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# THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS CULTURAL WORK

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On May 2, 1917 the newspaper Birzhevye vedemosti reported that the Ministry of Finance of the Provisional Government had made an appeal to the art world of Petrograd to engage in "constructive state work."[1] The ministry wanted the artists, writers and musicians of the capital to organize a day of support for the Provisional Government's Liberty Loan. Artists were exhorted by the newspaper ( and apparently by the ministry ) to bring to the organization of that day "all our creative enthusiasm. Let artists express the entire brilliance of their fantasies, draw many varied posters.... take to the streets with art of all forms not to collect money but to popularize the all- national loan.... take it to the villages and the peasant huts.... wear beautiful costumes, decorate the streets." Poets and writers were to issue a single issue newspaper with verse, interviews and articl extolling the loan. These were tasks of "state construction."

On May 25, in large letters the headlines of the same newspaper proclaimed:[2]

25 May art will be with you
on the streets of Petrograd
Artists of all theaters, painters
poets and musicians
will bring out their creations and raise your spir
Citizens! It will be "Liberty Loan"Day

Liberty Loan day itself involved demon trations, processions, performances, speeches etc. and was viewed as a huge success. The public manifestation of art in the streets had had "a great influence in its uplifting of the mood of the masses where seethes the passion of the struggle for the new dear fruits of freedom."[3]

Another example bears recounting here, this time involving the solemn funeral at Marsovo Pole on March 23 of the victims of the February revolution. Without going into a description of the ceremony honoring these martyrs, I would call attention to newspaper reports later in april about the lack of upkeep of the mass graves.[4] What was to have been a revolutionary shrine had been allowed to degenerate into a"bazaar square." What was to have been a "holy place" was strewn with cigarette butts and refuse with few traces of the flowers or flags that had marked the funeral itself. Newspaper reports indicated no small amount of disgust on the part of older peasants and young soldiers who interpreted the situation as the result of the government's indifference to the sacrifice of the dead.

My final introductory example, and one which will be taken up in more detail later, involves the bureaucratic organization of the arts ( and culture ) under the Provisional Government, and specifically the question of creating a new Ministry of Art to promote a cultural policy as well as to preserve the artistic and historical monuments of the past.[5] Prior to the February revolution, primary responsibility for the preservation of such cultural artifacts and the administration of royal theaters, museums and certain institutions of artistic education belonged to the Ministry of the Imperial Court. In free democratic Russia such a ministry could no longer exist, in name at least, and its responsibilities and apparat were placed under the guidance of F. A. Golovin as Commissar. In the early months of the revolution, Golovin created a series of special conferences with representatives from the artistic and literary world ( the first of these was the

so- called Gor'kii Commission ) to plan the preservation of cultural monumentsand to grope toward some new general principles of collaboration between the state and the representatives and institutions of "culture." Despite long debates during 1917, the Ministry of Art was never created, and indeed similar debates about the efficacy of such a bureaucratic organ took place during the early years of the Soviet regime.[6] The various arguments pro and con for such a ministry and the very fact that the debate took place at all in "new democratic"Russia, that a ministry, in form so symbolic of the hated state guardianship of the arts and culture in general under the Old Regime was viewed as desirable or even as a necessity by artists themselves ( not to mention government representatives ) reveals an organizational imperative that could not be ignored by either the state or the cultural world. On the one hand at every conceivable level from stage hands in individual theaters, through the academies and conservatories to the level of national unions artists and cultural workers had organized early in 1917 into unions and other organizations to promote their interests and visions of "cultural construction" and to shed the constraints of state power. On the other hand the state still existed, although in weakened form, and the ministerial organs of that state power remained as the most viable mediator between the interests of the state and those of the creators of culture- high and low.

Artists desired and feared creation of a Ministry of Art.[7] It quickly became clear in 1917 that despite a fierce desire to keep the state out of cultural affairs completely, it was impossib to do so not only because funds were needed, but even more im-

portantly, the organizing power and moral force of the state were essential to the revolution's cultural mission among the masses. The great fear however was that a ministry might be seized by one particular esthetic movement (iavochnym poriadkom) and used to batter the others into submission. It was recognized that given the structure of the state and of Russian political life that a ministry might be desirable to represent the interests of the art world. Ministerial politics and ministerial government required channels into the bureaucratic world as well as an apparat. As one commentator put it "we need a ministry as a sign of the state importance of art, as representative of its interests. Now there is a new regime and things can't possibly run the old way. The Ministry is necessary as a mediator between artists and society and as a real expression of the people's love and respect for native creativity." Already there were signs of the later soviet scramble for control of the cultural apparat and a feeling on the part of some that bureaucratic organization of the arts was desirable if it supported the correct revolutionary artistic movements and cultural policies.[8]

I begin with these three examples drawn from 1917 ( there are many others ) to illustrate three themes that relate to the cultural "work" of the Provisional Government. First, the fact that many leaders and officials of that government ( or more properly speaking of the succession of cabinets resting atop the inherited ministerial bureaucracy ) were aware of the connection between the revolution and culture- and in a variety of ways attempted to connect with the masses, to reach their psyches.

The Provisional Government did have at least some awareness of the need to effect a culture change, to institutionalize it, and to make clear the break with the Old Regime and the hopes of the new. Yet as my second example indicates, the efforts of the government were haphazard, unsystematic, and hopelessly inattentive to the psychological needs, to the mentality, to the existing culture of the people whose support it needed and upon whose cultural transformation the Russian revolution depended. Finally, there is the organizational and institutional phenomenon, itself a cultural product , a part of the structure that might generate the energy of culture change. The Provisional Government as would be the case later with the Bolsheviks, expressed these cultural imperatives and came under their influence, so that there was a certain limitation upon the pursuit of culture change and the use of culture as a motor force in the revolution. The Provisional Government's record in the area of culture is one of flawed achievment, a series of initiatives that found their resonance later under the soviets and that indeed helped to legitimize aspects of soviet policy. What we see under the Provisional Government is the beginnings of the attempt of a culture to transform itself- no easy task as the Soviet regime was to learn. The experience of the Provisional Government with culture and indeed the role of culture in the Russian Revolution have much to teach us not only about the subsequent history of culture in the Soviet Union, but about the phenomenon of revolution itself. A discussion of culture and revolution, and of some ways of treating the question of cultural transformation should put the cultural work of the Provisional Government in better perspective.

As is already apparent, culture is used in this essay in an anthropological sense, as the "patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievment of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i. e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand be considered a product of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action."[9] Even from a materialist perpsective , culture is viewed as the "learned repertory of thoughts and actions exhibited by members of social groups--repertories transmissable independently of genetic heredity from one generation to the next. The cultural repertories of particular societies contribute to the continuity of the population and its social life."[10] Without entering at this point the debate between structuralist and materialist conceptions of culture, we may say that both points of view embrace not only what we ordinarily consider high culture and the values and behavior of the masses, that is to say of all social groups in a given society. Culture represents patterns of thought and behavior, a "semiotic field" as one interprets an "assemblage of texts."[11] to be interpreted

From this perspective it is clear that the cultural work of a would be revolutionary regime must be at the very center of activities. The more one studies revolutionary processes in Russia and elsewhere, the more it becomes evident that the idea of revolution - whether it encompasses econcomic, social, or political transformation, or all three, must include a well-developed theory of culture and culture change.

Transformation of the basic structures of any society- whether they be mental or institutional requires fundamental changes in the "learned repertory of thoughts and actions" and in their symbolic forms of transmission. In short there can be no satisfactory theory of revolution that embraces both the breakdown of Old Regimes and historical outcomes that does not have as a component a cultural dimension. Unfortunately, the most widely heralded modern theories of revolution lack precisely this dimension. Let us examine Theda Skocpol's notion of "social revolution" which despite its evident strengths may stand as a paradigm for teleological approaches that ignore culture and assume transformation.[12]

Skocpol in States and Social Revolutions defines social revolution as:

> "rapid basic transformations of a society's state and class structures accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below. Social revolutions are set apart from other sorts of conflicts and transformative processes above all by the combination of two coincidences: the coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval: and the coincidence of political with social transformation..... What is unique to social revolution is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together in mutually reinforcing fashion. And these changes occur through intense sociopolitical conflicts in which class struggles play a key role. [13]

According to Skocpol her theory is different from others because it identifies a "complex object of explanation of which there are relatively few historical instances;" and because her "definition makes successful sociopolitical transformation-- actual change of state and class structures-- part of the specification of what is to be called a social revolution."[14] The problem with this approach is twofold. First of all it assumes transformation on the basis of external social and economic and political forms rather than their human content. Skocpol offers no explanation of

survivals (perezhitki), the curious mixing of old culture and new that any serious student of revolution faces again and again at almost every point in the historical process. While Skocpol's structural approach helps explain the demise of Old Regime political structures and authority it offers at best superficial insight into the construction of new regimes and the new men and women who bring the new forms to life and who themselves are supposedly transformed in the process. Secondly, Skocpol's theory assumes that the realm of culture, of the linguistic and symbolic, the entire mental world of a society is somehow separate from the social and poltical structures that may be "transformed" in a revolution. In this vision, governments and institutions are what they proclaim themselves to be and social change is measured by the degree to which previously downtrodden social groups begin to share in political power and improve their economic well- being. There is no attempt whatsoever to go beneath the surface of either the temporal order of events or of the new forms of the revolutionary state or society.

We need not be content with this kind of theory of revolution. A good many serious thinkers, marxists included, have maintained that superstructure, the realm of culture and subjectivity, of human mediation between the material world and the order of events may have an autonomous existence.[15] It is as if, to take 1917 as an example, class conflict had two mutually reinforcing realities- one clearly embedded in the economic and social realities of the era that exerted an enormous impact in the midst of the monumental chaos engendered by World War I; and a second that was rhetorical and symbolic, but no less real and no less ( and possibly even

more ) capable of causing events by having an impact on the way people perceived reality. A theory of revolution should embrace such symbols and other cultural products as well as the patterns of perception, behavior and organization that are themselves part of the culture undergoing transformation. How the structures that generate culture and its institutions interact with material conditions and other external influences is the kinds of question that will allow us to escape our own inbred belief in the myth of history ( diachrony ) as dominant over structure ( synchrony ) for all societies at all points in time. It may be, after all, that revolutions are profoundly conservative events in terms of culture. A thoery of revolution that embraces culture must try to get at both structure and event, it must go beneath formal institutions and laws and udnerstand their dynamics as cultural artifacts. Revolutionary theory or practice, if they are to fulfill their own goals, must must pay attention to the collective mentality and how to communicate with it and change it. I have already hinted above at the organizational- institutional imperatives of the revolution. Provisional Government ( and Bolshevik ) leaders did not want to reproduce older patterns of organization and behavior in state and social institutions. Yet the patterns proved stronger than will or event and new administrators, regardless of their class origin, were not immune to the pressures of bureacratic tradition upon them. The examples drawn from the realm of culture are numerous of this sort of stubbornness . Without wishing to appear reactionary or unsympathetic to the goals of the Russian revolution, I do think that this kind of cultural persistance must be explained.[16]

In my own work on the bureaucracy ( 1916-1921 ) I have found continuity in structure ( though not necessarily in personnel ) to be a dominant theme.[17] Viewing bureaucracy, as does Michel Crozier, as a cultural phenomenon, I have searched for possible explanations of the tenacity of institutional life in Russia. Here I can only offer some hypotheses, some broad avenues of approach derived from an odd collection of great thinkers each if whom dealsextensively with culture and history in their works. The thinkers I have in mind are Hegel, Levi-Strauss and Freud.

I begin with Hegel and his Philosophy of History because in fact there is a connection between his idea of Spirit as an expression of rationality and the structures of Levi- Strauss.[18] According to Hegel world history is the march of Universal Spirit. Historical peoples are those which enter into a dialectical relationship with that spirit through their own subjective self- consciousness. For Hegel language predates history. Spirit itself is immortal; "with it there is no past, no future, but an essential now."[19] Spirit thus represents a kind of immanent rationality or structure that always contains within it its earlier substance. "The grades which Spirit seems to have left behind it, it still possesses in the depths of its present."[20] For the first time in my career as a historian of Russia I understood the message in the famous early nineteenth century remark of Chaadaev that Russia had no history, that it was in the sense of Hegel ( and of Levi- Strauss ) historyless, durable, stable "belonging to mere space" and not to time. My

reading of Hegel and of Levi- Strauss has forced me to take seriously the idea that soceities may have "unhistorical Histories." This Hegelian idea essentially corresponds to the distinction Levi- Strauss makes between "hot" and "cold" societies.[21] For Levi- Strauss, cold societies are those in which structure succeeds in maintaining the upper hand over process. The synchronic meets the diachronic head- on and with a dexterity we underestimate tries to deny history by making "the state of their development which they consider 'prior' as permanent as possible.[22] This is not to claim that such societies never change, or that they are immune from outside influences, demographic upheavals and the like. Rather it is to say- as Levi- Strauss said about the "savage mind" that it is a totalizing mind that attempts to assimilate as much discontinuity as possible. The cold society is capable of filling the forms of history with the tenacious content of the past.

> I have suggested elsewhere that the clumsy distinction (Hegel's) between 'peoples without a history' and others could with advantage be replaced by a distinction between what for convenience I called "cold" and "hot" societies: the former seeking, by the institutions they give themselves, to annul the possible effects of historical factors on their equilibrium and continuity in a quasi- automatic fashion: the latter resolutely internalizing the historical process and making it the moving power of their development. 23

> It is tedious as well as useless, in this connection, to amass arguments to prove that all societies are in history and change; that this is so is patent. But in getting embroiled in a superfluous demonstration, there is a risk of overlooking the fact that human societies react to this common condition in very different fashions. Some accept it,with good or ill grace, and its consequences ( to themselves and other societies) assume immense proportions through their attention to it. Others (which we call primitive for this reason ) want to deny it and try, with a dexterity we underestimate, to make the states of their development which they consider 'prior' as permanent as possible . It is not sufficient, in order that they should succeed, that their institutions should exercise a regulating action on the recurrent sequences by limiting the incidence of demographic factors, smoothing down antagonisms which manifest themselves with

> the group or between groups and perpetuating the framework in which individual and collective activities take place. It is also necessary that these non- recurrent chains of events whose effects accumulate to produce economic and social upheavals, should be broken as soon as they form, or that the society should have an effective procedure to prevent their formation. We are acquainted with this procedure, which consists not in denying the historical process, but in admitti it as a form without content. 24

The members of this kind of society exhibit an"obstinate fidelity to a past conceived as a timeless model, rather than as a stage in the historical process." 25

Levi- Strauss unfortunately does not offer a theory of diachronic structures that might be merged with the synchronic to produce a new synthesis to explain social and cultural change and revolution. Nonetheless his analysis of such basic structures as kinship, totemism and myth etc. are richly suggestive of a search for relationships that might fruitfully be undertaken among the various institutional, social and cultural phenomena of revolutionary Russia.

Finally we must consider Freud as social theorist and cultural critic. 27 Freud's theories of instincts and of time and history also shed light on our theme of cultural work and revolution. Freud viewed history as a psychic burden "transmitted through the generations" of the masses retaining an impression of the past in unconscious memory traces. 28 "These memory traces exist permanently in the ID. Therefore, there problably exists in the mental life of the individual not only what he has experienced himself, but also what he brought with him at birth, ideational fragments of phylogenetic origin, and archaic heritage." 29

For Freud two kinds of time exist- kairos and chronos- crucial time decisive for what comes after and mathematical unit time with each unit qualitatively identical. Kairos on the

social level is the equivalent of instinct, and it lives on as tradition. "On the conscious, cultural surface of a social structure, tradition, the repressed content of the past, is something 'vanished and overcome in the life of a people.' But it is simply the hidden spring of personal and collective history."[30] For Freud whole structures of institutions become projections of psychic states and events become the outer meaning of the psychological. History has an inner, psychological articulation and in the words of Philip Reiff, "the future is preempted by the past" and man can become only what he has been."[31] One doesn't have to share this grim view to see the importance of a theory of instincts for understanding culture change and revolution. For Freud, the instincts were profoundly conservative. He expressed this best in his discussion of the compulsion to repeat in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. In his"instinctualized history" revolution too has a conservative character. It is "precisely the event that allows the most archaic to bisect the most recent accumulations in the psychic state of man."[32] Finally, Freud understood the importance of creation myths. For him, history had to begin with an event, a kind of "big bang" that permitted a society to become historical in the Hegelian sense. In this way revolution itself functions as a myth of creation and it appears in the Russian context as one more example of a culture in search of a history.[33]

Culture then as a unity of symbolic systems embracing many orders of human acitivity and institutions must be seen as a critical element in any revolution. The idea of cultural work, the building or transformation of the values and artifacts, the patterns of behavior and organization of broad segments of the population of the Russian Empire was a powerful theme during the

turmoil of 1917. Maxim Gor'kii, for example exhorted his readers in Novaia Zhizn' to temper their polemics and "at once begin cultural work in the broadest sense of the word... give our talents, minds and hearts to the Russian people in order to inspire them to intelligently create new forms of life."[34] Later he wrote: "Our beautiful dreams will never come true in the soil of destitution and ignorance, a new culture will not take root in this rotten soil, a Garden of Eden cannot be grown in this rotten swamp- it is necessary to drain the swamp and make it fertile; and:

'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'- this is natural, this is right; however, the present day has two 'evils': the struggle of the parties for power and the devlopment of culture. I know that the political struggle is a necessary matter, but I accept this matter as an unavoidable evil. For I can't help seeing that (under the conditions of the present moment and in view of some of the peculiarities of the Russian psychology) the political struggle renders the building of culture almost impossible.

The task of culture- to develop and strengthen a social conscience and a social morality in man, to develop and organize all personal abilities and talents- can this task be fulfilled in times of widespread brutality?

Just think what is happening around you; every newspaper having its own sphere of influence, introduces daily the most disgraceful feelings into the soul of its readers, such as malice, falsehood, hypocrisy, cynicism, and others of this order.

In some people they arouse fear and hatred of man; in others contempt and revenge; still others they wear out by the monotony of slander and infect them with the indifference of despair. Such things done by those whose dark instincts have been inflamed to the point of illness not only have nothing in common with the preaching of culture, but are sharply hostile to its aims.

But the revolution was made in the interests of culture and it was precisely the growth of cultural forces and cultural demands that called the revolution into being.

The Russian, seeing his old way of life shaken to its foundations by war and revolution, is yelling high and low for cultural aid.[35]

Both the absence of culture and the need to interact with the existing "crude" culture of the masses were common themes during 1917 and in retrospective accounts by participants. This was also true of officials in the Provisional Government. N. N. L'vov, the new Provisional Government Commissar of State Theaters put it

succinctly in the heady days of March: "the task of the state theaters is to serve the free narod and to educate them with artistic and moral ideals."[36] General A, Verkhovskii, the last War Minister of the Provisional Government, a man close to the troops refers constantly in his memoirs to the psychology of the masses.[37] Verkhovskii, who won the support of many leftists for his post- Kornilov reforms and futile attempts to end the war, wrote that reforms and peace were necessary to "create the necessary break in the psychology of the masses."[38] He understood that part of the effectiveness of the Bolshevik slogans on peace etc. was their"mythic"quality: "In the primitive psychology of the crowd everything is simple and clear. Everything is possible, and thus the masses follow these new words that promise them everything quickly and without any effort."[39] Verkhovskii also understood the need to talk to the representatives of the masses in the Soviet in "revolutionary language that is understandable to them." Fedor Stepun,an intellectual who for a time headed the "Cultural-Enlightenment" Section of the War Ministry also discusses the spiritual, symbolic and religious dimensions of the revolution and the Provisional Government's failure to connect with the masses through effective propaganda and education.[41] This list could be lengthened considerably, but now it is appropriate to summarize the major initiatives of the Provisional Government in the realm of culture. Then we will be able to assess the impact of this cultural "work" on the process of revolution.

What best to chose from the mountain of PG legislation and the kaleidoscope of small scale initiatives and vignettes reported

in the daily newspapers? The area of perhaps the most impressive PG legislation ( and many would argue its most spectacular failure ) was in the area of administrative reform or in "state building" where the government clearly attempted to modify not only key formal institutions of the Old Regime, but the political culture that supported them. The Provisional Government's initial thrust was to break up the old Tsar- centered, highly personalized, clannish, bureaucratic politics and administration substituting for them rule of law, separation of powers, self- government, and the primacy of institutions over personalities. In this as in so many PG policies, the legislation carried on the traditions of the reformers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[42] Democratization and extension of the zemstvo to the volost' , removal of police power from the bureaucracy, creation of administrati courts to hold officials accountable before the law, the Constituent Assembly-- all of these reforms were meant to break the cultural code of autocracy, to provide an institutional framework for the nurturing of a new politics and therefore of a new political behavior on the part of all classes.

As we know, the PG found it virtually impossible to graft these new institutions onto provincial society, which like the art world mentioned earlier, organized its own governing institutions in the countryside. The peasantry clearly did not perceive or believe that these new PG sponsored institutions represented, in theory at least, an enormous departure from tradition. Or perhaps in the Levi- Straussian sense, they understood it only too well and instinctively worked against them. The Provisional Government in any case could not sell the program, and bit by bit during 1917

in an effort to establish effective authority, the government had to renege on a good many of its ideals. The power of the ministerial bureaucracy and police crept back in, but perhaps the most instructive event in terms of political culture was the emergence of Kerensky as a kind of Tsar figure, a farcical, but logical repetition of the requirements of the culture for a "leader" and the reassertion of personal power over law. [43]

In the areas of education and religion where the state had long been dominant, the government moved to complete long stalled reforms from the agenda of the Old Regime.[44] There was legislation to democratize the schools and to unify vocational and general or classical education at the secondary level into one system that would permit transfers at all levels between different types of school without penalty. The government also decreed the absorption of the widespread network of church schools into the secular system, and as in the case of police power, made gestures toward turing over a share of the administration of education to the new organs of self government and education councils in the provinces that were to include representatives of society. The educational reforms of the Provisional Government were progressive when compared to the pre- 1917 system, but they remained abstract and largely designed to fulfill the aspirations of a narrow segment of the population. Little was planned in the way of primary education- either in terms of administration or content. I see little evidence in Provisional Government policy of any attempt to reach the minds of peasants or workers in order to effect culture change. Although the teacher's union, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet and the State Education Committee all spoke of such a program, it would take the advent

of Soviet power and a regime less fearful or ambivalent toward the use of state power to attempt qualitative change in the education of the peasantry.[45] Much in the realm of education had already begun prior to 1917 as a result of society's own initiatives ( the People's University, women's courses, private gymnasia, research into child psychology, the program of Minister of Education Ignat'ev in 1916 that emphasized the practical and vocational for peasants and workers who in fact found that this met their needs etc. ). The Provisional Government did not have much success here, but as Sheila Fitzpatrick has shown, the Bolsheviks, despite a much greater sensitivity to the issues still faced enormous difficulties in trying to use education to transform the culture of peasant and worker alike.[46]

In religious affairs, we may cite the Law on Freedom of Conscience of July 14, 1917 and the establishment of a Ministry of Religion to replace the Holy Synod.[47] Government and church leaders alike envisioned a revitalization of the Orthodox church through completion of the administrative, educational and social reforms begun during the nineteenth century.[48] Again, we see ambivalence on the government's part- a failure to address directly the religious dimension of popular culture and to consider the full implications of that culture for the goals of its revolution.

One could cite a whole range of other cultural activities undertaken by the government during 1917:[49] the use of plenipotentiaries instructors and commissars to prepare the population for the elections to self- government organs and the Constituent Assembly; plans to create tea rooms, reading rooms, lecture halls, the export of cultural exhibitions to the countryside, the use of state

theaters and orchestras to bring high culture to the new "democratic" audiences, sponsorship of contests and competitions for new people's hymns, support for the so- called concert-meeting at which speeches by government and soviet officials were mixed with the honoring of revolutionary heroes and participants, the singing of the marseillaise and other hymns and the evening's normal artistic program; support for the creation of "new revolut ionary works in the democratic spirit"; upgrading of artistic education of all sorts; the preservation of the monuments of the past along with the abolition of many Tsar's holidays and symbols; the new orthography; the use of "shock theater troupes" of drafted actors at the front to build morale; attempts to balance the desire for self- management and autonomy on the part of artists with the unavoidable participation of the state; the ambivalent use of the movie industry to make propaganda films ( here the PG very much misunderstood the vast potential of film as a cultural medium, a surprising fact given that by 1917 the movies were the most popular of all forms of urban mass entrtainment ).[50]

In the midst of these kinds of initiatives and haphazard activities, other groups were organizing to promote culture.[51] As mentioned earlier, artistic unions of all varieties were created during 1917, and the soviets themselves- and the Bolshevik party supported their own cultural apparats. Many of the organizations and conflicts in the cultural sphere during the early soviet era had their origins during 1917. The same tensions would exist between artistic freedom and the role of the state- and Bolshevik leaders themselves were reluctant to chose between the high culture of the past and the militancy of <u>proletkult</u> as the truly revolutionary

approach to culture change. As was the case for the Provisional Government, the institutions and culture ( the structures ) that were to be transformed exerted their own powerful influence on the genesis of government cultural policy. It was impossible to build hegemony ( in the Gramscian sense ) without the use of state power ( as the Provisional Government never learned ), and the use of state power called forth patterns of hierarchy and domination similar to the worst excesses of traditional ministerial government.

According to Gramsci, "the ruling class reaffirms its hegemony through the mediation of culture."[52] The hegemonic class requires the mediation of culture to attain the "political, intellectual and moral leadership over allied groups." (hegemony) It is the moment when a class becomes aware of extra- economic links to other sectors of society, a moment when the corporate interests of a purely economic class are transcended. It is a purely political moment when superstructure clearly dominates ( the political and the cultural (myth, symbol etc.) and unity is achieved by the mediation of an ideology that provides a moral unity that spreads throughout society. Despite its many accomplishments, the Provisional Government failed in its cultural work to create that hegemony and its higher cultural and moral synthesis. Yet the problem of culture would remain as a legacy to the Soviet regime as a necessary target for the makers of a new society and new men and women even as it determined the parameters of the effort.