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Stalin's Russia: Visions of Happiness, Omens of Terror

Mark Konecny

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, konecnmc@ucmail.uc.edu

Wendy Salmond

Chapman University, salmond@chapman.edu

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STALIN'S RUSSIA

VISIONS OF HAPPINESS, OMENS OF TERROR

An exhibition exploring the power
of visual propaganda.

*From the Ferris Russian Collection,
the Institute of Modern Russian Culture at USC,
and the Wende Museum, Culver City.*

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This catalogue and the exhibition it documents would not have been possible without the boundless enthusiasm, good will, and imagination of Eric Chimenti and Natalie Lawler. From the moment he chose the 1937 Korolev typeface for the catalogue, Eric was an exhilarating and supportive partner in bringing this project to fruition. Natalie worked quiet miracles to transform an inhospitable thoroughfare into a dynamic exhibition space and we are deeply grateful to her for her professionalism and good humor throughout.

We would also like to thank the following friends and colleagues for their assistance and support: Susanna Branch, Hannah Brockway, Rick Christophersen, Saied Farisi, Susanne Friend, Amy Graziano, Marilyn Harran, Wenshan Jia, Ilya Levin, Nancy Norwood, and Katie Silberstein. We are especially grateful to Sasha Netchev (BFA in Graphic Design '15) for her photography.

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Mark Konecny, Associate Director, Institute of Modern Russian Culture
Wendy Salmond, Professor of Art History, Chapman University



FOREWORD

by Jeri Chase Ferris

In 1970 an American high school teacher began a thirty-year journey into Stalin’s Russia. The items you see here were selected from more than 8,000 artifacts conserved on that journey.

Tom Ferris (the teacher) began collecting early, and he collected just about everything. But in 1970 Tom found a focus for his collecting and a new love and passion – Russia herself. He was teaching Russian Studies at Beverly Hills H.S. when he and a fellow teacher took their students on a winter-vacation field trip to the Soviet Union. It changed Tom’s life, and mine, forever. The moment we stepped on to Russian soil a magnetic, almost spiritual, attraction pulled us into Mother Russia. Our first night in Moscow, in softly falling snow, we stood at Lenin’s Tomb in Red Square at midnight, listening to the pealing bells from Spassky Tower and the slow, measured, goose-step march of the soldiers as the clock tolled twelve. It was a moment in which one’s heart simply stopped at the unbearable beauty and agony of this country.

In the 1970s antique shops and used bookstores in Moscow and Leningrad were filled with historic items. Tom began to focus his collecting on the Stalin era and reign of terror. By finding, buying, and carrying to the U.S. every scrap of 1930-40-50s material for sale on/about/by Stalin, Tom hoped to create a collection before this material disappeared into, well, history. He bought bronzes, busts,

*... so future
generations
would appreciate
the history and
sacrifices of
Soviet citizens.*

parade banners, boxes of propaganda training posters, books and posters and paintings praising Stalin.

Word spread in Moscow and Leningrad that a tall American in a beaver fur coat was looking for anything related to the Stalin era, and people began to approach him – citizens who could no longer keep their busts of Stalin; their recordings of Stalin’s speeches; their books of Stalin’s writings. Armed with rubles, dollars and hand-drawn maps, and avoiding Intourist, Tom would go out at night to people’s apartments and return with bags and parcels, those precious possessions their owners wanted preserved. They were often sad and bittersweet acquisitions. “Without our history we are not a people,” said one of his sources. But Tom would save that history.

Tom’s dream was that his collection of Russian memorabilia be preserved, kept safe, and made available for study so people could understand how Stalin came to be; so Soviet history would be real, not abstract; so future generations would appreciate the history and sacrifices of Soviet citizens.

STALIN’S RUSSIA at Chapman University is helping achieve exactly that. ★

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FIG. 1 Photomontage by N. Dologorukov from *Krasnaia zvezda*, 30 July 1933, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Bolshevik Party. Stalin stands at the pinnacle of power beneath Lenin's disembodied gaze. Courtesy of Susan Corbesero.

IN STALIN'S STERN EMBRACE

by Mark Konecny
Institute of Modern Russian Culture

The image of our great leader must be immortalized for all future generations and should serve as a permanent reminder and a call to the struggle for the ultimate victory of communism.¹

In the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, Russia's new Bolshevik leaders concerned themselves with the problem of asserting the legitimacy of the new government. In addition to removing symbols of the deposed Tsarist monarchy and moving the seat of power from Petrograd to Moscow, Lenin proposed that monuments be erected to the new leaders and intellectual forebears of communism. It was almost inevitable that, despite his protestations, Lenin himself would become the face of monumental propaganda in the new state. Upon his death in 1924, the triumvirate of Joseph Stalin, Grigorii Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev that assumed leadership of the Communist Party decided that the cause of communism was best served by promoting a cult of Lenin. Lenin's profile became a ubiquitous symbol of Soviet power; even his physical remains were preserved in a reliquary in Red Square, first in a temporary wooden structure and then in the red granite mausoleum that still stands there.

When, after a brutal power struggle, Stalin eliminated his competitors (as well as the majority of the Bolsheviks who had participated in the revolution), the new leader understood that it was vitally important to cultivate a specific image of



himself and to create a new narrative of his path to leadership. In a letter given to the Central Committee of the Communist Party upon his death, Lenin had made his wishes regarding the future of communism in Russia clear. The letter, called Lenin's Testament, rejected Stalin in explicit terms:

*Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority – namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc.*²

However, Stalin had already consolidated power in his hands during the lengthy period of illness prior to Lenin's death, and so the letter was never made public to the Soviet people. Instead, he set about making sure that the myth of his great friendship with, and love for, Lenin were monumentalized in propaganda.



FIG. 2 -3 Left and above: Stalin with Voroshilov, Molotov, and Ezhov, before and after the latter's removal from his post as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in December 1938. From David King, *The Commissar Vanishes* (New York, 1997).

His first task was to establish that his succession to leadership was ordained by Lenin. Throughout his tenure, the paired figures and profiles of Lenin and Stalin (with Stalin in the foreground, of course) were featured on posters, photographs, and every kind of ephemera; in most cases the images were of equal size, but it was not unusual to have Lenin depicted as an ethereal figure behind the dynamic Stalin (Fig. 1). Stalin himself was intimately involved in emphasizing his own part in the process. He insisted, for instance, that he alone should choose the actors who would portray him in film or on stage. Stalin on film spoke accentless Russian quite unlike the real, Georgian-born Stalin's heavily inflected speech. The usurper's almost palpable anxiety betrayed in such images was part and parcel of Stalin's paranoia. A careful examination of the imagery produced reveals the profound insecurity that drove Stalin and permeated his public persona as leader.



FIG. 4 Young workers brigade poses beneath a giant image of Stalin with Gelia Markizova, late 1930s.

Stalin used propaganda to convey a three-fold image: that of a forceful and capable leader, a wise and learned teacher, and a gentle and forgiving father to the people. This carefully crafted image was zealously protected and promoted at all levels. In *The First Circle*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn sardonically used Stalin's official biography to illustrate the effectiveness of this rhetoric: "His strategic genius. His wise foresight. His powerful will. His iron will. From 1918 on he had for all practical purposes become Lenin's deputy. Yes, yes. That was the way it had been! ..." ³

The template for Stalin as the great leader was one long familiar to the Russian people. The Tsar had invariably been depicted in military uniform and was expected to participate in military maneuvers and war campaigns. Whereas Lenin eschewed uniforms and the trappings of military finery during his tenure,

preferring to wear a suit and tie when in public, Stalin, perhaps in reaction to the military service of Leon Trotsky, head of the Red Army in the tumultuous years of the Civil War, was never seen without a uniform of some kind. Stalin was careful to link his own personal image to his most important power base, the military. In this way, he was able to both project an aura of invincibility and ensure the loyalty of the troops through a sense of identification.

Stalin was often portrayed as a calm, reflective scholar: smoking his pipe, sitting on the edge of his desk, reading the collected works of Lenin. His solitary, contemplative pose was designed to demonstrate his concern for the nation and his resolute plan for the future of his people. Of course, this was a direct rebuttal of Lenin's Testament, which described Stalin as an unthinking brute. He understood the basic need to portray steady leadership in spite of the turmoil that was characteristic of the Soviet Union throughout his reign. For the peoples of the Soviet Union, Stalin was the single force standing between them and the chaotic terror that had seized their nation; famines, wars, mass arrests, and executions were the fault of internal and external enemies that Stalin and his regime were fighting against.

In his guise as teacher, Stalin was often shown addressing various congresses, plenaries, and workers' organizations. Standing above all on a proscenium addressing crowds of adoring citizens, Stalin was both lawgiver and beacon of light in the uncertain future. Often the crowds were filled with workers from all of the republics wearing their national costumes, or young and enthusiastic members of the Komsomol (Communist Union of Youth) brimming with vitality and optimism. The wild adulation of the crowds is evident in their joyous expressions. Many of Stalin's speeches were recorded on phonograph records replete with thunderous applause that often lasted for minutes at a time. Again, Alexander Solzhenitsyn provides an ironic picture of one such occasion:

The director of the local paper factory, an independent and strong-minded man, stood with the presidium. Aware of all the falsity and all the impossibility of the situation, he still kept on applauding! Nine minutes! Ten! In anguish he watched the secretary of the District Party Committee, but the latter dared not stop. Insanity! To the last man! With make-believe enthusiasm on their faces, looking at each other with faint hope, the district leaders were just going to go on and on applauding till they fell where they stood, till they were carried out of the hall on stretchers! And even then those who were left would not falter. ... ⁴

*... Stalin was
their leader,
their teacher,
and their father.*

Under Stalin, the Soviet Union consolidated its hold on the republics and reasserted its control of the Caucasus and Central Asia; this control was not without its difficulties, including the forced relocation of many nationalities to distant republics in order to pacify resistance. Using posters to reassure the people of the peaceful unity of the entire nation was yet another means by which Stalin was able to maintain the illusion of progress.


Throughout the 1930s and 40s, purges took their toll on those in power, when the price of failure, real or imagined, was annihilation. Posters, paintings, even photographs that included those who had been arrested were immediately altered or destroyed (figs. 2-3).⁵ Even today, one encounters books in the State Libraries of Russia with carefully excised photographs of those who had been executed or sent to the gulag. Stalin crafted an unassailable image of himself as the sole source of leadership and stability, reducing the importance and influence of potential rivals. This tendency, denounced by Nikita Krushchev in the “secret speech” of 1956 as the “cult of personality,” is perhaps the prevailing motif of Stalin’s propaganda.

It is important, however, to remember that Stalin was not merely the public image of the Soviet Union at the time. He was also a ubiquitous figure in the private lives of his citizens. Stalin was celebrated as the father of his people — kind to the workers, beloved by women and children. Songs celebrated Stalin as the warming sun of his nation. One of the most famous, *Let There Always Be Sunshine*, originally had the refrain:

*Let there always be sunshine.
Let there always be bread.
Let there always be Stalin.
Let there always be me.*⁶

In 1936, a photograph was taken of Stalin embracing Gelia Markizova, the daughter of Ardan Markizov, the Commissar for Agriculture in the Buriat-Mongolian Autonomous Republic. In the photo, next to Stalin and Gelia, stood the governor of Buriat-Mongolia, Mikhei Erbanov, smiling at the warm scene (see p. 38). This was one of the most reproduced images of Stalin’s era, a celebration of the leader and his love of children (Fig. 4). Like many such images, the story behind

it is as chilling as Stalin’s great Terror. Within months of the photograph being taken, Gelia’s father had been arrested and executed for being a Japanese spy; her mother died three years later in suspicious circumstances. Erbanov, known as the “Buriat Stalin,” was arrested in the same purge and executed. All future reproductions of the photograph were cropped to remove his image.

The Soviet Union under Stalin was a culture in transition; roads and railways were built, and an industrial powerhouse was created from the strength and sacrifice of millions. For the Soviet people of that time, there was no question that “their” Stalin was the face of the nation. As the visual propropaganda proclaimed, Stalin was their leader, their teacher, and their father. 

- 1 *Vtoroi s’ezd sovetov Soiuzs Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik: stenograficheski otchet. Iz. Tsik Soiuzs SSR, 1924, 52. Quoted in M.T. Lampard, “Larger Than Life: Soviet Monumental Sculpture in the Soviet Period,” Experiment, 48 (2012).*
- 2 Max Eastman, “Lenin’s ‘Testament’ at Last Revealed,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 18, 1926, 1.
- 3 Quoted in Gary Kern, “Solzhenitsyn’s Portrait of Stalin,” *Slavic Review*, 33, no. 1 (March 1974), 11.
- 4 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, 3 vols. Translated by Thomas P. Whitney and H. T. Willetts (London: Collins-Harvill, 1974), 56.
- 5 See David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin’s Russia* (London: Metropolitan Books, 1997).
- 6 The original refrain was written by four-year-old Kostia Barannikov in 1928. In the popular 1962 version, the word “Stalin” was replaced with “mama.”



CAT. 34

STALIN'S RUSSIA

VISIONS OF HAPPINESS, OMENS OF TERROR

by Wendy Salmond, Chapman University

Few leaders have exploited the power of visual propaganda to convince, coerce, and control as brilliantly as Joseph Stalin, whose iron hand ruled the Soviet Union and its peoples from 1929 until his death in 1953. In word and image, Stalin conjured up a mythic world of abundance and radiant happiness. Rewriting the history of Russia's recent past, he erected a joyful façade over the terror and deprivation of the present, and invented a Utopian vision of the future.

Central to Stalin's vision was the cult of his own idealized persona as wise statesman, great leader, and kindly father of his people. Self-appointed heir to Vladimir Lenin's revolutionary legacy, he fought his way from the obscure margins of the Bolshevik Party to an unassailable position as an absolute dictator with imperial ambitions.

This exhibition, drawn from the Ferris Russian Collection, the Institute of Modern Russian Culture, and the Wende Museum, explores the evolution of Stalin's public persona over a quarter century. It represents the many millions of images of the Great Leader that saturated daily life in Stalin's Russia. Functioning as icons in his cult of personality, they have much to teach us about art's role in the promotion of ideology.

*Central to
Stalin's vision
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persona ...*

Left: This amateur painting, based on a photograph in the newspaper *Pravda* (see p. 38), captures the moment in 1936 when six-year-old Gelia Markizova, daughter of the Buriat-Mongol Commissar of Agriculture, presented a bouquet to Stalin.

GLORY TO THE WISE STALIN, GLORY!

Stalin emerged from World War Two an international hero, the “Great Liberator” who had saved Europe from Hitler. Post-war propaganda portrayed him as the architect of Soviet victory and a brilliant strategist. Aloof and god-like in a radiant white jacket, Stalin actively promoted a self-image of superhuman proportions.

1. Petr Golub and Anatoly Chernov

Under Stalin’s Leadership –

Forward to the New Dawn of Our Motherland!, 1946

Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1946; edition of 50,000 copies

Chromolithograph, 35 x 22 3/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

2. Still from the Film *The Fall of Berlin*, 1949

Directed by Mikhail Chiaureli, with score by Dmitry Shostakovich

In the final minutes of this lavish propaganda film, Stalin arrives in Berlin after Soviet troops take the Reichstag, descending from his airplane like a deity from heaven. Shostakovich’s film score, culminating in the hymn *Glory to Stalin*, has been described as the “closest to Socialist Realism” the composer ever came.

Glory to Stalin! 1949

Words by Evgeny Dolmatovsky, music by Dmitry Shostakovich

Glory to Stalin!

Forever is he true

To the vow he made to Lenin

Our friend and teacher has confidence in the people

Together with the people he has always prevailed

Great leader, we wish you

Health and strength for many years.

We march behind you on the victorious path

To radiant times!

Glory to Stalin!

Through the flame of battles

Fearlessly he led the Soviet people.

Like a storm, like a spring wind we passed,

Ending the campaign with the victory over Berlin.



CAT. 1



CAT. 2



In 1947, still basking in the glow of victory, Stalin imposed a new era of empire building on a population exhausted by war. Slogans of boundless abundance ushered in ambitious agricultural quotas and massive industrialization projects. While benignly promoting his International Peace Movement abroad, at home Stalin brutally suppressed all “internal enemies.” He created a buffer of Soviet satellite states between Russia and Western Europe, and forged an alliance with Mao Zedong’s People’s Republic of China.

3. Viktor Ivanov

We Will Reach Abundance, 1949

Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1949

Offset, 33 1/16 x 23 1/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

His gaze fixed on the future, Stalin stands in a sea of letters and telegrams from collective farm workers throughout the Soviet Union, pledging to fulfill their production quotas.

4. Boris Belopolsky

We Stand for Peace and Defend the Cause of Peace, 1950

Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1950; edition of 300,000 copies

Offset, 33 1/2 x 25 3/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

The mammoth size of the print run conveys the importance Stalin attached to his new role as leader of world peace.



GLORY TO THE PARTY OF LENIN!

Stalin's post-war vision of a Communist society outstripping the Capitalist West was reinforced through the ritualized repetition of visual and verbal formulae. Fluttering over vistas of military might and epic industrial projects, the red banner of Lenin's Bolshevik Party symbolized "the common motherland of the great Soviet country." As Stalin increasingly usurped Lenin's role in the Party's history, his image came to overshadow and dwarf that of the dead leader. While the masses might still march "under Lenin's banner," it was Stalin's features that marked the epicenter of power.

5. Konstantin Ivanov

Glory to the Party of Lenin and Stalin – Organizer of the Victorious Armed Forces of the USSR, 1948

Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1948

Offset, 33 1/4 x 20 3/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

6. *Under Lenin's Banner, Under Stalin's Leadership, Forward to the Victory of Communism, early 1950s*

Satin and fringe, 44 x 56 1/2 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

7. Mikhail Gordon

Under Lenin's Banner, Under Stalin's Leadership, Forward to the Victory of Communism, 1951

Offset, 30 x 21 1/2 inches

Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1951; edition of 100,000 copies

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

The panoramic landscape beneath the banner shows the Volga-Don Shipping Canal (1941-52), which opened up Soviet navigation between the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Azov. Like most of Stalin's epic construction projects, the canal was built by forced labor. Sergei Prokofiev wrote the tone poem *The Meeting of the Volga and the Don* to celebrate the canal's completion in 1952.



CAT. 5



CAT. 7



CAT. 6

GLORY TO THE PEOPLE FOREVER!

In Stalinist propaganda, “the people” were assigned the role of adoring children. Epithets like “Father of the People” and “Leader and Teacher” reinforced Stalin’s paternalistic bond with the entire population. The Party’s youth movements – the Young Pioneers, the Communist Youth League (Komsomol) and its international branch (KIM) – were shown as eager recipients of his fatherly concern. So too were the national republics of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, brought under the central control of Moscow and subjected to an increasingly stringent process of Russification.

8. Nikolai Troshin

Long Live Soviet Youth!, 1938

Fold-out from *Twenty Years of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League*

[XX let VLKSM], 10 (1938) • Photomontage, 13 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

An affable Stalin presides over the new generation of Communist youth. Despite the montage of smiling faces, a strong military note is sounded. As the delegates to the “Congress of the Young Victors of Socialism” of 1936 affirmed, they stood ready for “the defense of the Socialist fatherland from attack by the enemies of Socialism.”



CAT. 8



CAT. 9

9. Vladimir Kaidalov

Onward to the Shining Heights of Communism!

Tashkent: Izdabnashr, 1950; edition of 7,000 copies

Chromolithograph, 22 1/4 x 34 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

In Stalin’s empire many ethnic nationalities were melded into “one common culture with one common language,” all subordinate to the Great Leader and Moscow. Here the artist strives to reconcile Uzbek ethnic identity with a Russian patriotic vision, as the ideal Soviet nuclear family, blond and beaming, welcomes its more backward Uzbek counterpart to a radiant City of the Future.



10. Vladimir Kaidalov

For the Happy Life of Soviet Youth, 1950

Chromolithograph, 33 1/2 x 23 inches

Tashkent: Gosizdat, 1950; edition of 3,000 copies

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

11. Leonid Golovanov

My Friend, To Our Fatherland We Dedicate the Soul's Exquisite Raptures!, 1952

Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1952; edition of 100,000 copies

Offset, 11 13/16 x 24 inches

The Wende Museum, Culver City

Two exemplary New Men, evidently products of the towering Moscow State University behind them, quote Pushkin, Russia's national poet, while reading the words of Lenin and Stalin's *On Youth*. A year before Stalin's death, visual propaganda made his Utopian vision seem tantalizingly within reach.



FIRST AMONG EQUALS

Stalin's aura of Olympian calm, omnipotence, and remote geniality was not attained overnight. A marginal figure in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, after Lenin's death in 1924 he rose to the top of Party apparatus through cunningly outmaneuvering the charismatic Leon Trotsky and other rivals. By 1929 he had launched the country on a path of ruthless economic and social transformation. Ahead lay the Terror of 1936-38, in which millions of innocent "enemies of the people" and most of Lenin's Bolshevik comrades were eliminated.

This striking poster by the Latvian artist Gustav Klutsis captures Stalin's political position in 1931, jockeying with his rivals for control of the Party. Though he stands at the forefront of the Communist Party's "shock brigade," his image is still that of a mere mortal. It has yet to develop the gigantic proportions and god-like aloofness it would assume by the end of the decade.



CAT. 13

Klutsis was a committed Communist and a passionate advocate of photomontage's propaganda value. After 1932, when Stalin instituted the monolithic cultural policy known as Socialist Realism, Klutsis' experimental graphics increasingly fell out of step with the times. Like many of the figures shown here at Stalin's side, Klutsis was exterminated during the Terror.

12. Gustav Klutsis

The USSR is the Shock Brigade of the World Proletariat, 1931

Lithography, 56 1/2 x 40 5/8 inches

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

13. Youth Parade with Giant Poster of Stalin, after 1945

Photograph, (modern print)

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC



CAT. 12

FIG. 14



"STALIN IS THE LENIN OF TODAY"

Paving the way for Stalin's rise to power was the rewriting of revolutionary history to establish him as Lenin's chosen heir. Lenin's memory was made a sacred cult after his death in 1924, but by the late 1930s the new cult of Stalin had far surpassed it. A new iconography emerged, subtly subordinating the founder of the Bolshevik Party to Stalin's imperial image of absolute power.

14. *Stalin Before a Statue of Lenin, 1945*

Chromolithograph mounted on cardboard, 22 x 13 3/4 inches

Printed inscription: Fedorin, 1945

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

15. *Bust of Stalin, 1935*

Porcelain, 11 1/2 x 10 1/4 x 6 3/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC



CAT. 15

16. *Nikolai Tomskey*

Bust of Lenin, 1933

Lomonosov Porcelain Factory

Porcelain, 10 x 7 x 5 3/4 inches

Incised signature: Tomskey 1933

The Ferris Russian Collection,

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC



CAT. 16

17. *Propaganda Inkwell with Bust of Lenin, after 1924*

Porcelain, 5 3/4 x 4 3/4 x 5 1/4 inches

Lomonosov Porcelain Factory, green underglaze mark of hammer, sickle and cog

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

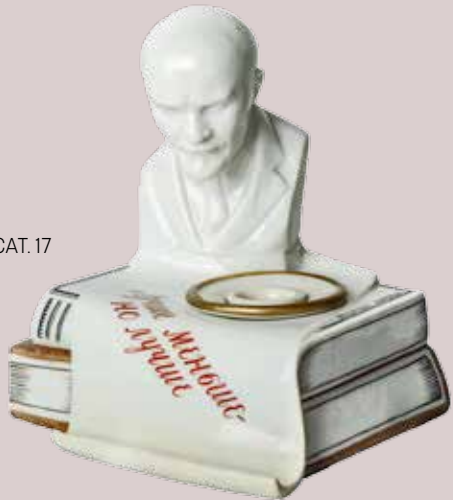
This inkwell is exemplary of the "Leniniana" produced in the first years after Lenin's death in 1924, when a special Immortalization Commission was appointed to control his image. Inscribed on the scroll atop two volumes of Lenin's collected works is the title of his 1923 speech "Better Fewer, but Better," while the bust is based on a model made by Natalia Danko in 1924.

18. *Lenin as a Child, 1950s*

Porcelain, 5 3/4 x 3 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

Images of Lenin as a curly-haired toddler were widely disseminated after his death, providing Soviet children with a model of studious diligence.



CAT. 17



CAT. 18

STALIN'S ALL-SEEING EYE

“Everything in the Soviet Union takes place under the fixed stare of the plaster, bronze, drawn or embroidered eye of Stalin He is everywhere, he sees everything ... we doubt whether Caesar Augustus enjoyed during his life the prestige, the worship and the godlike power over the people of which Stalin disposes.”

Western visitors to the Soviet Union, like John Steinbeck in 1947, were astonished by the visual saturation of Soviet life with Stalin's image. This vast production gained momentum in the late 1930s as Stalin exterminated his rivals and consolidated his power.



19. *Photograph of Stalin, 1924*

Photograph, 9 1/8 x 6 5/8 inches
The Ferris Russian Collection,
Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

This early photograph, taken the year of Lenin's death, captures both the studied informality of Stalin's early Bolshevik wardrobe – loose trousers tucked into boots – and his Napoleonic hand gesture.

20. *Wall Calendar with Stalin and Tractor, 1934*

Pressed tin, 10 x 5 3/4 inches
The Ferris Russian Collection,
Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

Inscribed beneath Stalin's imperial profile is a long excerpt from his speech at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party in 1934, extolling the virtues of the “new village” after forced collectivization and the arrival of the tractor.



CAT. 20

21. *Woven Portrait of Stalin, 1934*

Viscose, 25 1/4 x 18 1/2 inches
The Ferris Russian Collection,
Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

A souvenir of the so-called “Congress of Victors” of 1934, this woven portrait is inscribed: “J. V. Stalin. Presented by the Weavers of the Trekhgornaia Manufactory, Participants in the Production Campaign of the Seventeenth Party Congress.” Such items proclaimed the triumph of the proletariat and the economic successes of the First Five-Year Plan.



CAT. 21

22. *Portrait of Stalin, ca. 1939*

Photograph on tin, 9 1/2 x 6 1/2 inches
Printed on the frame: Metalltrest, Odessa; Izd. Moskovskii Rabochii, Moscow
The Ferris Russian Collection,
Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

Like most photographs of Stalin, this 1924 portrait is heavily retouched to smooth out his pock-marked complexion. It was reissued in 1939 on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.



CAT. 22

23. *Silk Portrait of Stalin, ca. 1950*

Silk, 5 1/2 x 3 3/4 inches
Inscription in Mandarin:
“Stalin. Embroidered by Hangzhou Dujinsheng Factory”
The Ferris Russian Collection,
Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

Woven in Hangzhou, China, this silk portrait marks the Treaty of Alliance signed by Stalin and Mao Zedong in 1950, and the Soviet Union's subsequent recognition of the People's Republic of China.



CAT. 23



CAT. 25

THE GIFT OF STALIN

In a highly politicized culture where ceremonial gift giving was an important ritual, the range of media in which Stalin's image could be presented was limitless. The gifts displayed here also show some of the portrait types and poses that artists replicated, most of them taken from photographs.

24. *Notebook Cover with Stalin's Profile in a Medallion*

Imitation leather, 9 x 7 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

25. *Pen with Portrait of Stalin, 1950*

Wood and metal, 6 1/2 inches long

The Wende Museum, Culver City

26. *V. S. Gytanov (?)*

Plate with Portrait of Stalin, 1936

Krasnyi Farforist Factory

Porcelain, airbrush on stencil, 7 3/4 inches diameter

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

The inscription reads: "Presented to the Party Committee Secretary of the Maly Opera Theater Mikhailov from the Party Committee of the Krasnyi Farforist Factory."

27. *Pavel Leonov*

Plate from the "Order of Lenin" Service with Portrait of Stalin, 1934

Dulevo Porcelain Factory

Porcelain, 13 1/2 inches diameter

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

An inscription on the back of this elegant plate, with its border of military oak leaves and wheat threaded through hammer and sickle, identifies the painter as Pavel Leonov, the principle artist at the Dulevo Porcelain Factory.

CAT. 24



CAT. 26



CAT. 27



28. *Ivory Figurine of Stalin, c. 1949*

Ivory, 10 inches h.

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

The pose replicates Fedor Shurpin's ecstatic portrait of Stalin in his painting, *The Morning of Our Motherland*, 1949, for which he won the Stalin Prize.

29. *Hand-Painted Bust of Stalin, 1936*

Lomonosov Porcelain Factory

Porcelain, hand-painted, 7 x 5 1/2 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

CAT. 29



CAT. 28





CAT. 30



CAT. 30 - detail

30. *“Artel” Gramophone and Recording of Speech by Comrade Joseph Stalin at the Extraordinary Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets 15 November 1936 on the Project for the Constitution of the USSR, 1936*

Gramophone: 14 x 11 x 5 1/4 inches; record case: 10 3/4 x 12 1/2 x 3 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

31. *Stalin’s Report on the Project for a Constitution at the Extraordinary Eighth Congress of the Soviets, 25 November 1936*

Offset reproduction of the painting by Fedor Modorov, 8 x 6 1/2 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC



CAT. 31

THE LEADER’S VOICE

Stalin’s speeches were extraordinary performances of his power and the Russian people’s subjugation to it. “Prolonged stormy applause” and lengthy standing ovations were an essential component of these public rituals, and a bell was often sounded to signal when the applause might safely end.

Stalin’s voice was first recorded at the Eighth Party Congress in 1936, where he presented his project for a Constitution. Lauded as “a genius of the new world, the wisest man of the epoch, the great leader of Communism,” Stalin nevertheless inspired terror in the officials of the Gramophone Plant Trust factory, who were criticized for the poor sound quality of the recording.

THE GREAT FRIEND OF CHILDREN

“Thank you, Comrade Stalin, for our Happy Childhood” was a universal slogan in Stalin’s Russia. As the Father of the Nation, Stalin frequently appeared surrounded by children and flowers, greeting Soviet youth groups, and presiding over massive celebrations of youthful athletic prowess.

CAT. 33



32. Nina Vatolina

Glory to the Great Friend of Children, 1952

Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1952; edition of 200,000 copies

Offset, 30 3/4 x 22 1/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

33. Stalin Accepting Flowers From Children at the All-Union Parade of Gymnasts at Moscow’s Dinamo Stadium, July 1946

Photograph, 8 3/4 x 6 3/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC



34. Comrade Stalin and Gelia Markizova, after 1936

Oil on canvas, 39 x 29 1/8 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

This amateur painting (see p. 12), based on a photograph in the newspaper *Pravda* (at left), captures the moment in 1936 when six-year-old Gelia Markizova, daughter of the Buriat-Mongol Commissar of Agriculture, presented a bouquet to Stalin. Soon thereafter Gelia’s parents fell victim to the Terror. Once a national symbol of happy childhood, she now joined the growing ranks of orphans of

“enemies of the people.” The picture’s blend of cosy sentimentality and hidden menace makes it one of the most disturbing artifacts of Stalinism.

35. Sofia Pressman

“Pioneers” Plate, 1930

Konakovo Faience Factory, Tver

Faience, 13 1/4 inches diameter

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

CAT. 35



CAT. 32





CAT. 36



CAT. 37

**36. Galina Stolbova (sculptor) and Elizaveta Lupanova (painter)
*School Girl, 1950***

Lomonosov State Porcelain Factory

Porcelain, 7 1/4 x 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

37. *Eskimo Schoolgirl, 1950s*

Lomonosov State Porcelain Factory

Porcelain, 7 3/4 x 4 1/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

Though easily dismissed as kitsch knick-knacks, decorative plates and porcelain figurines played their part in shaping Communist society. The wholesome lives of Young Pioneers (Lenin's version of the Scouts) and the educational opportunities for girls throughout the Soviet Union were popular and politically correct themes for the ceramics industry.

38. Frontispiece to *ABC [Bukvar']*, 1954

Moscow: Uchpedgiz, 1954, 13 1/2 x 5 1/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection,

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

**39. Boris Raevsky, with drawings by E. Zh.
*The Outstanding Student [Otlichnik]***

Leningrad: OGIZ, 1947

Chromolithograph on cardboard, 6 3/4 x 5 1/4 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection,

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

Schoolbooks were a natural vehicle for inculcating the values of Leninism-Stalinism in early childhood. From a frontispiece featuring Stalin to the red flash of a Young Pioneer's scarf, the Great Leader, Teacher and Friend was ever present.



CAT. 38



CAT. 39

A PAGEANT OF YOUTH

Demonstrations of physical culture became increasingly theatrical under Stalin, in an overwhelming display of “the strength and happiness of youth in the Soviet land.” Physical fitness programs were an important part of Communist youth culture, preparing the new generation to defend the gains of socialism.

40. *Sports Display, Red Square, 1936*

Photograph, 6 7/8 x 9 5/8 inches

The Ferris Russian Collection, Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

This photograph possibly depicts the celebration of Constitution Day 1936, when 75,000 athletes assembled on Moscow’s Red Square. Here, they spell out Stalin’s name.



CAT. 40

41. Aleksandr Rodchenko (photographer) *A Pageant of Youth, 1939*

Moscow-Leningrad: State Art Publishers,
1939, 8 x 10 inches

Institute of Modern Russian Culture, USC

42. *Artistic Gymnastics* [*Khudozhestvennaia gimnastika*], 1950

Moscow: Fizkul'tura i sport, 8 7/8 x 11 7/8 inches
The Wende Museum, Culver City

The sport of artistic gymnastics originated in Leningrad in 1934. This book was the first comprehensive teachers’ guide on the subject to be published, and included sheet music with compositions by Isaak Dunaevsky and Dmitry Shostakovich.



CAT. 41



CAT. 42

43. Trophy with Male Gymnast, n.d.

Metal , 9 7/16 h. x 4 1/8 diam. inches

The Wende Museum, Culver City



CAT. 43

44. Trophy with Female Gymnast, n.d.

Metal , 13 1/8 h x 4 5/15 x 4 4/15 inches.

The Wende Museum, Culver City



CAT. 44

INTERACTIVE PROMPTS

2. *Glory to Stalin!* 1949



32. Stalin’s speech at the Bolshoi Theater, 1937



35. Comrade Stalin and Gelia Markizova, after 1936



41. Sports Display, Red Square, 1939



SUGGESTED READING

Bonnell, Victoria E. *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1999)

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Stalinka Digital Library of Staliniana. Compiled by Susan Corbesero, Helena Goscilo, and Petre Petrov. Hosted by the University of Pittsburgh’s Digital Research Library, <http://images.library.pitt.edu/s/stalinka/>

DESIGN NOTES

This exhibition catalogue and the graphics for the exhibition utilize the following:

DF **KOROLEV** is the sans serif family based on lettering created by an anonymous Soviet graphic designer for the propaganda displays held in Red Square in 1937. It has been named in honor of Sergei Korolev (Korolyov), considered by many to be the father of practical astronautics.

NEW STANDARD is the serif family that was designed at Polygraphmash ca. 1940 (project manager Anatoly Shchukin). It is based on the Obyknovennaya (Common) group of text typefaces of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Initially designed for a collection of works by Lenin, this typeface was widely used in the Soviet Union for technical and scientific books, both for text and display. The digital version was developed at ParaType in 1996 by Vladimir Efimov.

To achieve visual harmony a modified version of the Van de Graaf Canon and Tschichold's 2:3 page-size ratio and grid was employed. The logo of Stalin framed by banner, hammer & sickle, and laurel leaves is derived from Soviet posters, medals, and insignia of the period.

Exhibition and catalogue design by EMC Illustration & Design. EMC's work has won a Gold Advertising Award, been selected for inclusion into LogoLounge: Master Library, Volume 2, and been featured on visual.ly. The studio has 15 years of experience in the communication design industry. To view a client list and see additional samples please visit www.behance.net/ericchimenti.

