period discussed here. These elements lie in discourse and in representation.

As it has previously been mentioned, time is a privileged legitimisation tool. Indeed, objects and concepts, which have existed for a lengthy period, tend to become transparent. They are legitimate because they seem natural or traditional. Their legitimacy is rarely questioned. Conversely, new things gain legitimacy if inscribed within a history or made to look, sound or feel traditional. The attribution of traditional forms to a recent function, practice or space might legitimise it, as shown by the examples of 'fake folk' and neo-classical architecture.

In the 1930s, the Stalinist regime was both still revolutionary and already reactionary. The construction of new state buildings alluding to the classical empire, and incarnating values of power and righteousness, provided Soviet space with a link to a distant past. Ironically, this foregoing world was more acceptable to the Stalinist ideologues than the recent past, still alive through memories of tsarist repression or of the

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[84]Built between 1934 and 1940 in Moscow, by the architects K. Alabyan and V. Simbirtsev.

[85]Built between 1928 and 1940 in Moscow, by the architects V. Shchuko and V. Gelfreikh.

[86] About the doctrine of the Third Rome, see Riasanovsky, pp. 121-147.

Bolsheviks' efforts to destabilise traditional social values. This leap in time and space permitted the regime to engage in the process of re-establishing itself in history, after having abolished it. This inscription in history permitted Stalin's name to be written alongside those of the great leaders throughout the ages. The discourse defining the capital of achieved Socialism, underlying the 1935 General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow, seeks to establish the historical importance of Moscow and its leaders.

Twenty-seventh mosaic; In the webs of metal carcasses

The 1936 Soviet Constitution granted every citizen the right to state provided housing. In combination with the right to work, the right to leisure and the right to education, guaranteed housing signified that socialism had been attained in the Soviet Union because everyone's basic needs were fulfilled, regardless of sex, age, education level or background.

Yet, while joblessness was reported to have reached zero in 1931 (from 1,576,000 at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928),[87] the same could not be said about homelessness. In 1931, *USSR in Construction* reported that '5,000 new buildings have been built in the past five years in Moscow.'[88] Their number allegedly increased steadily during the Second Five-Year Plan. The entire centre of Moscow was renovated, and the large apartments of the pre-Revolutionary bourgeoisie were transformed into communal housing facilities for workers. Most importantly, whole proletarian neighbourhoods were constructed beyond the limits of pre-socialist Moscow. This marked a radical contrast with the pre-Revolutionary proletarian housing situation when, according to the 1937 official textbook, workers slept in shifts, in filthy, congested barracks with no ventilation. 'The beds on which they slept were never empty; when the workers on the day shift rose to go to work, the workers from the night shift came to sleep in them.'[89]

Before the Revolution, the population of Moscow consisted of less than 300,000 inhabitants. By 1935, over four million workers lived in the Red Capital.[90] The General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow attended to this incredible expansion of the city by making allowances for an anticipated population of five million. The limits of

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[87] *USSR in Construction*, 9-12 (1937), n. p.
[88] *USSR in Construction*, 9 (1931), n. p.
[89] Shestakov, p. 131.
[90] *USSR in Construction*, 9 (1931), n. p.

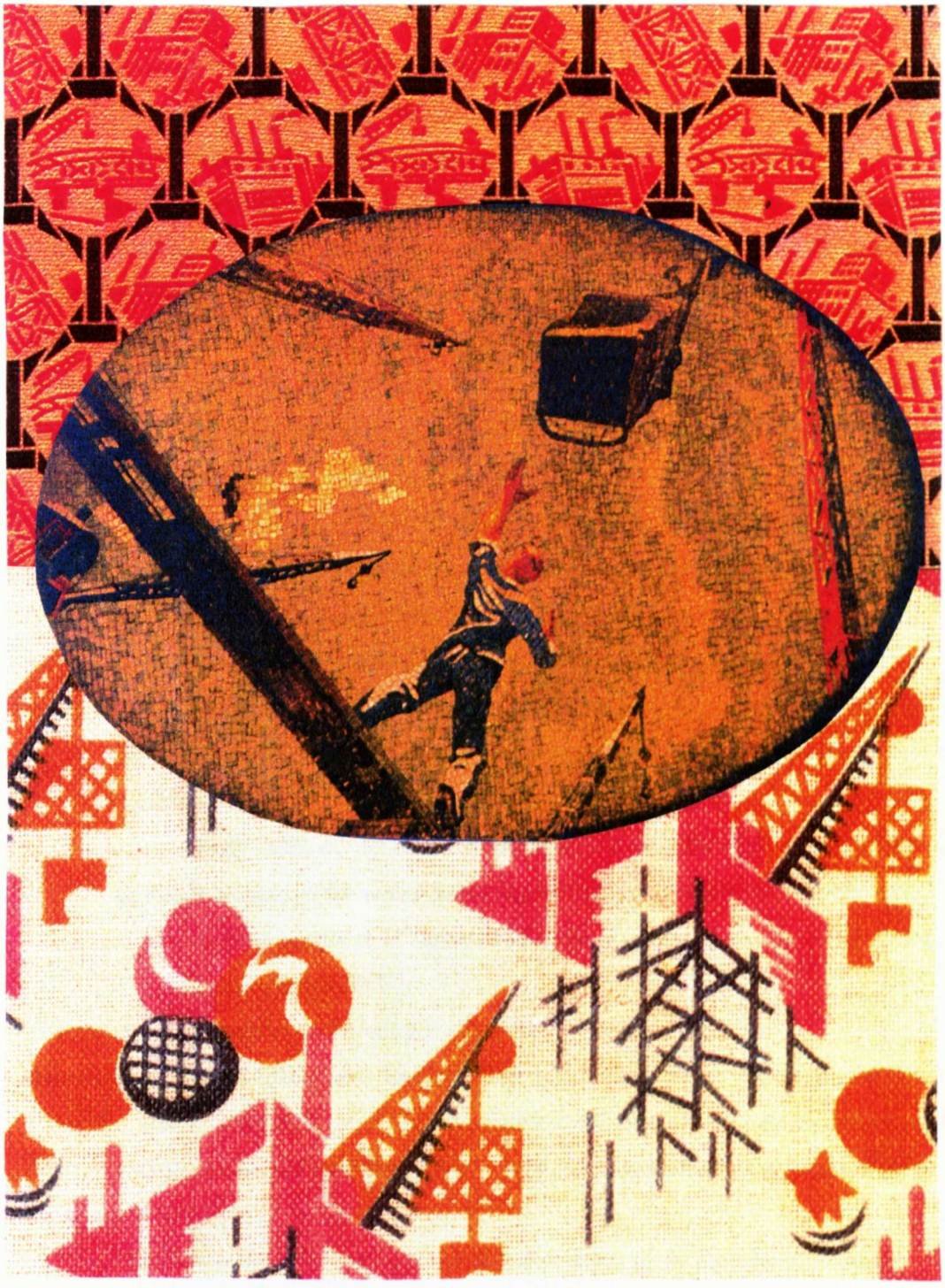

Fig. 75. S. Burylin, 'Industry,' textile design, 1930
Fig. 76. Twenty-seventh mosaic
Fig. 77. O. Bogoslovskaya, 'Construction site,' textile design, 1920-1930

the city were stretched from 28 thousand hectares to 60 thousand. In the thirties, the city spread mostly to the Southeast and the Northeast.

Construction sites were ubiquitous, whether linked to housing, or to the great infrastructure projects, such as the Moscow-Volga Canal, the Metro or the construction of various governmental buildings. Engineers and construction workers populated streets, as well they appeared in fiction and film during the thirties. Construction seemed to be a reliable material indicator of growth and progress. Therefore, it is not surprising that scenes depicting construction became important features in Socialist Realist representations of the thirties. Further projects to be realised in the city revealed how the future had already settled in the present, by the planning of houses, schools, hospitals, etc., and in a more immediate way, by the standing metallic frames about to be covered by walls to shelter more and more workers.

Not only were building methods new and surprising, the omnipresence of building sites and the speed of construction were also astonishing. When the Metro opened in 1935, people raved about the fact that nowhere in the world a metro system had been built at such speed. Speed in construction reflected Soviet control over materials and work techniques, bodies, space and time.

> The Moscow skyline was radically transformed during the years of intense construction.
>
> In the webs of metal carcasses, clouds of dust, flooded in light, in the incessant tapping of hammers, in the squeaking and clanking of winches and cranes, in the atmosphere of asphalt and pungent cement - Moscow - the rising Red capital is being built.[91]

This description provides an impression of what cityscapes might have resembled...crowded with cranes and scaffolding. Correspondingly, a painting by Boris Yakovlev, simply entitled 'Cranes' (1930), shows the disembodied stems of cranes, as if they independently resided over the viewer's head, having themselves acquired right to residency in the sky.

The twenty-seventh mosaic of the Mayakovskaya cycle represents a similar image. Four cranes reaching into the sky are depicted in fragments. Only one displays its cab, another hauls a container. The soaring machines are too large to fit the image. Again Deineka used the strategy of presenting only a portion of the objects in order to force the image into the empirical world, thereby triggering association, which the user could draw from her experience of the material world. Incidentally, if the mosaic really were a hole

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[91] Shadr, 'Zametki o Skulpture' (1934), in Shadr, p. 118.

in the ceiling of Mayakovskaya station, the scene portrayed is exactly what the user would have seen in 1938, while Gorky Street was being rebuilt.

Amidst the cranes, a tall, flexible worker is perched on a transversal beam, directing the machines like a musical conductor waving his arms about. The modulated and organic shapes of his clothing and body contrast with the hardedge, linear structure of the machinery. The worker appears to move in broad gestures. Just like Deineka's previous inhabitants of the sky, parachutists and athletes, he shows no fear of height. He seems to be in harmony with both sky and machine.

This representation mostly consists of elongated triangles, remnant of the ones depicting rays of light in the nineteenth mosaic. Yet, the effect produced here is quite different. The image is not flattened on the surface of the mosaic. On the contrary, in this representation, the perspective is exaggerated by the sharp metal hands and the dangling hooks and cargo.

It is impossible to know how high the constructions implied in the twenty-seventh mosaic are meant to be. The limitless movement upwards functions as a simple metaphor for the 'construction of Socialism,' a metaphor commonly used during the first two Five-Year Plans. This limited trope is analogous to that equating transport with progress. Indeed, the fetishism of height and speed represented here is a direct link to the concept of establishing the future into the present. Building tall houses, schools, theatres, etc., sets the goals of the regime in the empirical world. As it has been argued in the third chapter, constructed space influences the development of individuals by setting up spatial practices, and forming part of the space of representation.

The 1937 guidebook to Moscow featured representations of buildings that had not yet been built. A black and white image of the Palace of the Soviets printed on rough paper, for example, could be mistaken for a photograph.[92] The boundaries between past and future are completely blurred in such representations. Conversely, construction sites set a clear distinction between the city of the past and that of the future. Because both coexist in the empirical world, the discourse surrounding buildings of other periods and those in construction must be fashioned so that it advantages new constructions.

> We have two Moscows -- the merchant Moscow in her old coat, earning her living on church amulets, growing deaf from the ringing of chimes. A Granny? Yes, but a granny leaving us her great monuments of art and architecture [...] And by it, ours, Moscow in construction, Socialist Moscow, with her projected

[92] Dlugach and Portugalov, p. 20.

> Palace of the Soviets, her future centre. What monuments and sculptures will adorn her?[93]

In spite of frenetic construction practices, the tempo was lagging behind the demand. The mass influx of migrants from 1928 onward increased the housing shortage, in spite of thousands of square meters constructed every year. In Moscow, the *per capita* living space fell from 5.44 square meters in 1929 to 3.94 square meters in 1931. In 1937, the average for the Soviet Union was 3.77 square meters per person.[94] Construction was ubiquitous, but the building of housing facilities was still much slower than the increase of the urban population. The presence of cranes everywhere in the city revealed political will and definite progress in housing conditions of the proletariat, but also a severe lack.

Twenty-eight mosaic; The 10 seas

The twenty-eighth mosaic represents the mast of a Soviet ship, clearly identified by two flags: one red, one white, and marked with a red five-pointed star and the unambiguous symbol of the red hammer and sickle respectively. A flock of seagulls fly toward the mast located at one of the narrower ends of the mosaic. Of the 10 white and grey birds depicted by Deineka, one seems about to land, either on the ship, or on the rim of the illusionary opening in the Mayakovskaya ceiling. The bright blue sky is calm; two white clouds contrast the darker silhouette of faraway birds.

The Soviet Navy had become fairly discreet during the late twenties, in spite of the important ideological and historical role it possessed. Its significance was exemplified by the aforementioned popularity of Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (see fourth mosaic). Yet, less material means were allotted to the development of ship technology, as opposed to aircraft technology. The ship featured was relatively rarely in representations. As it has been previously mentioned, it was difficult to produce a ship on the landlocked Red Square on socialist holidays. The Navy re-emerged in the public sphere in the mid-thirties, with the impulse to build Soviet heavy industry, the rise of fascism in Western Europe, and the concrete need to protect maritime borders.

With the annexation of new territory in the Soviet Union, the country was open to 10 seas. To the North, the Baltic Sea, the Barents Sea, the Kara Sea, the Laptian Sea and the East Siberian Sea bordered the land. To the East, the Bering Sea, the Sea of Okhtosk and the Sea of Japan defined the country, while the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea formed part of its southern border. This geographical feature could have been

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[93] Shadr, 'Moskva' (1934-35), in Shadr, p. 124.
[94] J. D. Barber and R. W. Davies, 'Employment and Industrial Labour' in Davies, *The Economic*, p. 103.

Fig. 78. Twenty-eighth mosaic

beneficial for trade, but it also caused defence complexities. Indeed, each sea was vulnerable to different external threats. In the context of the imminent war against Fascism, for example, the Soviet Union might have had to protect its maritime borders to the Northwest against the German fleet in the Baltic Sea, and against the Japanese to the East. These bodies of water, spread around the Soviet Union, spanned over 11 time zones. They hosted different fauna and were exposed to different climates. The use of ship differed, and naval conditions varied tremendously from one region to another. This caused great difficulty in the creation of one united fleet.

During the twenties, second rate material had been dispatched to the Navy, which was generally regarded as auxiliary to the army, easier to homogenise and more tactical. Yet, investment in naval aviation and shipbuilding during the Second Five-Year Plan increased by 510%.[95] This expenditure had to be justified to the population in the media. This provoked the sudden apparition of ships in material culture in the form of toys, on candy wrappers and in representations of all kinds.

In May 1935, all naval aviation units were transferred from the military airforce to the navy, and formed the maritime airforce. This consolidation of the navy effective under one administrative structure was widely publicised. Finally, in January 1938, the Central Committee made the decision to build a strong naval aviation and fleet. Factories by the Black Sea were mobilised for shipbuilding. Iterating the party line, Admiral Smirnov outlined the mission of the new fleet even before construction started:

> The duties of our navy are: to secure the impregnability of the maritime approaches to our sacred Soviet country, to guard the motherland from the attempts at invasion by fascist plunderers from the sea, and to secure the normal navigation of merchant ships under the Red Soviet Flag in any part of the world.[96]

Although boat racing was reintroduced as a competition sport in 1938 and sports sailing was practised in all Soviet seas, large lakes and rivers, ship building and technological advances remained mostly military in nature.

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[95] For a history of naval aviation, see Jacob W. Kipp, 'The Development of Naval Aviation, 1908-1975' in Robin Higham and Jacob W. Kipp (eds) *Soviet Aviation and Air Power: A Historical View*, London: Brassey's, 1978, pp. 137-165.

[96] P. Smirnov, *Morskoi Sbornik*, 1 (1938), quoted in Kipp, p. 148.

Twenty-ninth mosaic; The joy of motherhood and the joy of work

Article 122 of the 1936 constitution reads as follows:

> Women in the USSR are accorded equal rights with men, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life.
>
> The exercise of these rights of women is ensured by affording women equally with men the right to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interest of the mother and child, pregnancy leave with pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens.[97]

If the pro-family stance adopted by the Stalinist regime is not obvious enough in this document, other sources were absolutely unequivocal: 'Mothers! Bear children, for socialism needs productive forces. Bear children, for a joyous childhood and a happy life awaits them.'[98] This statement from 1935 contradicts the previous Bolshevik attitude towards the family and motherhood, as exemplified by Inessa Armand's 1918 statement to the Women's congress: 'As long as [...] the old forms of the family, home life, and child rearing are not abolished, it will be impossible to build socialism.'[99] This contradiction demonstrates that the relationship between female sexuality, freedom and motherhood was not axiomatic.

The industrial boom caused by the introduction of the Five-Year Plans privileged women in many areas. They joined the ranks of the employed in great numbers, they gained social visibility, and their education and skill level was greatly improved. Furthermore, while Soviet women set records in employment (82% of workers entering working for the first time were women during 1932 and 1937)[100] and education (19% of urban women had finished high school in 1938),[101] the depression in North America and Western Europe meant that women were laid off, with little hope of finding work. The Soviet press made sure that Soviet women were aware of their good fortune.

Conversely, it instigated a reactionary backlash with regards to the women's role in the family. The pro-natalist attitude of the Stalinist government has been discussed with regards to many aspects. It infiltrated many seemingly innocent areas of every woman's life, by affecting conceptions of bodies, space and time. For example,

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[97] Central Executive Committee of the USSR, pp. 35-36.
[98] *USSR in Construction*, 6 (1935), n. p.
[99] Quoted in Barbara Evans Clements, *Daughters of the Revolution: A History of Women in the USSR*, Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1994, p. 74.
[100] Evans Clements, p. 72.
[101] Evans Clements, p. 72.

Fig. 79. Twenty-ninth mosaic
Fig. 80. Illustration to Article 122 of the 1936 Constitution of the USSR, from *USSR in Construction*, 9-12 (1937)

throughout the aforementioned book *Women's Labour in the Interwar Period*, Melanie Ilič has demonstrated how scientific research and political will contributed to justifying work protection measures designed to protect women's reproductive functions. These included the various restrictions with regards to certain types of work (underground work, for example) and the handling of certain materials. Scientific work conducted at TsIT had established that women engaged in certain tasks or working in certain environments were more likely to suffer from menstrual disorders and had a greater chance to miscarry. The aforementioned controversial measure of menstrual leaves, which brought women's biological clocks to the forefront of the debate about labour time management, also needs to be considered in this context.[102]

An important aspect of production is reproduction, or the continuous production of the labour force. This aspect became one of the most important topical debates surrounding the 1936 Constitution. This relationship between production and reproduction is exemplified by a photograph opposite Article 122 in the end-of-the-year issue of the 1937 *USSR in Construction*. The picture represents a cheerful young woman holding a male child, high upon her chest. In this position, the young boy is a full head higher than his mother is. He is the 'new one.' His right arm is extended upwards, his hand stretches as if ready to seize the future. He looks forward and smiles at the world unfolding before him. The young mother gazes at her son. The caption under the photograph reads: 'In the Soviet country, the joy of motherhood and the joy of work are not antithetical to each other; they complete each other. It is only through their combination that women can be fully happy.'[103]

The representation in the twenty-ninth mosaic is similar to the one illustrating Article 122 in *USSR in Construction*. A young woman wearing a white dress holds up a boy completely clad in red. He looks upwards to three planes in formation, extending his small hand towards them. In this image, the 'future aviator' theme rests on the broader discourse of motherhood and child rearing.

Each artist of the period seems to have represented the mother and child configuration in a very similar way. One could see the tradition for this motif in icons, representing the holy mother and her saviour child. For example, Deineka's own 'Mother' (1932), a nude woman holding a child, was known as the 'twentieth century

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[102] Throughout her book, Ilič has argued that many of these provisions were contested by women themselves, feeling that protection and preferential treatment prevented them from being considered as equal workers.

[103] *USSR in Construction*, 9-12 (1937).

Madonna.'[104] This is a case where the iconographical shell has been emptied to serve very different purposes under the atheist regime. Again, the representation functions as an ambigramme, flipping back and forth between pre-Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary systems of meaning without the opportunity of both being perceived at once. Furthermore, as it has been observed earlier in this section, the definitions of womanhood and motherhood were still in flux in the late thirties.

While *USSR in Construction* states that there are no contradictions between motherhood and work, many could be found in the experience of the successive variants of the official discourse, as well as in the empirical world. Two issues will be briefly addressed at this point. They seem to be representative of the general ambivalence towards motherhood, and of the anachronistic character of the 1936 discourse on women. These are the anti-abortion law, and the 'wives' movement.'

The pro-abortion law passed in 1920 was revoked in 1936, after a month of public debate. In May 1936, the government put out a draft law prohibiting abortions. It was set in the general frame of protective legislation for women, their reproductive functions, and the restoration of family values (including anti-hooliganism and anti-prostitution measures). Women's control over their bodies and their own future was the determinant issue for the whole the nation since their reproductive choices would impact general growth and the production tempo. The increased levels of production, the constant need for human labour and the imminence of a war justified the pro-natalist governmental stance. The law must have been a shock to a lot of communists who had fought so hard for the 1920 law to be implemented. Women lost part of the limited control over their own bodies the law afforded.

> Judging by the resolutions and letters published in the Soviet press, the draft bill is meeting with a mixed reception from the public. The question of abortion in particular raises numerous protests and criticisms from young women students and workers.[105]

As Fitzpatrick notes, the Soviet public debate about abortions was not at all about the foetus' right to life.[106] It seems that both the 'pro-choice' and the anti-abortion groups agreed that any healthy woman would naturally desire becoming a mother. The debate was based upon issues of material stability, of how to secure the future of a child. The question posed was whether or not a woman, whose material circumstances were so bad

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[104] Vladimir Sissoiev, *Alexandre Deineka*, Leningrad: Aurora, 1982, p. 9. The history of the mother and child configuration in Russian and Soviet art begs to be explored.
[105] 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), p. 228.
[106] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 153. The general debate about abortions is outlined in pages 152 to 156. The 'right to life' issue is an anachronism.

that she could not adequately provide for a child, could get an abortion. The central topics of discussion were therefore not ethical, but related to housing and health care problems. They revealed a deep fear that the future might not be the one outlined by the Socialist Realist narrative.

On May 27, 1936, the decree on abortions became law. The public debate had barely modified the original decree. The law was justified by '[...] the high standard of welfare reached in the socialist state, where every mother may be assured of the future of her progeny.'[107] The law showed immediate impact, temporarily increasing the birth rate from under 25 per thousand in 1935 to almost 31 per thousand in 1940.[108]

The anti-abortion law was followed by a series of reinforcement measures. Material incentives encouraged maternity: monetary help distributed directly to mothers (not to their husbands), the establishment of state support for large families, as well as a network of child care facilities. Between May 1936 and May 1938, 1,357 million rubles were given to help Soviet mothers.[109]

Women's journals in the thirties contributed to naturalise the discourse of the happy mother, by printing testimonies written by 'real' women: 'Thank you, our Bolshevik party, our government and, most of all, comrade Stalin, for creating wonderful circumstances to fulfil our motherly duties.'[110] Ironically, this text printed in a 1938 issue of *Rabotnitsa* faced a group testimony by the members of an artel of female *kolkhoz* workers thanking Krupskaya and Lenin for freeing them from the home and granting them equality to men.[111] A more blatant coexistence of historically opposed value systems could not be found.

A second anachronistic position regarding the role of women in society was resurrected in the Stalinist discourse during the same period: the 'wives movement.' As Fitzpatrick points out, 'wives were an almost unrecognised entity in the first decade and a half after the Revolution.'[112] A Soviet woman did not describe herself by her husband's status, but by her own position in the system of production. Before the late thirties, for a woman to consider her primary duty to be a housewife or mother was considered 'bourgeois.'

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[107] 'Russian Chronicles,' *The Slavonic Review*, 15 (1936-37), p. 228.
[108] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 155.
[109] *Rabotnitsa*, 18 (1938), p. 10.
[110] E. Ivanova, 'Materinstvo – ne Bremia a Radost',' *Rabotnitsa*, 10 (1938), p. 19.
[111] Ivanova, p. 18.
[112] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 156. The 'wives movement' is described in the pages 156 to 163.

However, the women who came the closest to reach the ideal of carefree motherhood proposed by the 1936 constitution were not female workers. They were the wives of high-ranking communists, architects and engineers. Many hired young peasant women to help with housework and childcare. Although Soviet newspapers were saturated with representations of women such as Pasha Angelina, the tractor driver, and Metro stakhanovite, Tatyana Fedorova, the non-toiling female elite became increasingly visible. Whether they were considered as a model to aspire to or a betrayal of the revolutionary dream depended, of course, on the position of the viewer. In the 1930s, these women became the butt of many *anekdot*, as a most incomprehensible or anachronistic phenomena.

The introduction of the 'professional wife and mother' as a positive category in Soviet discourse also dates from May 1936, when a 'Conference of Wives of Managers and Engineers in Heavy Industry' was organised under the sponsorship of Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the commissar of heavy industry. It was held in the Kremlin. Housewives, thereafter, benefited from a certain prestige. They were mobilised and introduced into soviet society through their husband's workplace. They were organised in agencies, which resembled the pre-Revolutionary philanthropic organisations; they planned day care centres and camps for children, literacy schools, libraries and public baths; they planted trees and organised neighbourhood parties. Membership in the wives' movement consisted of a privileged situation, which very few women could aspire to.

Thirtieth mosaic; Preparing for the future war

The two small red and white monoplanes depicted in the thirtieth mosaic are difficult to identify. Their colour red might indicate that they were part of the Arctic exploration projects. Indeed, Arctic planes were painted in the bright colour of the Soviet flag in order to make them easier to find in the event of a catastrophe. They could also be sports planes or civil planes used to deliver mail and information to remote regions or reconnaissance planes. Deineka might have represented the LAGG-3, the SU-2 or the YaK-1. In any case, this further representation of planes participated in constructing the general air-mindedness of the country. As it has previously been mentioned, the interest

Fig. 81. Thirtieth mosaic
Fig. 82. Aleksandr Rodchenko, 'Red Aviator' cookies, package design for Red October confectionery, 1923

in aviation covered a fascination for technology and admiration for pilots and record holders:

> The names of the Soviet arctic explorers and airmen, the heroes of the Soviet Union, Schmidt, Chkalov, Baidukov, Belyakov, Gromov, Yumashev, Dumilin, Vodopyanov, Molokov, Levanevsky, Slepnev and others are famous throughout the country.[113]

Air-mindedness and the popularity of pilots took on greater proportions as the world context changed in the late thirties. Hundreds of pilots returned to tell their battle stories of the Spanish civil war, during which they first encountered Nazi aircraft. In the period when Mayakovskaya revealed its representations of planes, many felt the imminence of war.

> 'Let's give our Soviet country 150,000 pilots!' This slogan is repeated in all corners of the Soviet Union. Glorious sons and daughters of our fatherland participate in aviation training, so that when the moment requires it, they can defend our country against enemies.[114]

The slogan, partly referring to the experience of the Spanish war, alluded to different concerns. It aimed to encourage technical proficiency, linked to production and progress. It also revealed the awareness that a second world war would be fought on different territories than the first. As Kliment Voroshilov, minister of Defence under Stalin, noted: 'In our times, the strongest in the air is the strongest.'[115]

In 1938, the Soviet Union celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Red Army and its air fleet. In the context of the purges, this was an ambiguous celebration. Indeed, some of the most important military heroes, those who had created the Red Army and modernised their resources and tactics, by introducing the use or parachuting, for example, had been slandered during the Moscow trials. Trostky, who had created and led the Red Army and Marshall Tukhachevsky (see sixth mosaic) were the two most important figures in the Soviet armed forces. During the show trials they were charged with treachery and collusion with the fascist forces. The reputation of Trosty was attacked in every history book, such as this one, destined to teach third and fourth graders:

> In their preparation for a world war the fascists sent their spies to all countries. Fascist spies also managed to penetrate the Soviet Union. Here they found active assistants in the persons of the adherents of Trotsky and Rykov. That

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[113] Shestakov, p. 241.
[114] *Ogonek*, 4 (1937), p. 21.
[115] Kliment Voroshilov, 'Sovetskie Letchiki,' *Ogonek*, 4 (1937), p. 21.

> contemptible enemy of the people, the fascist agent Trotsky, and his contemptible friends Rykov and Bukharin, organised in the USSR gangs of murderers, wreckers and spies.[116]

In 20 years, great military progress and air proficiency was effectuated in the country, with regards to new technology and new uses of the sky. This strength was intrinsically linked in discourse with the general progress attributable to the Revolution and the Five-Year Plans. Record setter Gromov, for example, established a clear link between social progress, technology, sky exploration and defence:

> In 20 years our airforce has become a power, which at a moment's notice can smash any enemy that dares to attack our country... But we, the Soviet people, are not content with this, and are moving at rapid strides towards communism.'[117]

In the Soviet Union, civil and military pilots held similar roles. In times of peace they served the general prestige of the country, by providing services never before imagined (such as rapid mail delivery, dissemination of propaganda, etc.), establishing aviation records and participating in imaginatively choreographed public air displays. If the time should change to war, pilots would be ready.

> Our pilots do not need to risk their lives for money. But if the need arises, they will proudly give their life for the great Soviet people, for the Communist Party, for the Soviet government, for our beloved Stalin.[118]

Thirty-first mosaic; The current is switched on

> On October 10, 1932, at 11 o'clock in the morning, everyone in the Soviet Union who had a radio receiver, sat down beside the apparatus and listened in. Who was speaking? It was water! And the sound of its speech reminded rather of the roar of some giant beast, suddenly uncaged and set at liberty. But despite the unfamiliar accents, the speech stirred the hearts of all listeners, for what the radio was transmitting to them was the roar of the torrent of the Dnepr's waters, cascading downward from the great dam of the Dnepr Electric Power Station.[119]

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[116] Shestakov, p. 245.

[117] Gromov addressing a school for collective farmers in Galich, on November 16, 1937, quoted in *USSR in Construction*, 4 (1938), n. p.

[118] S. Budkevich, 'Aviatsiia v Budushchei Voine,' *Ogonek*, 5 (1937), p. 2.

[119] *Soviet Travel*, 6 (1939), p. 18

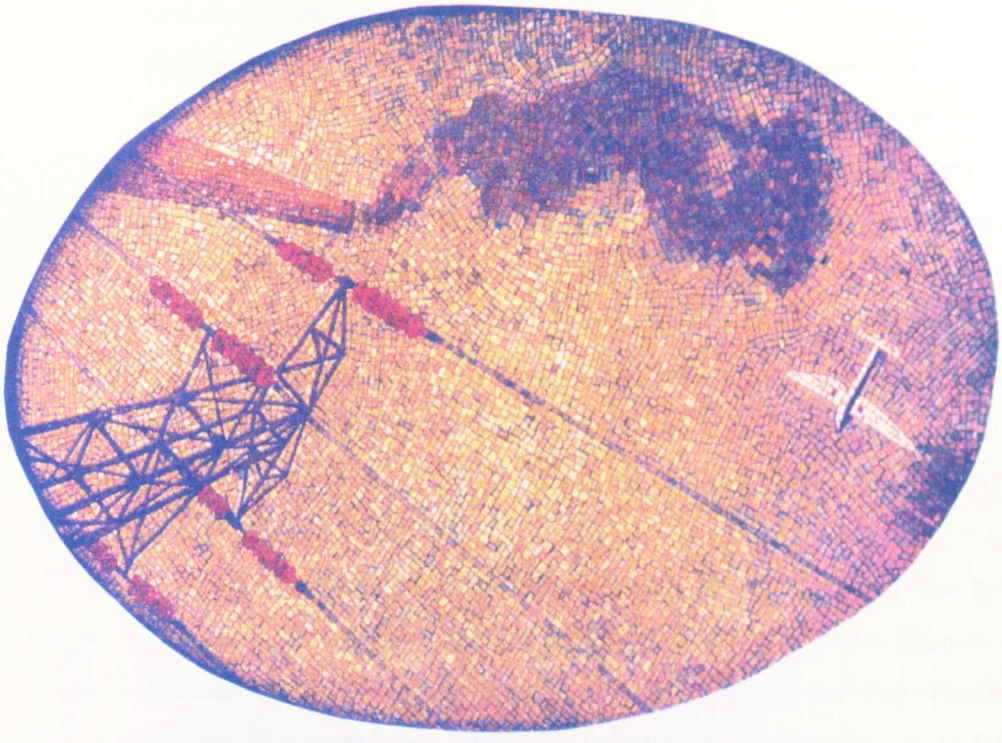

Fig. 83. Thirty-first mosaic
Fig. 84. 'The Current is Switched On,' from *USSR in Construction,* 10 (1932)

The Dneprostroy, the energy station built on the Dnepr River, was to provide for a large percentage of Soviet electrical needs. Like many of the great projects, the electrification of the country was promoted as a multi-fold project, participating in the social, political and material development of the USSR.

> Thousands of hectares of formerly barren land was made fertile; the Dnepr, which had been blocked by rocks, forming the rapids, became navigable throughout its length, and many large mills and factories now producing goods for the whole country's needs are supplied with electricity from this station.[120]

Lenin had devised a plan for electrification in the days that followed the Revolution. It seemed clear to the government that setting the infrastructure for the exploitation of renewable energy sources would afford the country greater means for both production and emancipation of the workers. The combined rhetoric of 'social and technical progress reached in the face of adversity' was used for the electrification plan, as for all other sectors of Soviet industry.

> This plan of building socialism in our country, however, was opposed by the traitors who at that time were in the ranks of the Party: Trotsky, Zinovev and Kamenev. They did all they possibly could to hinder the building of socialist industry. They said it was impossible to build a socialist society in the USSR.[121]

The decree for the electrification of the Soviet territory had been signed on December 22, 1920. It had then been announced with a slogan, which was still in use during the thirties: 'Communism is Soviet government plus the electrification of the whole country.'[122]

In the late thirties, during the two first Five-Year Plans, electricity became a popular feature of the newly created world. Electrification provided a significant qualitative change in everyday life, whether at home or at work, for the average worker. It also embellished the world as avenues and alleys in parks were strewn with bright electric bulbs. Signs illuminated the façade of different buildings. It was also responsible for the bright red 'M,' capturing the gaze of many from a distance and indicating the Metro entrance for evening users.

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[120] Shestakov, p. 234.
[121] Shestakov, p. 231.
[122] Lenin quoted in *USSR in Construction*, 10 (1932), n. p. An *anekdot* of the period goes as follows:
If socialism = bolshevism + electrification of the whole country
then socialism – electrification of the whole country = bolshevism
and socialism – bolshevism= electrification of the whole country

In an article entitled 'The City at Night,' the Socialist Realist writer Valentin Kataev described his favourite Moscow sites, recently transformed by electricity:

> On all sides, projectors light up the Mossovet.[123] They draw attention to it. They draw out from the shade ornamental details. Red, yellow, violet, white. The *façade* of the Mossovet glows on the square, like a bonfire. The shadows of giants walk across the walls of the surrounding houses.[124]

A two-page photomontage from *USSR in Construction* also includes the example of the Mossovet, at the centre of a city transformed by electricity. The cityscape flaunts illuminated signs, *façades* and streets. It also features an electricity station, from which emerge three flat, streamlined light rays, similar to the ones represented in the nineteenth mosaic. The smiling head of Stalin occupies a third of the image on the right side, while gigantic ghostly hands pull down a colossal switch in the upper left corner. The caption under the image reads: 'The current is switched on.'[125] The relationship between the leader, the electrification and the new face of Soviet urban centres is clear in this image.

The thirty-first mosaic in the cycle refers to the electrification of the Soviet Union, and its direct repercussions on different areas of life, such as industry and defence. An electric pylon, a tall, mast-like structure, from the summit of which four high-tension wires carry electricity across the country, is flanked by a factory tower, discharging a large cloud of black smoke, and a white aeroplane. Red insulating matter makes the wires more visible to the users of Mayakovskaya. This configuration establishes links that were repeatedly made in the Soviet press: 'Water [hydroelectricity] smelts steel;' 'Water helps us fly.'[126]

This example is a demonstration of how nature could be used to transcend nature. Electricity, as a flamboyant feature of modernity showed immediate transformations to the daily existence. It lessened certain tasks, provided faster transport (such as the electric underground railroad, the *Metropoliten*) and stretched the day by providing adequate lighting in the workplace, at home and on the streets. Among the many enthusiasts of electricity was the Futurist Mayakovsky: 'after seeing electricity, I lost interest in nature. Not up to date enough.'[127]

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[123] The building hosting the Moscow City Council.
[124] Valentin Kataev, 'Gorod Noch'iu,' in Kovalev, p. 278.
[125] *USSR in Construction*, 10 (1932), n. p.
[126] *USSR in Construction*, 6 (1936), n. p.
[127] Vladimir Mayakovsky, *The Bedbug and Selected Poetry*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961, p. 32.

Chapter Five

Morning; Causing Memory

It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards!
Lewis Carrol[1]

Just as Paris used to be the refuge and revolutionary school for the leaders of the rising bourgeoisie, Moscow is now becoming the refuge and revolutionary school for the leaders of the rising proletariat around the world.
Joseph Stalin[2]

The first time I saw Mayakovsky was in 1920...twenty years ago. Now, it is history. Youth know about those years only from reading books and museums.
Aleksandr Deineka[3]

The train should arrive any second now. The wait for the Metro car is never more than five minutes.[4] The user, gazing at the clock screwed to the wall over the tunnel, can therefore predict at what time she will arrive at her destination. This knowledge is based both on the data in her Metro user's guide (*Shto Dolzhen Znat' Passazhir Metropolitena*) and the experience gained from her previous trips. Her practice of the space of the Metro also enables her to decide at which end of the train, or under which mosaic, to stand in order to be more advantageously positioned in relation to the exit at her target station. These are some of the subtle strategies used by the seasoned user.

Prediction and memory play a vital role in everyday life. Memory sets up the parameters of daily activity.[5] In memory factors are recorded, which determine the legitimacy of events or ideas. It also provides guidelines as to how to proceed when faced with any situation, known or unknown. The user's guide to the world resides within the personal or collective memory. The lack of experience in a socialist society has been a major concern throughout this study. It accounts for several errors in aim and prediction. Indeed, as Stephen Cohen has noted, 'Stalin's revolution from above led in important respects not to a pre-designed system but, having collided with and disrupted social

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[1] Quoted by Davies, *About Time*, p. 222.
[2] Quoted by Perchik, p. 3.
[3] Deineka, 'Vladimir Vladimirovich' (1940), in Sysoev, p. 78.
[4] In 1935, the maximal interval between trains was scheduled at five minutes. It was expected to be lowered to 1.75 minutes in the near future. Katsen, *Shto Dolzhen*, pp. 13-14.
[5] The notion of memory developed in this chapter relies heavily on the understanding that bodies, space and time insistently carry material, indexical, traces of their past into the present.

realities, to one that was characterised by many improvised measures and makeshift outcomes.'[6]

Prediction is the 'advanced' state of memory. It can be conceived as 'anti-memory,' a reverse image of memory. Based on legitimised knowledge, it also organises everyday activity, gives it a purpose, a praxis. Together, memory and prediction provide a person or a group with a sense of causality. In the thirties, prediction also seemed to correspond snugly with representation. In the illustrated fold-out album *Moskva Rekonstriruet'sia,* designed by Rodchenko and Stepanova, for example, 10-year previsions about population growth, industry, territorial expansion, etc., are juxtaposed with images of the first results of the 1935 General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow.[7] Based on the experience of the tempo of progress achieved in the late thirties, Soviet citizens knew what they were entitled to expect 10 years in the future.

In *About Time*, Paul Davies argues that in the material world (at the quantum level), effect does not necessarily ensue what can be understood as its cause. Davies raises the issue of the fracture between cause and effect in the empirical world, as well as in representation. This was a problem faced everyday by soviet citizens in the thirties.

> The concept of causality has a strong directional flavour. We like to suppose that the cause precedes effects. We would be uncomfortable with the idea that a breaking window causes a stone to be thrown, or a shadow passing across the earth causes the moon to move in the way of the sun. It would be hard to make sense of a world where cause and effect were interchanged.[8]

The nature of memory, understood as a complex sign system, is similar to the quantum world described by Davies, where a particle observed is moved by the photon colliding with it, before the photon can return to the eye and the observation can be recorded by the viewer. When the eye seizes the image of the particle, the particle has already been displaced. The same occurs in both memory and representation. By the time an object or event has been transformed into a sign and recorded by memory, it no longer exists as such. It only participates in stories and narratives, which transform any event to make it fit the general structure and the objective of the story. This is why the stakes of representation are so high; representation is never innocent. This concept refers directly to Voloshinov's understanding of the domain of signs, which corresponds with the kaleidoscopic domain of ideology.

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[6] Cohen, p. 377.
[7] *Moskva Rekonstriruet'sia*, Moscow: Institut Vsesoiuznykh Statistiki, 1938, n. p.
[8] Davies, *About Time*, p. 222.

In the 1930s, priority was given to the world-image, over the empirical world. This corresponds to a Socialist Realist prediction of what the world would be when communism reached maturity. This preference for the future forced the government to tinker with memory, organised representations of causes. In order to preserve the alignment of past and future, of cause and effect, of memory and prediction, the past and its traces need to be constantly shifted to conform to the most recent version of the praxis, or social situation.

Two of the clearest examples of the problem of causality, and therefore of memory, in the context of the thirties are the show-trials of 1936-1938, and the doctoring of official photographs throughout the Stalinist period. On the former issue, most historians agree that the evidence used for judging the first generation of Bolsheviks to be wreckers and enemies of the regime was entirely manufactured. In relation to the second issue, David King's *The Commissar Vanishes* provides a series of cases where bodies in representation, whether photographs or paintings, were altered. Bodies appeared and disappeared from archives and photographic records, in order to follow official discourse. This implies that cause follows effect. For example, various versions of a photograph of Stalin attending a 1915 meeting of Bolshevik exiles in Siberia circulated in the thirties. The first version presents 15 adults and a child standing by a wooden gate in a small Siberian village. Pine trees and a small wooden house serve as the background. The second print of the same photograph shows one less adult: Grigory Zinovev, who had been one of Lenin's closest associates. Zinovev was tried in 1935, following the assassination of Kirov. He was then retried and executed during the first Moscow trial in August 1936. The space he occupied in the photograph has left a dense dark mark in the second print, which uneasily blends in with the texture of the pine tree branches. In a third version published in 1939 in a biography of the Leader. 'Five more members of the group have been replaced by vegetation, fencing, and a better view of the log cabin.'[9] This manipulation of history, and therefore of memory, is not a unique case in this corpus, where numbers and words suffered from the same treatment as images.

An unpredictable cocktail of signs

It is safe to say that state intervention in memory and prediction must have created a surreal effect. But if doctoring and misinformation had blurred causes, how could they subsequently be recreated from the traces left (if one assumes that traces can ever be considered as authentic). One way to illustrate the difficulty involved is to look at the causal structure as a mathematical equation: the cause 1917 + 21 results in 1938. If the

cause disappears, and only the result is left behind, how can the cause of 1938 be recovered? There are a variety of possible causes to 1938: 2 x 969; 1937 + 1; 2000 – 62; (6 x 6 x 6 x 6) + (4 x 4 x 4) + 578; etc. Possibilities are practically infinite in the world of mathematical signs even if each sign corresponds to a single, albeit abstract, value. Yet, as it has been noted in the introduction of this work, the ideological sign and the representation do not correspond to concepts in such a strict way. They do not belong to a legitimised system of correspondence, as the mathematical sign does. Possible reconstructions of cause would, therefore, take an even more indeterminate aspect. Indeed, it would be difficult to make sense of a world, and make predictions, where all traces and causes were discarded, altered or replaced by others.

The notion that it is impossible to establish unequivocal causes is important to this argument for two reasons. Historians are too often tempted to use photographic records, newsreels, and even art objects *as if* they were memory itself, and memory as if it were truth. Both these concepts are always misleading. However, in the case of the Socialist Realist world-image, this is especially problematic. The fact that documents were constantly falsified and that large scale Socialist Realist paintings were used as photographic images, when reproduced in black and white books, journals and newspapers, illustrates this point. Through mass media, representations acquired the official status of truth, of historical document.

Mikhail Ryklin has argued that terror, and its double, ecstasy, cannot be understood in traditional historical analysis.[10] He contended that looking for origin in the normal causal way, is not sufficient; in the case of terror, the consequences outstrip the causes; the effects have in fact little to do with their causes. This implies that Stalinist culture requires explanations in a philosophy without guarantees...without history. According to Ryklin, culture can therefore be understood by the analysis of its periphery. The philosopher chose the Metro as one of the peripheral images revealing the nature of Stalinist culture, as an unnoticed site, which resides in popular memory. If Ryklin has a point in placing the Metro on the sideline of late socialist culture, I would argue that in 1938, when the 'underground palace' opened its doors to the public, it hardly went unnoticed. This is because there was no previous memory of such a site, with regards to both its function and its material aspect.

Furthermore, as Burgin notes, 'representation cannot be simply tested against reality, as reality itself is constituted through the agency of representation.'[11] In the same

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[9] King, p. 24.
[10] Ryklin, p. 56.
[11] Burgin, p. 238.

way, memory cannot be tested against reality. Indeed, the relative truth or falsity of memory and its material manifestations, in signs or in the empirical world, must be sought beyond the image. This is because neither the material world nor representation hold anything but the transitional phases of stories being constructed by subjects, between memory, praxis, censorship, ideology, etc. The relationship between the images is therefore perhaps more instructive than the images themselves. Consequently, it might be less productive to ask 'who was represented on the picture before the scissors and paints altered it?' or 'whose face was glued onto this image?' The most constructive questions might lie in the processes that triggered the transformation of these images, and in the network of signs, within which sense could have been made of the images. What effect did the twisting of memory and its manifestations have on users? How could several conflicting representations of a single event coexist, even if hidden in the files of the KGB archives? How could they all be authentic, inasmuch as all signs are real?

Finally, one needs to reiterate that memory is not the simple recovery of things that happened. Events, images, sensations are transformed into signs before they are accessed by memory. In other words, memories do not simply emerge, they are formed. As any other sign, they acquire meaning by their juxtaposition with other signs. Memories are influenced by intertextual relationships, just like the configurations in the Mayakovskaya mosaics, which are influenced by their neighbouring mosaics, the architecture and the bodies circulating in the station.

> In the teletopologically fashioned subject, actual events mingle indiscriminately not only with fantasies but with memories of events in photographs, films and television broadcasts.[12]

The membrane separating discourse fashioned by the state and personal memories is permeable. An individual's memory can also be contaminated by another person's memory. That is to say that a person can integrate stories and memories, as if the events they refer to had actually happened. Oral history projects have, countless times, demonstrated how individual memories can be composites of actual events and of their apocryphal representation, of either the visual or textual character.[13]

This brings about a serious implication. The assimilation and appropriation of signs as personal memory can be related to the idea of the inscriptive body, transformed by its environment or discourse, or socially produced space and time. On a certain level, this parasitic use of signs could be equated to the Freudian concept of 'screen memory,'

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[12] Burgin, p. 226.

[13] See Marie-Claude Taranger, 'Une Mémoire de Seconde Main? Film, Emprunt et Référence dans le Récit de Vie,' *Hors Cadre*, 9 (1991).

replacing a repressed or confused memory. This is what Socialist Realism aimed for by substituting memory of traumatic or confusing events, with simpler representations corresponding conveniently with the predictions of a new world crafted by the regime. This is the prescriptive effect of Socialist Realism. This is how Socialist Realist memory looks forward.

Stories are made up of a sequence of static events passed at such speed (memory organised time) that it becomes impossible to distinguish each fragment's limit, as in a film for example. This provides the juxtaposition of images with the illusion of continuity. But not all the fragments need to be presented to the viewer for the narrative to preserve continuity. Works of art, historical documents and texts serve as sources to activate fragments, which would otherwise be present only as signs in the viewer's memory. They function as a source of authority, but their insertion into a coherent narrative is the work of the user, drawing on personal experience and other sources encountered in the past.

> From such heterogeneous psychical materials, the individual narrator would reconstruct her or his hybrid personal history - imposing a coherent narrative order on the discontinuous fragments.[14]

This is the process, which transforms the individual mosaic in Mayakovskaya into a moment in the 'Day.' Indeed, the reading of the narrative owes more to construction than to flow. The user, by her position in the station, becomes the central organiser of the memory collection. This would not cause a problem if the user's memory could be abstracted from a single collective memory, or if the user could be done way with altogether. But because Socialist Realism is made to address people and transform them, their bodies, as well as their world-view, this last option can never be considered.

Referring to consumer goods shortages and famines in the 1930s, Sheila Fitzpatrick observed that:

> In popular memory, indeed, the only really good year of the 1930s in Russia seems to have been 1937 – ironically the first year of the Great Purges – when the harvest was best in the decade and there was plenty of food in the stores.[15]

Unfortunately, Fitzpatrick does not mention when and where the data supporting this statement was collected. Indeed, 1937 might have been the best year in popular memory, but for whom and at what specific moment? In 1937's popular memory, in 1954's, or in 1991's? Once again it should be mentioned that stories, which arrange events, dates, context and values make sense only according to the needs of the users of the story, both

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[14] Burgin, p. 228.
[15] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 7.

the author and the 'reader.' This recalls one of the first points established in the present study; there was no consensus in the thirties about the narrative needs of the population, neither from the sign producing agencies, nor from the public itself, and that story-telling codes and iconography were vastly misunderstood. Fitzpatrick's argument, developed in *Everyday Stalinism*, that the optimism of the Second Five-Year Plan was authentic, and was based on the conditions of everyday life rather than on ideological concerns, is pertinent. However, many groups were still not liberated from their own stories, the narratives according to which they could judge whether life had become better or worse for peasants, for the clergy, for women, for intellectuals, etc.; before the Revolution, before Lenin's death, before the Five-Year Plans, etc.

This is the reason why it is so important to occasionally subtract fragments from narratives and isolate them, or to subvert the narrative in which they participate by looking at what Ryklin considers the 'peripheral' elements of a culture. Narratives should be read in as many ways as possible. For example, the cycle in Mayakovskaya can literally be read in both directions. This idea should challenge the principles of causality.

As it has previously been mentioned, there is no absolute time in representation, or in memory. Representation is a semiotic space, similar to the already discussed space-time continuum of the fourth dimension, where all signs are contemporary, coexisting on a single plane. They can therefore interact or act simultaneously (or with the illusion of simultaneity). Yet this is not a static space, since the mere fact of reflecting on a sign, and juxtaposing it with other signs, irremediably transforms it, and re-constructs it. Furthermore, the accessibility of signs by a multitude of different users juxtaposing these signs with those inhabiting their own memory and personal imaginary forces every sign to circulate within an infinite number of dimensions, making allowance for thoughts that fold back, or repeat themselves, and are then driven in new directions.

Within this concept of signs, representation and memory, no single widely legitimised Stalinist space-time-body, with well-defined co-ordinates, could exist in the 1930s. Indeed, this apparently stable manifestation can only emerge within myth. In the Stalinist period, all possible conceptions of time, bodies, spaces were still mixing together in an unpredictable cocktail of signs, producing alternative and simultaneous realities. One must therefore strive to imagine all the possible combinations available in order to create an outline of the configurations of memory, which might have been available to Soviet citizens in the Stalinist period. Since it is impossible to determine how each sign can be interpreted, or which ideological direction the image might take, one needs to assume that all possibilities coexist in a sort of hybrid reality.

If nothing Soviet existed before the October Revolution, where could Soviet memory be drawn from? As has been established in the first chapter, a series of rhetorical breaks with a past populated the Stalinist space of representation of the thirties. While revolutionary genealogy was fashioned in public spaces and history books, energy was also directed to the creation in the present of precedents for future memory, both collective and individual:

> Our monumental sculpture is presented with the challenge of creating images, which were not known to the ancients. For example, images linked to aviation. Could there therefore be flying monuments?[16]

The enthusiasm for novelty manifested by the sculptor Ivan Shadr was not shared by all. Andrey Arzhilovsky, for example, deplored the loss of Russian traditions. In his diary partially reproduced in *Intimacy and Terror*, he recalled his elderly mother telling a fairy tale to his children. 'We need to cherish and preserve this old woman, with her tales of old Russia. There is so few people left who can remember life as it used to be.'[17] Arzhilovsky was shot in 1937 as an opponent of the regime, incriminated by his own stories. On the pages of the diary, red marks were inscribed, presumably by the NKVD worker who underlined incriminating words. The segment quoted earlier was underlined. According to the bureaucrat, this was evidently not the right sort of memory.

Thirty-second mosaic; The greatest gardener

In the midst of the reconstruction of Moscow, among the rubble and metallic structures, tropical plants started to appear in the urban centre. They adorned Moscow's parks, squares and the lobbies of public buildings. Rows of palm trees populated the alleys of Gorky Park. Topical leaves also appeared at the entrance of Metro stations. They were featured in movies and journals of the period. They were studied by school children in compliance with the official *curriculum.*

Never in Russian memory had such luscious plants been able to grow in the harsh climate of Moscow. Some tropical trees were imported from the Black Sea region, were hybrids adapted to the northern soil and climate, by agronomists such as

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[16] Shadr, 'Novyi Obraz Monumentalnoi Skulptury' (1935), in Shadr, p. 134.
[17] Garros, Korenevskaya and Lahusen (eds), p. 114

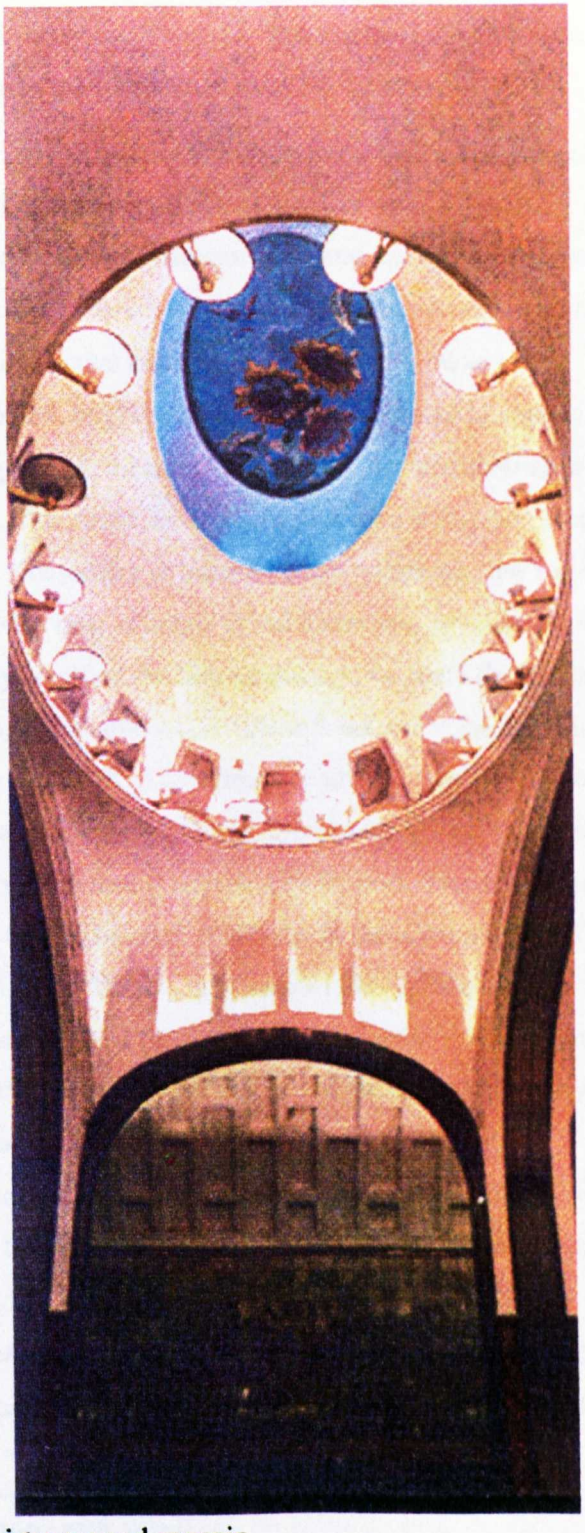

Fig. 85. Thirty-second mosaic

Michurin (see third mosaic). More often they had to be replanted every year at a horrendous cost.[18] Rumours claim that, in his spare time, Stalin himself attempted to grow lemons at his *dacha*. This proliferation of tropical growth, above the fifty-fifth northern parallel, produced the impression that Moscow had become a more clement and 'merrier' place. A victory over the sun, Futurist style, had really been effected. This could only happen in the state of achieved Socialism.

> Mayakovsky dreamed of a 'city-garden.' The cultivation of gardens was among the most important civic duties in Icaria and Utopia. They are closely connected with Charles Fourier's dreams of a total alteration of nature in an age of societal happiness and with Engel's assertion that under communism people 'become for the first time active and conscious masters of nature.'[19]

In Socialist Realist art, brightly coloured flowers started to appear. However, they no longer held their previous meaning of romantic love and their relationship to nature in a naturalistic sense. They were increasingly used as a metaphor either of the sun brought indoors, or as the blossoming of human beings within the new state. Flowers were given out in mass events by state officials to stakhanovites, athletes and various heroes of the 'new world.' They signified the link established between the Leader and the 'new ones.' At official meetings, the table where officials sat was often decorated with flowers. An example of this is Vasily Efanov's famous painting, 'An Unforgettable Meeting' (1936-37), which represents a female delegate greeted by Stalin. The table where Krupskaya, Kalinin and others are seated is strewn with flowers. The delegate receives a large bouquet from the Leader himself. Similarly, in the aforementioned sketch painted on the ceiling of the Red Army Theatre in Moscow (1937), Deineka depicted athletes greeted with flowers as they reached the finish line. The scene is set within an orchard. In this specific context, the gift of flowers can be interpreted as an analogy of the reaping of the crop of the 'new ones.'

> The representation of communism in the image of the 'flowering garden' preceded the image of the 'greatest gardener,' as Stalin was dubbed in an official (not folkloric) song [of the thirties].[20]

This type of representation established the link between heroes and flowers tended by the Leader, become gardener. Indeed, Stalin was often referred to as the sun, having usurped

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[18] This practice ended with WWII.

[19] Julia Latynina, 'New Folklore and Newspeak,' in Ellen Berry and Anesa Miller-Pogacar (eds), *Re-entering the Sign; Articulating New Russian Culture*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995, p. 80.

[20] Latynina, p. 80.

the role of the natural sun. Growing beneath the socialist source of energy, the sunflowers[21] in the thirty-second mosaic take on an almost human dimension. Indeed, the image represents a colourful bird and three giant sunflowers leaning over the frame of the mosaic. Their size is gigantic, compared to the bodies and planes represented in the other fragments of the cycle. If the flowers were really dangling from the edge of the illusory opening, at 34 metres over the heads of the users, they would never match anyone's experience of the empirical world.

Another feature of this representation subverts any naturalistic interpretation. The bright yellow flowers point downward to the users in the station, as if more brightness emanated from them, than from the natural sun. The flowers' hearts point resolutely to the underground, one staring straight down, while the others point toward the extremities of the station. The red and blue bird, which seems about to land on one of the sunflowers, could also be nimbly manoeuvring to enter, through the periscope, the underground socialist space of the representation.

> The representation of Stalin as the Master of Nature was not limited to folklore. The epithet 'sun,' 'friend,' and 'father' crossed over into common usage. Everyday one could read in the newspaper about the transformation of a swamp into a garden, with the conclusion that 'this magical transformation was accomplished by the collective farm system.'[22]

This represents the same 'magical transformation,' which could be read about in popular journals, such as *Stakhanovets* and *Rabotnitsa*...the transformation of people into socialist heroes, by record setting or achievement of the GTO requirements; people joining the Stakhanov movement or the *Komsomol*; people acquiring literacy and technical education; etc. These stories, which set the blossoming socialist present against a pre-Revolutionary past, rely on the knowledge, and the memory, that none of these things had been possible before 1917, or before Stalin's government whipped the industry and the socialist fields into shape. A few years earlier, stakhanovites, parachutists and hybrid palm trees were implausible visions of humanity and nature. These became possible in the 1930s, and could serve as a basis for predicting the future.

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[21] In Russian, *podsolnechnik*, literally 'under-the-sun.'
[22] Latynina, p. 80.

Thirty-third mosaic; The last word

The thirty-third mosaic represents a sturdy branch heavy with orange-red fruit. The tight mass of fruit and leaves is just slightly off-centre. The fruit might be apples, some kind of citrus or perhaps peaches. The image is indeterminate. If this really were the last image in the cycle, one would be tempted to think that Deineka used the representation in order to close the cycle, referring to the very first mosaic accessible to the user. This strategy would force the depicted Soviet 'day' into circularity.

One might also argue that in content, the thirty-third mosaic is closer to the third, which also depicts ripe fruit. The latter image has been described in this study as representing two branches carrying enormous specimens of *Bellefleur-Kitaika* apples, entering the representation from opposite sides of the image. Yet, there is a narrative link uniting the thirty-third and the first representations. Indeed, the first image experienced by the user of the station as she steps off the escalator represents the flowering phase of a fruit-tree branch, which could be considered the cause for the fruit in the later mosaic, set at the loop-end of the circadian cycle.

This brings about the problem of the space occupied by the user in the narrative work of art. Originally, the thirty-third image was intended to be the thirty-third fragment in a 35-mosaic cycle. It was never meant by the artist to occupy this final position in the space of Mayakovskaya station. It was never destined to force the viewer back (in an exercise of memory guided by the structure of the 'one day' narrative), to the origin of the cycle, which begins as she steps off the escalator. Nevertheless, the 1938 user only ever experienced Deineka's work in its abridged version. She could only place this image of fruit next to the blind wall. Time should have restored the image to its originally intended location. But its 'temporary' position became its perpetual reality. This implies that the mosaic's cause, the artistic process that led it to be placed in the thirty-third position of a 35-mosaic cycle, had been erased. It would be impossible for the user to reconstruct the thirty-third mosaic's intended purpose, according to its 'final' position in the station. The thirty-third mosaic, as the 'last word' in the station narrative happened without being caused, in the traditional art historical sense. It was an accident. This might seem problematic with regards to the controlled intentionality always attributed by art historians to Socialist Realist art.

It seems that Deineka understood the relative independence of objects from their creators. The painter even declared that biography is written from the material results of life, rather than the other way around. In a backward-looking process of organising life events, the artist reversed the tradition of biographical art history, which usually finds the seed of final achievements in the earliest days of the artist:

> It seems to me that a person's biography is ideally revealed in his work. We know Michurin's biography by his wonderful gardens, mothers by their beautiful offsprings, and personally I would like to show my own biography through objects and my work. Whatever we say about a painting, it will always be nothing but a beautiful fiction, not what eyes really see.[23]

Volumes of scholarly work have been written to debate whether the Stalinist era was a historical accident or an inevitable product of Russia's history, or of Bolshevism. According to Marx, no country could ever become a socialist country without fulfilling its bourgeois capitalist stage. Contrary to Stalin's affirmation, Russia should never have achieved socialism within a single country, or closed its doors to world revolution. Yet, it seems that in the thirties, contingency and historical gaps were more acceptable than they have become today. The brutal emergence of the Revolution, the constant breaks, the transformation and doctoring of codes and representations had made the idea of differential spaces and the removing the present from the experience of the past, more acceptable to the Russian population. Collage, photomontage and mosaics, methods of producing images that duplicate the aforementioned historical phenomenon, were coincidentally modes of expression privileged by several artist and designers during this period.

Since the thirty-third mosaic represents fruit, it seems appropriate to finish this section by recalling the example of the agronomist Ivan Michurin, a character who should never have appeared within the traditional understanding of causality, and whose work on fruit challenged traditional structure of cause and effect in nature. Indeed, Michurin himself, the progressive scientist and Soviet sympathiser, should not have emerged from his own social causes.

> The capitalist system was the grave of popular talent. In those times, only a few individuals climbed to any height in art and science. Such a one was I. Michurin, the great horticulturist of our country. He grew many new kinds of fruit, fruits which do not fear frost.[24]

Two issues of *USSR in Construction* contain displays portraying Michurin and his genetically engineered fruit.[25] The first contains a special report on new plants and crops, while the other deals with Soviet scientific advances in general. This last one exhibits

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[23] Deineka, 'Zametki k Biografii' (1934), in Sysoev, p. 32.
[24] Shestakov, p. 242.
[25] *USSR in Construction*, 5 (1933) and 6 (1934), n. p.

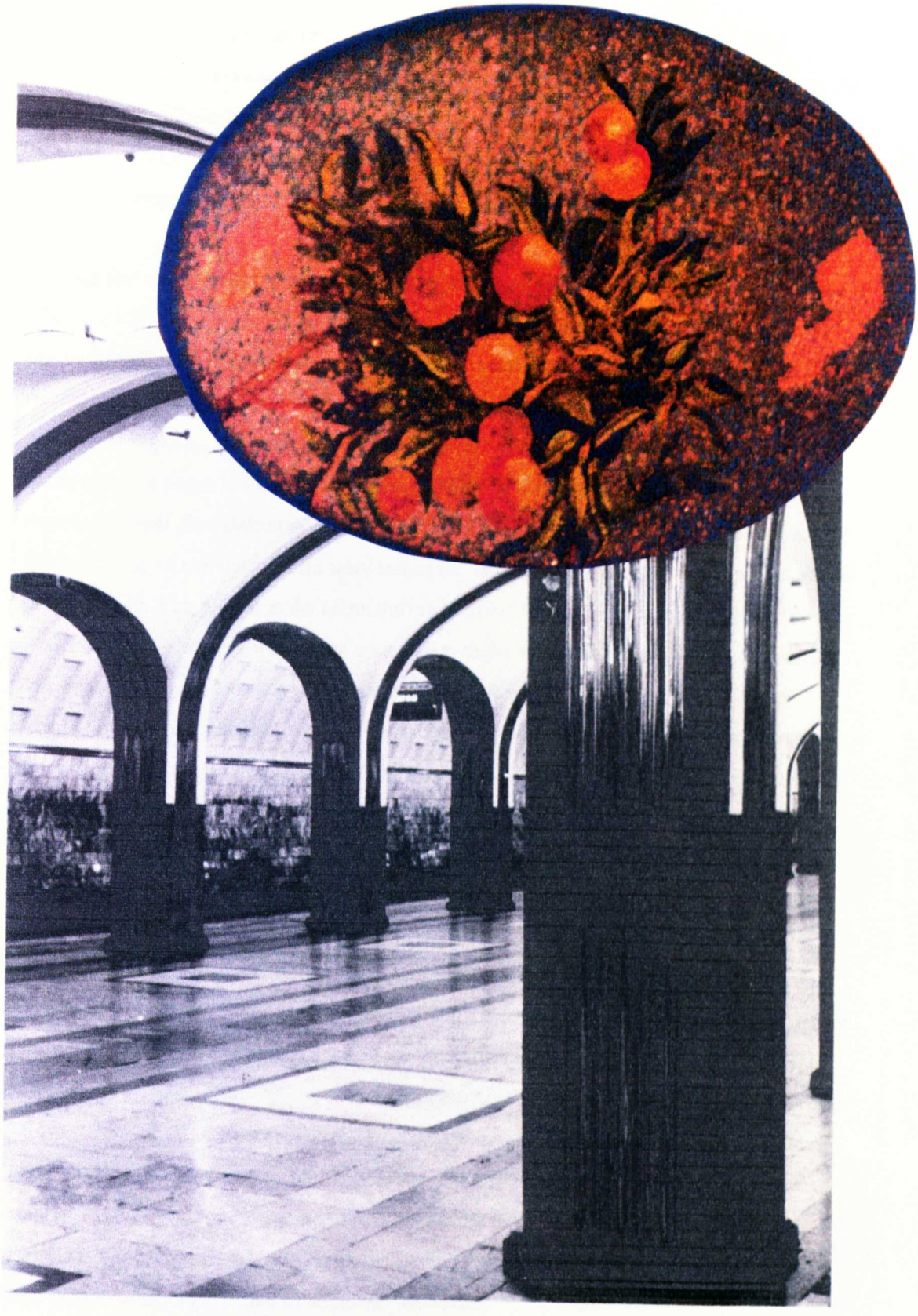

Fig. 86. Thirty-third mosaic
Fig. 87. View of Mayakovskaya, 1938

aircraft and all kinds of machines alongside the fruit, all considered equally valid products of the Five-Year Plans. The Constructivist style photomontage layouts designed by Rodchenko show fragments of Michurin's garden surrounding the bearded agronomist himself, who Deineka had had the occasion to meet in the twenties, while Michurin was setting up some experimental gardens in the artist's native city of Kursk.

Behind the wall; Thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth mosaics

The user has now hit a wall. Although the station was originally planned with an exit at each extremity of the platform, one was never constructed. A blind wall was erected at the East end of the station, under Gorky Street, as a temporary measure. The present user, crossing the station in accordance with the narrative established in this study, would come across a larger than life bust of Mayakovsky staring over her head, raised on a marble pedestal (by Aleksandr Kibalnikov, 1957). The poet's firm stare projects back to the beginning of the station. His stare traces the mirror image of the route explored in the present work. Yet, photographs taken during the first few years of the exploitation of the station testify to what served as the conclusion to the visual narrative, which, according to Dushkin's original drawings, should have been left open. A large emblem of the Soviet Union had been placed on the wall. This recently conceived configuration would have been as familiar to every Soviet citizen as their country's flag. As an emblem, this configuration is the concrete symbol of an abstract idea, like the mathematical sign. As opposed to the allegory, or Deineka's mosaics, it snugly corresponds to the concept it represents.

> What is the emblem of our country?
> The globe in a wreath of grain, suspended in sunrays. Over the globe, a red star. On the globe, a hammer and sickle. And all around it, a slogan, repeated 11 times in 11 languages: 'Proletariat of all countries, unite!'[26]

This configuration, which appeared simultaneously with the 1936 Constitution, referred to the inclusion of 11 republics in the Union. It also referred to the anachronistic goal of international communism, an idea superseded by the discourse of 'communism in one country' made popular during the Five-Year Plans. Just like Spasskaya tower still chiming the 'International,' the slogan of international communism was anachronistic and contradictory to the idea of achieved socialism.

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[26] Ilin, p. 9. Article 143 of the Constitution describes in detail the emblem of the USSR. Central Executive Committee of the USSR, p. 40.

Fig. 88. Emblem of the USSR from *USSR in Construction*, 9-13 (1937)
Fig. 89. Concealed mosaic

> December 5 [1936], the day on which the Constitution was ratified, was declared a public holiday. In this Constitution are recorded the main achievements of the land of Soviets during the first 19 years of its existence.
>
> In the former Constitution it was stated that our Republic was called a socialist republic because the working class was in power and was striving to build socialism. In the new Constitution our state is called a socialist state of workers and peasants because, in the main, socialism has already been built in the USSR.[27]

In 1938, the Union consisted of 11 Soviet Socialist Republics, and within these, 22 autonomous republics, 9 autonomous regions and several territories. Dozens of languages were spoken across the Union spanning over 9,000 kilometres from its Western point to the East, and 4,500 kilometres from North to South. This represents a sixth of the land on Earth, and comprises of different climates, ethnic groups, and cultures. Somehow all these people were supposed to instantly feel they belonged to a single country, linked by the goal of living under socialism in an 'indivisible Union.' A single red flag and a single emblem represented them all. Their occasional reunions in Moscow seem to have been colourful and exotic:

> People came from all corners of the country for the conference of delegates: men and women, Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Armenian and Turks, inhabitants of the Great North in their fur coats and deer-skin boots, residents of the faraway steppes of Turkestan with their striped robes and embroidered hats, the highlanders of the Caucasus in their long-waisted coats and felt cloaks. They all met in the brightly-lit room of the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow.[28]

In official discourse, people were meant to be simultaneously one and distinct, both incompatible qualities were constantly stressed, by the drive to proletarianise the whole country and the Stalinist interest in national folklores. This is the same problem, which emerged with the introduction of hero-building trends. As has been mentioned, the singling out of heroes conflicted with the idea of equality promoted in the early years of the regime. The ambigramme structure appears again in this phenomenon, where mutually exclusive narratives coexist.

Several pictures document the inauguration of the first Metro stations by representatives from the Far East of the Union. The delegates were characterised by their ethnic clothing and Asian facial features. Their token physical visibility echoes the efforts produced by early socialist realist writers to translate poetry, novels and songs of

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[27] Shestakov, p. 250.
[28] Ilin, p. 7.

non-Russian writers into Russian, as well as Russian works into many of the languages in the USSR. Emphasis was put on issues of language, race and identity in the thirties, a noble gesture, perhaps troubling for a population which had had limited contact with the different ethnic groups now participating in the Union. New forms of racial prejudice and benevolence appeared amidst the aforementioned campaign against racism.

One example of the discourse of ideological unity amidst cultural difference can be found in the 1937 issue of *USSR in Construction*, which was dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution.[29] The aforementioned emblem illustrates the journal's cover. In the issue, each republic is described in statistics and pictures. Each section is inaugurated by a full colour plate glued into the magazine, representing each republic's coat of arm against a traditional textile pattern:

1. The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Capital, Moscow. Its territory was twice as large as all of Europe, and 78% of the territory of the Union. Its economy was geared towards heavy industry.
2. The Ukrainian Republic. Capital, Kiev. Its economy was focused on coal, metals, chemistry and light industry.
3. The Belorussian Republic. Capital, Minsk. It specialised in the pulp industry and agriculture.
4. The Republic of Azerbadjan. Capital, Baku. It produced petroleum and cotton.
5. The Republic of Georgia. Capital, Tbilissi. It specialised in agriculture and light industry.
6. The Republic of Armenia. Capital, Erevan. It specialised in agriculture and the production of electricity.
7. The Republic of Turkmenia. Capital, Ashrabad. It produced cotton, silk and petroleum.
8. The Uzbek Republic. Capital, Tashkent. It specialised in textile, petroleum and light industry.
9. The Tadjik Republic. Capital, Stalinabad. It focused on cotton and agriculture.
10. The Kazakh Republic. Capital, Alma-Ata. It specialised in heavy and light industry.
11. The Kirghiz Republic. Capital, Frunze. It specialised in heavy industry and cattle rearing.

In spite of differences in resource organisation, the All-Union statistics draw a homogenous portrait of the republics, when it comes to the living conditions of its inhabitants and with regards to education, gender issues, religion, culture, etc. Indeed, this strategy of describing such a vast country according to all-inclusive statistics

completely erases the experience of everyday life. It privileges the typical exception. Soviet homogeneity could only be fiction; the differences between Russian urban and rural practices were still extreme in the thirties; an even greater gap would have separated the daily experience of an Uzbek *kombainersha* from that of a Ukrainian housewife. These differences are denied in the unity of the Soviet emblem.

Article 123 of the 1936 constitution reads as follows: 'The equality of the rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an immutable law.'[30] M. Ilin, the author of a book explaining to children the meaning of the Soviet emblem commented on this article. He wrote: 'In this article, like in all articles of our Constitution, it is written not what should be, but what already is.'[31]

This is again a case of 'screen memory.' Only those who did not possess long-term memory, according to which to organise their present experience, could have accepted this vision, privileging discourse over the experience of everyday life. For other Soviet citizens, daily experience still imbued by the traces of pre-Revolutionary institutionalised anti-Semitism and racism would conflict with the new vision, or flicker between the two.

The emblem on the wall echoes one of the mosaics hidden behind it. There are in fact two concealed mosaics, which have never been revealed to the users of Mayakovskaya. Some might however remember one. A black and white image of it was printed in *Arkhitektura SSSR* in 1938, just before the opening of the station.[32]

The image represents a flag emerging from one of the narrow ends of the oval. This flag is decorated with the emblem of the USSR, such as it was just described. It is presumably constituted of dozens of crimson smalto pieces (the journal reproduction is a monochrome). The cloth undulates in heavy winds, which cause the fringes confining the red material and an oversized tassel to flutter about. A configuration constituted by 33 dark bombers soar in the mosaic sky. The planes fly in a formation spelling out the initials of the country in large letters, SSSR. Flypasts spelling the name of the Leader or of the Soviet Union were fairly frequent in the thirties and refer to one of the roles aeroplanes fulfilled in the inscription of the sky during holidays. The aircraft in the mosaic are about to exit the frame. Because of its reliance on a symbol (the emblem of the no longer existing USSR) rather than allegory, this mosaic would arguably be the only representation in Mayakovskaya, which would seem entirely out of place today.

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[29] *USSR in Construction*, 9-12 (1937).
[30] Central Executive Committee of the USSR, p. 36.
[31] Ilin, p. 6.

I would expect this image to reside at the extremity of the station. But in fact it is unknown if the work was the thirty-fourth or the thirty-fifth mosaic, or if it still exists at all. Experts on Dushkin and Deineka are in the dark about this issue.[33] According to Deineka's sketches, the unknown work could represent purple lilacs in bloom, or the Shabolevskaya tower.[34] If the exit onto Gorky Street (now reverted toTverskaya) is ever completed (the project has been revived), the two mosaics might be revealed. This would transform the Mayakovskaya cycle.

Indifference to his memory is a crime

Who was Vladimir Mayakovsky ? She remembers very well. She was familiar with the colourful posters he designed.[35] Her co-workers claimed to have heard him read his poetry in the strong staccato voice, which had made him famous. She knew he was very tall and attractive, and that the crowds loved him. She read a poem about the dead poet from a paper. The poem was written for the inauguration of Mayakovskaya, the first commemorative station in the Moscow Metro network:

'Mayakovskaya' Station [36]

On the new
radius
by the Metro relay
once again I
rejoice, -
it's all so bright!
The train ran,
from afar,
noisy was the tunnel,
it lit up with
happiness

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[32] V. Frolov, 'Mozaika v Arkhitekture,' *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 7 (1938), p. 52.
[33] Both Natalya Dushkina and Vladimir Sysoev were consulted with regards to the order and the present condition of the concealed mosaics.
[34] This refers to the aforementioned mosaic sketches found in the Kursk Regional Museum.
[35] At the state propaganda agency Rosta, Mayakovsky created about 1,100 'windows,' illustrated agitation rhymes, between 1919 and 1921.
[36] By Semen Kirsanov, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, Sept. 16, 1938. Translated by Nadya Fedotova.

my whole soul.
I ride as though pulled
by an invisible hand
into the verses
of the poet
where we will meet! [...]

The poem brings back the memory of how Mayakovsky committed suicide on April 14, 1930, when the repression that led to the great purges was just barely being felt. Approximately 150,000 people went to view the body at the club of the Writers' Union. The body lay under a wreath made of hammers, flywheels and screws, and bared the inscription: 'An iron wreath for an iron poet.'[37] For a few days, all Soviet newspapers recounted the tragedy, as pictures of the public mourning were published. Then the poet's books were taken out of children's libraries as 'allegedly unsuitable.' Theatres dropped his plays; and his books disappeared from circulation.

Indeed, a few months before his death, Vladimir Ermilov, a critic and official at the Proletarian Writers Association (RAPP) had accused Mayakovsky, of being in collusion with the Trotskyites.[38] Yet, an article published in 1938 blames Mayakovsky's suicide on Trotskyite activism against socialist literature. According to the author of the article, Mayakovsky had participated in the fight against Trotskyites and other enemies of the regime. 'Already in 1921, when Trotsky became a spy, Mayakovsky warned his readers about the necessity to fight spies and wreckers.'[39] Past accusations were forgotten:

> Mayakovsky, along with Gorky, waged a fierce battle against all evil and scum from the old world. He fought fascists, bourgeois, reactionaries, trotskyites, kulaks, toadies, bureaucrats, pompadours, and nobility. The enemy received each

[37] The funeral is described by Patricia Blake in the introduction to the collection of works by Mayakovsky, *The Bedbug and Selected Poetry*, p. 48.
[38] RAPP was dissolved in 1932. Its members went on to form the large Writers' Union of the USSR. It is during its first conference that Zhdanov defined the concept of Socialist Realism. See chapter one.
[39] N. Plisko, 'Maiakovskii v Borbe s Vragami,' *Novyi Mir*, 4 (1938), p. 240.

Fig. 90. Vladimir Mayakovsky standing in front of his 'Rosta windows,' 1920s
Fig. 91. A. Kibalnikov, ' Vladimir Mayakovsky,' 1957

of the poet words with mortal hatred. In his struggle with them, he held a banner reading 'the 100 volumes of my Party card.'[40]

In 1935, newspaper headlines carried Stalin's message to the Soviet people: 'Mayakovsky was and remains the best and the most talented poet of our Soviet epoch [...] Indifference to his *memory* and to his work is a crime.'[41] From one day to the next, Mayakovsky had been disassociated from the Futurists and inscribed in the history of Socialist Realism. 'Owing to its concerns with social issues, Mayakovsky's poetry did not fit into the framework of Futurism.'[42] Within days, the Council of People's Commissars reported that they had renamed Moscow's Triumfalny Square after Mayakovsky.[43] Mayakovsky's complete works were printed; streets and mountain peeks were named in his honour. It became public knowledge that the State Institute for the Study of Brains had extracted Mayakovsky's Brain after his death. It weighed 1,700 grams, compared to the average of 1,400 grams for Russian men.[44] The brain was installed in the Institute's 'pantheon of great men.' His ashes were removed from the mortuary where they hitherto resided, and placed among the graves of Gogol, Nadezhda Allilueva (Stalin's wife) and other heroes of the regime in Moscow's exclusive Novo Devichy cemetery. In 1937, the Mayakovsky library-museum was opened in Moscow on Gendrikov Lane (now Mayakovsky Lane). On September 11, 1938 a Metro station bearing his name was inaugurated.

There is a surplus of significance in Mayakovskaya. This surplus is resonant in the surname of Mayakovsky more than anywhere else.

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[40] Plisko, p. 239. Mayakovsky was never member of the Communist Party. In the poem, Mayakovsky argued that his work testified to his belief in the goals of socialism more eloquently than any Party card ever could.

[41] *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, December 9, 1935. Emphasis added.

[42] Prokhorov, vol. 15, p. 542.

[43] Until that time, the site which became Mayakovskaya station had been planned as Triumfalny Square station.

[44] It was thought that the weight of a person's brain was in direct proportion with the individual's talent or intelligence. Stephen Jay Gould traces the orgins of this belief. According to Gould, the size of the human brain is only proportional to its owner's body size. See Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, New York: Norton, 1981. Vladimir Mayakovsky was a very tall man.

Conclusion

In its proper meaning, dialectics is the study of contradiction *within the very essence of things.*
Vladimir Lenin[1]

Where could one imagine that bureaucracy could maintain the regime of the strait-jacket indefinitely around a young people of 170 million souls which retains in it its memory the heroic legend of the great years and its human condition to conquer?
Victor Serge[2]

The nature of Stalinism has always been a highly contentious question, charged with political significance for almost all disputants.
Sheila Fitzpatrick[3]

The previous chapter could have served as a conclusion for this work. Nevertheless, a few observations remain to be made. Throughout this study I have endeavoured to sketch some of the possible modes of interaction between Soviet public art and society, the production and consumption of Stalinist monumental space during 1938. I have shown that monumental art in the 1930s did more than decorate and educate, it also compensated for discontinuity in history, identity, space and time, through complex mechanisms relying on memory and daily practices. Experienced in a gap between the material and the conceived, monumental spaces embodied all the inconsistencies of every day life, while occasionally partially veiling contradictions to the benefit of one possible interpretation over another. Yet, if any of the dialogic stories or any of the wanderings described here seem possible, the totalitarian model, which relies on the fiction of unhindered communication between the Leader and the population, simply cannot be valid.

In the space of the metro, a dream world coexisted with tragedy, hope with despair and pride with shame. These polarities, which can only crudely hint at the variety of synchronous images and discourse present within the Stalinist world-image, account for the critical, political and emotional charge, which still involves those engaged in the study and interpretation of the period. As with the moebius strip, opposite and apparently

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[1] Quoted in Stalin, p. 305.
[2] From the French journal *Le Crapouillot*, January 1937, special issue by Victor Serge, 'De Lénine à Staline' (1936), quoted by Sarah Wilson, 'The Soviet Pavilion in Paris,' in Cullerne Bown and Taylor (eds), p. 110.
[3] Fitzpatrick produced this observation 15 years ago, before the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Studies of the Soviet Union remain as contentious. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'New Perspectives on Stalinism,' *The Russian Review*, 45 (1986), p. 357.

irreconcilable aspects of every event are always linked and inseparable. These aspects often appear consecutively, but are synchronously present, like the flickering images of an *ambigramme*. Indeed, the space of Mayakovskaya functioned both as the source of revolutionary inspiration and the embodiment of fears and warnings, within a situation where the pre-Revolutionary world had been shattered and the goals of the Revolution had already been betrayed.

This thesis required work of historical scholarship to bind possible experience of everyday life in the thirties. Because of the digressive nature of this study, the fields of Soviet science, law, education and military technology have been researched. But the sum of details collected from each epistemological field does not culminate in a conclusion to this work. The fundamental goal of this study was to expose the vast domain of representation as incompatible with totalitarian models of communication. Within the scope of this analysis of a world characterised by the aestheticism of politics, where discourse and the empirical world often became indistinguishable, this seemed a particularly meaningful task to engage in.

The many complicated paradoxes and contradictions found within, and between, discourse and daily existence are linked to the Stalinist regime's self-conscious need to change society. This means that discourse often contradicted the experience of life. In order to cope with this problem, I have attempted to show that people experience their own life with only one foot planted on the broad narratives. The other foot rests on personal interpretations and memories. Issues of interpretation are therefore linked to the social, spatial and temporal positions of the user. Furthermore, between the individual knowledge and the empirical world, a continuous dialogue takes place.

No mechanistic causality ever exists in any space of representation, but least of all in the Stalinist world-image. Because representation is always involved in a dialectical process, motivated by producers and consumers, Socialist Realist art works functioned as transitional images (about to be transformed by a changing world), and as performatives (subverting the *status quo*). Ultimately, Stalinist representations were designed to change the world and were changed by it almost instantly. Indeed, Socialist Realism aimed at introducing the future into the present within an allegorical structure. Within this trope, Soviet optimism was deferred *ad infinitum*, and so was terror. Susan Buck-Morss describes this phenomenon as a parallel universe coexisting with the accessible present:

> And if you ask the residents of Moscow about their childhood experience of this extraordinary metro, they will tell you that it was a magical place, comparable to a Disney theme park, except that it cost only a few kopecks to enter, and that its multiple phantasmagorias intervened habitually into their daily life – comparable also to a cathedral, except that they traversed it in a distracted state, almost

> moving with, through, or against the crowd, on your way to somewhere else. Critics have written that the wonderful world of the Moscow Metro was an illusion, belying the failure of Socialism above the ground. They have criticised its style as an abdication of the modernist project and a return to pre-Revolutionary aesthetics. They have noted that such an architectural form interpelated a mass subject, dismissing the individual as significant. No doubt the critics are right. But precisely because these socialist dream houses entered into the utopian fantasy of childhood, they acquire a critical power, as memory, in adults. The generation of Gorbachev and *glasnost* grew up in Stalin's Russia. Komar and Melamid, *enfants terribles* of the late-Soviet art world, painted a series of parodic images of Stalin that were sacrilegious in the extreme, but also ambivalent, as in their painting of a red banner with the slogan: 'Thank you, Comrade Stalin for our Happy Childhood.' There is nostalgia as well as derision in this message, nostalgia for a world that was *supposed* to be.[4]

Buck-Morss visualises Socialist Realism as the double of society, and Soviet citizens participating in both worlds simultaneously. Another way to conceive of the apparent incompatibility of the two (or more) coexisting worlds is to interpret them as a 'performative contradiction,'[5] which both invokes and provokes, plays both with memory and projection. This refers to the idea of the palimpsest, as a discourse incapable of hiding fragments testifying to shifts, inconsistencies and the past, which are invoked by a persistent parergonal link.

Voloshinov has noted that a sign has (at least) two faces:[6] this duplicity is produced by the conscious or otherwise point of view adopted by different users of the sign. For example, the *kombainersha*, a sign explored in this study (eighth mosaic), could signify the social, political and economic promises of a union between the city and the countryside, or conversely the oppression and ultimately the death of thousands of peasants in the collectivisation process. Because the position of the user is indispensable in monumental and propaganda artwork, each sign needs to be considered within different possible discourses, corresponding to historically rooted interpretations, to different subjects.

It should also be stressed that the specific development in concepts of body, space and time, which occurred in the thirties, were by no means inevitable, just as Stalinism cannot be conceived of as an inevitable consequence of the Revolution.

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[4] Susan Buck-Morss, 'The City as Dreamworld and Catastrophe,' *October*, 73 (1995), p. 23.
[5] The concept of the 'performative contradiction' was developed in Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, London: Verso, 1997, as the positive and political potential of the supplement.

Throughout this historical period, public debates, faction rivalry and dissension were constant. Had these conflicts and issues been resolved differently, or different models of body, space and time been shaped, then perhaps the corrupt bureaucratic state, which collapsed in 1991, might never have existed. Conversely, since the late Soviet society no longer exists, its very first steps become harder and harder to retrace.

Can we now make the difference between camp labour and the *subbotnik*? Between opportunism, fear and genuine accord? It might still be difficult for some to admit that there was authentic enthusiasm and support for some programmes established by Stalin's government. Yet one should not frown at the goals or laugh at the desire to achieve the socialist world, but at the cover-ups and discrepancies found within Soviet and Western discourse alike, and which eventually blurred the fundamental issues. As Julia Latynia noted:

> Even today some citizens will say, with a demonstrative sigh, that we never had any famine at all; 'I worked at the [1939 All-Union Agricultural] exhibition – the pavilions were groaning under the weight of the fruit and vegetable.'[7]

Under Stalin monumental space was politicised to the extreme. Both artists and the government could now imagine a new client for art, the proletariat. This changed the whole conception of aesthetic design and prompted fresh uses for representation. The space of Mayakovskaya was produced by Aleksey Dushkin, an architect of apparently liberal convictions, who felt free to refer to codes, which were seemingly forbidden by the regime, in his design of the station. The narrative cycle inserted in the ceiling of Mayakovskaya was designed by Aleksandr Deineka, a self-proclaimed Bolshevik painter (who had fought for the tsarist army in his youth). While Deineka occupied a cardinal position in the debates on Socialist Realism, the formal and narrative qualities, which emerge in his representation, often diverge from his invitations toward a critical realist form and clarity in subject matter. Ambivalence was built into the site of Mayakovskaya, ironically a site intrinsically made to signify. This present work has attempted to address problems related to public reception in such an ambiguous site, through which circulated heterogeneous groups of users.

> Utterance is constructed between two socially organised persons and, in the absence of a real addressee, an addressee is presupposed in the representative of the social group to which the speaker belongs.'[8]

Of course, every sign is selected from an inventory of available signs, but social relations also regulate concrete configurations. I have attempted to demonstrate what happens to

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[6] Voloshinov, p. 23.
[7] Latynia, p. 81.
[8] Voloshinov, p. 3.

the reading of signs in a situation when codes are perverted, myths eclipsed, and the entire country, a homeland to millions a few years earlier, vanished, replaced by a union of republics over a vast expanse of land, cradling different ethnic groups, which all communicate with their own languages and codes. This study has explored possible readings of Mayakovskaya based on available cultural traces from 1938. Other readings would have been possible, and would only have contributed to establishing my argument that the notion of totalitarian culture, usually ascribed to the thirties, is essentially flawed.

The Soviet bureaucracy could not communicate in an unmediated way with the heterogeneous mass of 170 million souls populating the USSR in the 1930s. Even less, it could control the reception of monumental art by foreigners visiting the Union, or by the equally heterogeneous American population, who showed sympathy for the Soviet regime, who viewed Soviet art during international exhibitions.

The reception of the Soviet pavilion at the 1939 World Fair, hosted by the city of New York, shows similar ambiguity. The monumentality of the construction was certainly noticed by all. In fact, the Soviet Union had refused to sign the international agreement limiting each country's fair budget. No expense was spared for the ideological display: the 79 metres structure designed by Boris Iofan used 1,000 tons of steel and 800 tons of nine varieties of marble. A gigantic stainless steel worker crowned the object. A seven-ton mosaic map of the USSR in semi-precious stones, a nine-metre scale model of the Palace of the Soviets, and a 180 square metre oil painting representing 50 Soviet heroes, stakhanovites and scientists, greeted the public.[9]

> The entrance hall is surrounded by exhibit halls, one of which attracted much attention yesterday, is a full size replica of a station of the Moscow subway, decorated with frescoes and finished in marble.[10]

The replica of Mayakovskaya station was cunningly walled in mirrors to provide the viewer with the illusion of endless tracks. Some critics reproached the pomposity of the display:

> The Russians have also chosen a display a 60-foot section of Mayakovskaya station of the Moscow subway. The Moscow line is called 'the Palace Subway,' the comrades evidently feeling that only the old-fashioned bourgeois word does it justice.[11]

Time has also added possible interpretations to Mayakovskaya station, history invariably contributing to the palempsestic effect. During the German bombing of Moscow in 1941,

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[9] The representation executed under the direction of Vasily Efanov was possibly the largest oil painting on canvas in the world.

[10] 'Russia Takes the Spotlight at the Fair as her Towering Pavilion Opens,' *The New York Times*, May 17, 1939.

for example, Mayakovskaya and several other Metro stations served as bomb shelters. Muscovites, mostly women and children, lived for several weeks on camp beds, snugly aligned in the underground palace. One can only imagine that during the many hours spent lying on her back, gazing at the Mayakovskyan sky, the user might have attributed different significance to the TB-3 bombers and the parachutists. With the thundering of shells crashing on the architecture above, the images of fruit-filled trees and towering constructions must have acquired a sinister fatality.

In 1954, one year after Stalin's death, Kaganovich, who had lent his name to the Metro project (*Moskovsky Metropoliten imeni Kaganovicha*) was purged from the Metro, which was renamed in honour of Lenin (*Moskovsky Metropoliten imeni Lenina*). Three years later the giant chest of Mayakovsky, carved from white marble, was screwed to the platform. A product of *zhdanovshchina*, the unequivocal referent to the poet was presumably meant to anchor meaning in such an unstable site. Similarly, a monumental statue of Mayakovsky by the same sculptor was erected at the centre of Mayakovsky Square, a few meters from the station's entrance.

In 1990, Mikhail Ryklin proposed that ideology was so well embodied in the subway that it would survive forever.[12] Only the superficial layer of official discourse has survived the collapse of the USSR, and not entirely since Stalinist discourse had already been altered during the destalinisation process. The Metro is now mute with regards to the contradictions, which characterise the period when it was built. This is because Mayakovskaya now signifies in the *lived* interaction between contemporary users and social forces. It seems that Ryklin was wrong. Not only did the philosopher himself, as a product of the destalinised Soviet Union, not understand the pre-myth presence of Mayakovskaya, his own existence in a relatively stable period of Soviet history precluded him from predicting a further break, which would shatter all the codes he relied on.[13] While Mayakovskaya has so far been spared from fast food kiosks and the proliferation of advertisement, which is defacing other stations, its space is not isolated from the bodies of new users, who no longer consider themselves Soviet citizens, and who possess relatively little knowledge of Soviet history.[14]

Children now using Mayakovskaya will not necessarily recognise the allusions to Michurin or Pasha Angelina. They might not connect a night flight over a red wood forest to Valery Chkalov, the famous daredevil of the thirties. The culture these images were

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[11] 'The Russian Pavilion,' *The New Yorker*, May 20, 1939.
[12] Ryklin, p. 68.
[13] The 1991 'counter-Revolution' was arguably not as unsettling as the Revolution itself.
[14] History has been erased by the destalinisation process and the more recent demonisation of all Soviet elements. Soviet codes are now slowly being replaced by capitalist values, nationalist sentiments and a return to the Christian orthodox faith.

Fig. 92. Mayakovskaya station used as a bomb shelter during WWII

part of no longer exists. Yet, Mayakovskaya is still one of the preferred stations today. Today's users might find contemporary associations in images of sports, work and nature. The intrinsic ambiguity of this Socialist Realist narrative makes this process possible. Stalinist space, without the complicity of Stalinist bodies, time and memory, could not survive in the way I have described in this study. Maykovskaya is now changed; it is now involved in a different set of stories.

Appendix One

Chronology of the Moscow Metro[1]

1902 A first proposal for a privately operated Moscow subway was drawn by Russian engineer P. Balinsky. Moscow's City Council rejected the project.

1912 The subway project was revived with a Moscow City Council sponsored study. The study and project were abandonned during WWI, the Revolution and the civil war.

1924 Talks of building a subway in Moscow resumed.

1925 A planning department for the subway was inaugurated, within the Moscow City Rail Trust (MGZhD).

1926 Two draft plans of the subway were proposed to Moscow City Council.

1927 A plan was adopted. It was decided that the subway should be built within the next five years.

1931 The Central Committee of the Soviet Union ratified the subway project, declaring that construction should begin in 1932.

1932 Construction of the subway, named '*Metropoliten*' was initiated. The daily paper *Udarnik Metrostroya* (Metro Shock-workers) was born.

1933 Seven thousand *komsomols* joined the construction project. The first model of the Metro car was constructed at the Mytishchinsky factory.

1934 Thirty-seven thousand volunteers participated in the construction of the Moscow Metro. The first tunnel was completed in February. On October 15, the first train rolled on the underground rails. In November, all the tunnels of the first phase of the Metro project were completed.

1935 On February 6, 2,500 delegates from all regions of the USSR travelled underground as the first passengers of the Moscow *Metropoliten*. On May 15, at 7:00, the first phase of the Metro was open to the general public. It consisted of 13 stations: Sokolniki, Krasnoselskaya, Komsomolskaya,

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[1] A detailed chronology of the Moscow Metro 1931-1979 is available in Reznichenko, pp. 409-421. Information regarding the initial stages of the Metro project was drawn from William Wolf 's PhD dissertation, *Russia's Revolutionary Underground; The Construction of the Moscow Subway, 1931-1935*. Other sources include Artemy Lebedev's website entitled *Metro*, at http://www.metro.ru.

Krasnye Vorota (now Lermontovskaya), Kirovskaya, Dzerzhinskaya (now Lubyanka), Okhotny Ryad, Biblioteka imeni Lenina, Dvorets Sovetov (now Kropotkinskaya), Park Kultury, Imeni Kominterna (now Kalininskaya), Arbatskaya and Smolenskaya. The Moscow Metro was named in honour of Lazar Kaganovich, the Soviet Commissar of Transport and Communications, *Moskovsky Metropoliten imeni Kaganovicha.*

1937 The construction of the second phase of the Metro was inaugurated. The architect Aleksey Dushkin was awarded the '*Diplôme d'honneur*' at the Paris World Fair for the model of the Metro Station Dvorets Sovetov.

1938 The stations of the second phase were opened to the public. On March 13, Ploshchad Revolutsii and Kurskaya were inaugurated. On September 11, Ploshchad Sverdlova, Mayakovskaya, Belorusskaya, Dinamo, Aeroport and Sokol opened. The third phase was initiated.

1939 A model of Mayakovskaya was awarded the first prize at the New York World Fair. The station was declared a UNESCO 'World Heritage Monument.'

1939-2000 New stations were constructed. In 2000, there were 157 stations in the Moscow Metro network, and 20 projected stations.

1941-1945 Metro stations served as bomb shelters during WWII.

1954 The Moscow Metro was renamed in honour of Lenin: *Moskovsky Metropoliten imeni Lenina.*

1994 By 1994, the Moscow Metro had served 86.3 milliard users. The yearly average of trips in the nineties was 3.18 milliard. Daily use of the Metro has reached 9.2 million.

1996 On the occasion of the 850th anniversary of the city of Moscow, a list of monuments to be restored was compiled. Mayakovskaya and several other stations dating from the thirties are presently in restoration.

Appendix Two

Chronology of Aleksey Dushkin (1904-1977)[1]

1904	January 6: birth of Aleksey Dushkin in Aleksandrovka, Kharkov region.
1930	Graduated from the architecture faculty of the Kharkov Polytechnic, under the architect A. N. Beketov.
1931-33	Won first prize for a project of the Palace of the Soviets (joint project with Ya. Dodits).
1933-39	Worked under the architect I. A. Fomin at Architecture Workshop no. 3 of the Moscow Soviet. Participated in several architectural projects, including the Radio Palace and the Academic Movie Theatre in Moscow.
1935-51	Designed the projects and supervised construction for several Metro stations: Dvorets Sovetov (now Kropotkinskaya, joint project with Ya. Likhtenberg, 1935); Ploshchad Revolutsii (1937); Mayakovskaya (1938); vestibule for Ploshchad Sverdlova (now Teatralnaya, 1938); Zavod imeni Stalina (now Avtozavodskaya, 1943); and Novoslobodskaya (joint project with A. Strelkov).
1937	Was awarded the '*Diplôme d'honneur*' at the Paris World Fair for the Dvorets Sovetov Metro station model.
1939	Won first prize at the New York World Fair for the Mayakovskaya Metro station model. The station was declared a UNESCO 'World Heritage Monument.'
1943-51	Worked as head architect at the Central Architecture Workshop of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Designed and supervised the construction of railway stations in Stalingrad, Simferopol, Dniepronetrovsk and Sochi.
1950	Received at the Academy of Architecture of the USSR.
1951	Designed and supervised the construction of the high-rise administrative and housing complex at Krasnye Vorota, Moscow (joint project with B. Mesentsev). Was awarded the State Architectural Prize of the USSR.

[1] The following biographical information was drawn from notes generously provided by Natalya Dushkina.

1951-59	Worked as head architect for *Mosgiprotrans* (Moscow Transport Agency). Authored several buildings in Moscow.
1959-1977	Worked on several monumental art projects throughout the USSR, including a number of war memorials.
1967-1977	Taught at the Moscow Institute of Architecture.
1977	Died in Moscow on October 1.

Appendix Three

Chronology of Aleksandr Deineka (1899-1969)[1]

1899	May 21: birth of Aleksandr Deineka in Kursk, Russia.
1915-17	Studied at the Kharkov Art Institute.
1918	Worked as a photographer for the Kursk Criminal Investigation Department. Directed the Kursk Regional Fine Arts Division of the Commissariat of Enlightenment. Contributed to the decoration of propaganda trains and agitation theatre set designs.
1919-20	Served in the Red Army as set designer for its mobile theatre. Designed posters for the Kursk section of Rosta. Participated in combat for the defence of Kursk against the White Army. Moved to Moscow in 1920.
1921-25	Studied at the polygraphic department of the Vkhutemas under Vladimir Favorsky. Met Vladimir Mayakovsky. Collaborated on propaganda journals such as *U Stanka* and the anti-religious journal *Bezbozhnik U Stanka*. Travelled to the Donbass region for *Bezbozhnik U Stanka*. Created OST (Association of Easel Painters) with A. Goncharov, N. Kupryanov, Yu. Pimenov, D. Shterenberg, A. Tyshler and P. Williams.
1926-27	First OST exhibition. Collaborated on several propaganda journals: *Bezbozhnik U Stanka, Krasnaya Niva, Prozhektor.*
1928-29	Left OST for the October Association of Artists. Headed the poster department at the Polygraphic Institute. Produced book illustrations for children's literature. Worked as a consultant at the Fine Arts Publishing House (*Izogiz*).
1930-34	Produced a variety of posters, paintings and monumental works.
1931	Joined RAPKH (Association of Russian Proletarian Artists).
1935	Travelled to the United States, France and Italy.
1936	Initiated work on a decorative panel for the Soviet Pavilion, Paris World Fair, 1937. Headed the Monumental Art division at the Moscow Institute of Fine Arts (until 1946).
1938	Completed a series of mosaics for the Mayakovskaya Metro station.

[1] The following biographical information was drawn from Sissoïev, pp. 279-282. A bibliography and list of exhibitions are included in this book.

1939-41	Produced a variety of paintings and monumental works, including the sketches for the ceiling of the Red Army Theatre in Moscow and mosaics for Paveletskaya Metro station (installed in the station Novokuznetskaya in 1943). Was appointed to the chair of Monumental Art at the Moscow Institute of Fine Arts.
1942	Headed the poster division of the Political Administration of the Moscow Military District. Produced agitational posters for the news agency TASS.
1945	Travelled to East Germany. Was appointed director of the Moscow Institute of Arts and Design (until 1948). Received the title of Master Arts Worker.
1946	Travelled to Vienna. Was elected to the Academy of Arts of the USSR.
1947-1958	Produced a variety of paintings and monumental works, including panels for the main pavilion of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow, and two panels for the Brussels World Fair.
1955	Headed the Drawing Department at the Moscow Architecture Institute (until 1957).
1958	Headed the Monumental Painting Division at the Surikov Art Institute in Moscow (until 1963).
1959	Received the title of People's Artist of the Russian Federation.
1960	Joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Worked as chief designer on the construction of the Kremlin Palace of Congress, for which he also produced a mosaic frieze.
1961	Travelled to France.
1962	Received the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. Was elected Vice-president of the Academy of Arts of the USSR. Travelled to Czechoslovakia.
1963	Received the title of People's Artists of the USSR.
1964	Won the Lenin Prize. Travelled to the East Germany, where he was elected as Honorary Member of the Academy of Arts.
1965-68	Travelled to Italy. Produced a variety of paintings and monumental works, including panels for the Moscow Airport.
1969	Was awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labour. Died in Moscow on June 12.

Selected Bibliography

Since this thesis attempted to include different stories within its pages, it was necessary to draw upon an extremely large number of materials. The organisation of this bibliography might therefore require some explanation. In order to avoid forcing children's books next to military theory and French philosophy, I have tried to group my sources into what seemed to be logical categories. The use of subdivisions should make it easier to access materials.

The first category includes material directly related to the Moscow Metro. The second section includes sources on Russian and Soviet art, architecture, urbanism, design and literature. A section dedicated to Russian history and different cultural phenomena follows. A fourth division contains a selection of general and theoretical works related to the study of art and culture. Then, various periodicals consulted in depth for information on the years 1932-1939 are listed in alphabetical order. With a few exceptions, individual articles have not been noted in other sections of the bibliography. The bibliography ends on the enumeration of the primary archives and museums consulted. Works of art, films, websites and certain books alluded to in the text, but not directly discussed, were not included in this bibliography. Russian and French titles of books and articles have been translated into English.

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Lenin State Library (Moscow, Russia)

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Museum of the Metro Builders (Moscow, Russia)

New York Public Library, Slavic Division (New York, USA)

Shchusev Museum of Architecture (Moscow, Russia)

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