GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS
1917 saw not one but two revolutions in Russia.

The seeds of the second Revolution in October were sown in the confused outcome of the first Revolution in February.

Writers were not directly involved in the revolutions in the way they were in the 1916 Easter Rising, for example – although Maxim Gorky was involved on the fringes. There is, however, a tremendous body of literature – prose, poetry, polemic and non-fiction – arising out of Russia 1917.

**The February Revolution**

There is something almost Herculean about the Tsar’s ability to refuse reality while his capital went up in flames, his police fled, his soldiers rebelled, and his officials, his own brother, implored him to do something, anything.

While the February revolution seemed to break out spontaneously, without any real leadership or formal planning, the continuing disaster at the front, coupled with food shortages, were the major contributor to the collapse of the Tsarist regime. The underlying discontent with the Tsar erupted into mass protests against food rationing on 23 February.

On 27 February matters came to a head. For the first time soldiers sided with the people. The tide turned when disaffected soldiers from the city’s garrison joined the people demanding bread, and angry industrial workers. Petrograd fell into chaos, and three days later Tsar Nicholas II abdicated, bringing to an end the Romanov dynasty, and the Russian Empire. The Tsar’s council of Ministers was replaced by a Russian Provisional Government under Prince Georgey Lvov, although Aleksandr Kerensky held the real power from late February to the autumn of the year.

More than 1,300 people were killed in February. The role of mutinous soldiers – and sailors from the Kronstadt garrison – set the tone for the rest of 1917.

**Bolsheviks vs Mensheviks**

At the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party held in London in 1903, Lenin succeeded in having a majority of his choices elected to the Party’s Central Committee. Majority in Russia is bolshevist, minority is menshevist, giving birth to these iconic terms ‘Bolshevik’ and ‘Menshevik’.

**St Petersburg or Petrograd**

Tsar Peter the Great named the city St Petersburg (Sankt Petersburg in Russian). On the outbreak of World War I, the Imperial government renamed the city Petrograd, meaning “Peter’s City”, to rid the name of the German words Sankt and Burg.

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**Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>23 February</td>
<td>Revolution starts at Saratov. Women’s strikes spread. White-dominated attempt to restore order collapses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Nicholas II abdicates; Provisional Government announced.</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Lenin writes ‘What is to be Done?’; Kharkov controversy.</td>
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**Culture / Visual & Performing Arts**

Siberian Symphony Orchestra: The Siberian Symphony Orchestra traces its history back to the Siberian region. The orchestra was founded in 1936 and has since become one of Russia’s leading orchestras. The orchestra has a long history, but it is the present-day ensemble that is truly unique. The orchestra has recorded many albums, and its music has been played in concerts around the world.

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**Library Resources**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork City Library</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

Events through 1917

"Rough sandpaper has polished all our words." Mikhail Kuzmin, poet

Aleksandr Kerensky was Minister of War and the most powerful figure in the government set up after the February Revolution. The so-called ‘Kerensky Offensive’ in June seemed to promise success in the War, but this was short-lived. At home the spread of soviets (Russian word for Councils) encouraged long-suppressed peasants to try and take power into their own hands, and to get even with landowners. They took over meadows, ‘private’ woods, while paying only the profit they felt was fair for seeds. At the same time the Empire’s minorities saw their chance. In the spring and early summer of 1917 nationalist congresses in the Caucasus mountains, in predominantly Muslim lands in Central Asia, and among the Buddhist people of eastern Siberia, agitated for autonomy, not for outright independence.

The never-ending slaughter at the front was driving opinion to the left. July was a torrid month, in the words of Arthur Ransome, present in Russia for the whole of 1917:

‘One lives the whole time in an atmosphere of mental conflict of the most violent kind.’

On 3 July a protest march by Bolshevik sympathisers led to extreme violence in central Petrograd, aggravated by a counter demonstration by right-wing ‘Black Hundreds’. On 4 July a train carrying Lenin and his small party of workers and supporters crossed from Finland (part of the Empire) into Russia proper.

As the year went on it was the Bolsheviks who were the most effective in seeking ‘Peace, Land and Bread’ the core demands of the mass of the people.

“The masses, in so far as they were organized, were organized by the Bolsheviks and followed them... Without them, the committee was impotent... it could only have happened the time with appeals and idle speeches.”

Sukhanov, a non-Bolshevik socialist writer.

Stikes broke out – postal workers, milliners, factory workers of all types – leading to economic chaos. Kerensky sealed his own fate by trying – and failing – to suppress those political forces to his left.

Red October

“Put the locomotive in top gear and keep it on the rails” Lenin

The Congress of Soviets, based in the Smolny Institute, by late autumn the most powerful body in Russia, began its sitting in late October. 25 October started as a normal day, most trains were running, most shops stayed open. At midday armed revolutionary soldiers turned up at the Winter Palace. That night, and into the early hours of 26 October, a large body of soldiers took over the Winter Palace, ‘stormed’ it was far too strong a word, they just turned up, entered, and with minimal opposition took over the seat of the Russian government.

The Bolshevik takeover was almost complete and the non-Bolsheviks in the Congress were left powerless. Martov, a former ally but now an opponent of Lenin, shouted at those present in the Congress,

‘One day you will understand the crime in which you are taking part.’

Realising his impotence, he walked out after this statement.

Whatever one’s views on the success or otherwise of the October Revolution, and the following seven decades, it remains one of the most important events in human history.

Within days of the takeover of the Winter Palace the new revolutionary government had introduced workers’ control of production, peasants’ control of the land, equal rights for women and men, maternity support, the decriminalisation of homosexuality, free and universal education, a change in the soul as much as in the factory... according to Lunacharsky, the first Soviet People’s Commissar responsible for culture and education.

Timeline

Politics

July: General strike, breaking bread cult, workers and peasants seize factories in Petrograd for 10 days. Lenin named leader.

Second Provisional government under Kerensky in Petrograd.

August – Bolsheviks take over Petrograd and Moscow Soviets.

September – Bolsheviks declare civil war.

24 October – Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee seizes control of Petrograd’s transport systems, telegraph communications and printing factories and overthrows Provisional government.

26/27 October – Bolsheviks take control of the Winter Palace seat of the Provisional government.

November – Lenin returns from exile in Switzerland.

Literature

June/July – Tractorielle (1894) - Lenin


September – Alexander Berkman’s pamphlet about Lenin: The End of Anarchism.

October – Maximov, writings on the 33rd anniversary of the 1905 revolution.

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26/27 October – Bolsheviks take control of the Winter Palace seat of the Provisional government.

November – Lenin returns from exile in Switzerland.

December – Congressional election.

January 1918 – Alexander Berkman writes the Forward.

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February 1918 – Lenin’s pamphlet The Two Worlds.

Cultural / Visual & Performing arts

November – Congress of soviets in Petrograd.

December – Revolution begins in Petrograd.

January – nationalisation of all imperial palaces including the Winter Palace in Petrograd.

August – Rachmaninov’s last performance in Russia takes place in Paris.

September – 33rd anniversary of the 1905 revolution.

October – Anarchist Leftheris Kipris, turner of future Situationists calls the conference of provocateur writers and radicals that gets on.

October – Revolutionary Cultural Organisation is formed, led by: Alexander Bogdanov, philosopher, physician and scientific fiction writer.

November – Winter Palace in Petrograd becomes a state museum.

December – Bolsheviks take over the Winter Palace, storming it... forever.

Bolsheviks. Troops guarding the Smolny Institute.

"Bolsheviks, troopers guarding the Smolny Institute.”

The Winter Palace: the large white-dotted block at bottom, view from the Bolshevik Russian Government.

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SILVER AGE POETS

AMONG THOSE THAT LEFT

David Buriuk
1882 – 1967
Considered a poetic troubadour, in 1900 the Russian Academy of Futurist Poetry established the annual David Buriuk Prize for experimental poetry.
He was co-author (along with Kruchenykh, Mayakovsky and Rosenstock) of the future manifesto A Step in the Face of Public Taste: In 1917 Buriuk, Mayakovsky and Kamenetsky opened the Poets’ Café.
His brother was drafted into service in 1914, and died in Sambor in 1917. Within months Buriuk, the father of Russian Futurism, began his travels, which brought him through Siberia, Japan and Canada. He arrived in the United States in 1922 and was allowed to visit the Soviet Union only in 1956 and 1965.

Zinaida Gippius
1869 – 1945
A critic of tsarism she welcomed the February Revolution and denounced the October Revolution and emigrated to Poland, France and Italy. The events of October 1917 led to Gippius severing all ties with most of those who admired her poetry, including Blok, Bryusov and Bely.
"The Germans collected a whole bunch of these miscellaneous foreigners, gave them a whole train, and said to the poet not to shift to German soil and what's more, that the country's end is near. On April 19 1917, he wrote, "I felt as if a stone pillow fell on you to strangle... Strange what—it the city? The country? No, something much, much bigger." Diary, 26 October 1917
"I'mker 1200 officers killed, legs severed, brains taken off"— 23 February.

"In Moscow, the government censors shut down—for being irremediably tainted with Constitutional-Democratic Party codes, the banned ones."— 17 March.

Among those that stayed

Anna Akhmatova
1889 – 1966
Born to an aristocratic family, this poet of the Silver Age anticipated the afflictions that awaited her in the Soviet state yet she never considered emigration a viable option. Her work was condemned and censored by Stalinist authorities and she is notable for choosing not to emigrate. Although she was still conscious in the 1930s she was allowed to travel and, in November 1960, after visiting Oxford, Akhmatova suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized. She was moved to a sanatorium in Moscow in the spring of 1966 and died of heart failure on March 5, at the age of 76.

Thousands attended the two memorial ceremonies which were held in Moscow and in Leningrad. After being displayed in an open coffin, she was interred at Krasnaya Cemetery in St. Petersburg.

A voice came to me. It called out conversationally.
It said, "Come here,
Leave your head and sinful hand;
Leave Russia forever,
I will wash the blood from your hands,
Raze out the black stain from your heart.
... I cannot enter it without it...
I covered my ears with my hands,
So that my sorrowing spirit
Would not be stained by those shameful words.
— When in suicide anguish, trans., Jane Kenyon

When Gumilev was murdered by the Cheka for the fabricated Taganrog conspiracy, despite Goriy getting a release order for Gumilev personally from Lenin, Akhmatova wrote:

Traces of men all things in the dark,
Leads noontide to the moor.
There’s an anxious knock behind the wall.
A ghost, a third or a rat.

The widespread worship of her memory in Soviet Union today, built on an artist and an uncompromising human being, has, for as far as I know, no parallel. The legend of her life and underlying passive resistance to what she regarded as unanswerably of her country and herself, transformed her into a figure 1. Not merely in Russian literature, but in Russian history (in the twentieth century).
—Vladimir Nabokov

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ANDREI BELY
1880 – 1934
The philosopher Mikhail Solomyayev wrote: "Bely is the poet who first makes sense of the modern world." Bely's first three books of verse are his most important contributions to poetry. He pioneered a new mythology with images of the descent of Russian life using a somber poetic philosophical lyricism.

He supported the Bolsheviks rise to power and later dedicated his efforts to Soviet culture. He propounded the idea of an avant-garde led by an avant-garde poet and the rejection of traditional forms. He was considered the foremost poet of the Russian avant-garde, a poetic avant-garde and a leading representative of Russian modernism.

Russia, established in 1978 by the largest selection literary Journal in Leningrad, to recognize excellence in prose, poetry, and theory.

Alexander Blok
1880 – 1921
Perhaps the most important poet of the Silver Age. In May 1917 Blok was appointed as a stenographer for the Extraordinary Commission to investigate illegal actions of police Ministers and to transcribe the interrogations of those who knew Rasputin.

Blok enthusiastically welcomed the Russian Revolution, considering it an outburst of creative power and experienced a boost in creativity which was covered with his best known poems: The Twice (November 1918) and The Synagogue (early 1918).

Over a million copies of The Twice were sold in the first year and it was even prohibited in some countries. After a short time Blok began to diverge from the Bolshovo and their methods of governing and soon he even stopped composing poetry. From 1918 to 1921, he worked as an editor, translator, publisher and theatre worker in different government organisations and publishing houses.

By 1921, he claimed he had lost his faith in the wisdom of humanity. He grew pensive and Goriy wrote to Andrei Lermontov: "Andrey is Russia's best poet. If you asked him to go abroad and he did not answer you and your country will be guilty of his death." His health deteriorated sharply and he died before he could go abroad.

Our sons now gone to serve the Reds to serve the Reds to serve the Reds.
To get the bourgeoisie
We'll start a like a worldwide life, and drink it in blood.
The good Lord bless us
— You later bitterness, biting banter,
Deadly boredom.
This is how I will spend my time.
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Is there anywhere else where poetry is so common a motive for murder?"

AMONG THE POETS THAT STAYED

Nikolai Gumilyov 1886 – 1921
He established the Guild of Poets (Acmeists) along with Sergei Gordeyev.
During the Russian Revolution, Gumilyov served in the Russian Expeditionary Corps in Paris. Despite advice to the contrary he returned to Petrograd where he published new collections, Fomakob and donjole, and finally divorced Almazova in August 1918.
In 1920 he co-founded the All-Russia Union of Writers.
He was arrested on fabricated charges alleging participation in monarchist conspiracies known as "Petrolejgrad military organization" or Zagoretsev conspiracy on August 3, and murdered by the Cheka on August 25 1921.
The executioner, with a face like an usher, red-shafted, stout as an ox,
has chopped off my head, along with the others,
it lies at the bottom of a slippery well.
(from The Lost Train translated by Boris Dralyuk)

Oslip Mandelstam 1891 – 1938
He had the reputation for being the poetry that his generation and intently supported the Revolution. He was a supporter of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and opposed the Bolshevik seizure of power. His close ties with the Socialists without identifying himself wholly with Bolshevik methods or goals and became disillusioned by the increasing demands of the regime for poetry to serve the political and collective, rather than the personal and the human.
"Only in Russia is poetry necessary. It is not pacified. Can there anywhere else where poetry is so common a motive for murder?"
In 1934 he was arrested six months after setting his pet dog Del to Stalin and on December 27 1938 he died in a transit camp near Vladivostok.
Nadezhda Mandelstam wrote memoirs about her life and times with her husband in Hope against Hope and Hope Abandoned.

Vladimir Mayakovsky 1893 – 1930
"Mayakovsky was the best and most talented poet of our Soviet epoch... Indefatigable in his memory and to his work a crime..."
Stalin
Mayakovsky welcomed the revolution and was an admirer of Lenin. He ran the poet's Cafe with Bukovski in Moscow in 1919/1920. Designed a propaganda poster for the Bolsheviks during the Civil War and wrote and starred in three silent movies in 1919 and wrote a 1050 line epic on the death of Lenin. Yet his relationship with the regime was tumultuous and he was consistently critical of the leaders of the Soviet system.
The poem "Writing To the Tsar: About Poetry" (1926) was sent with scorn by the literary establishment.

Tsitian Tabidze 1895 – 1937
Tsitian Tabidze, simply referred to as Tsitiani was a Georgian poet and one of the leaders of Georgian symbolist movement.
In 1936 he co-founded the Blue Horison, Tabidze was a close friend of Boris Pasternak who translated his poetry into Russian.
In 1936 he was attacked for his failure to free himself 'from the old traditions and forge closer contact with the people'. On 10 October 1937 Tabidze was expelled from the Union of Georgian Writers and arrested the same day. He was charged for treason and tortured in prison, ramming, with bitter humor, only the 18th century Georgian poet Besiki as an accomplice in his anti-Soviet activities. Then he was killed by the NKVD.
A Poor Poet
Dear reader, if you want to know me, listen to my poems.
I no longer hear their melody.
You can have these words, if you wait.
Suffredly, pain strikes me.
The words inside me sing.

Marina Tsvetaeva 1892 – 1941
She studied at the Sorbonne at 16, self published her well received first collection Vecherni Album (Evening Album) in 1910 and two years later she married Sergei Eichen. She wrote the epic verse cycle satedlya Strom ("The Decampment of the Skoie") about the civil war, glorifying those who fought against the communists.
In 1919, she placed both of her daughters in a state orphanage, mistakenly believing that they would be better fed there. Mayakovsky and Tsvetaeva remarried but his tima died there of starvation in 1929.
She left Russia in 1927 to live in poverty in Pauze, Berlin and Paris where she corresponded with Pasternak and Rilke. In Paris she contracted tuberculosis before returning to Moscow in 1939. She was looked on with suspicion, her husband was shot in 1941 and her daughter was imprisoned for eight years (released only after Stalin died).
In August 1941 unable to find a job and without any means to support herself and her son she hanged herself.
Shostakovich set six of Tsvetaeva's poems to music.
"Among the dust of bookshops, wide dispersed
And never purchased them.
Yet more similar, where the verse can write.
Its tone will come."

Sergei Yesenin 1895 – 1925
Born to a peasant family, he began to write poetry when he was aged nine. In 1920 he served in the military as an ordinary in the Sanitats train and defected from the army shortly after the Revolution of 1917.
In 1922 Yesenin married the dancer Nadezhda Duncan and accompanied her on a tour of Europe. Then in 1924, he published a series of travel books, received a great deal of publicity in the world's press. Yesenin returned to his homeland in 1924.
Yesenin was at first thrilled by the October Revolution and truly hoped it would lead to a better future for the peasants. These hopes crystallised in the collection Impirno (1918). Lines in "The Broom, October Day, Cursed Me", "Yesenia" represented his disappointment with the results of the revolution, his love for the poetic drama Pygmalion (1921-22).
Yesenia led the spirit of the past and glorified rebellious 18th-century peasant leaders. Confessions of a Hothead (1920), written in the same period, revealed a newly emerged side of Yesenin's personality: provocative, wedge, wounded and anguished.
He founded the publishing house Labor Company of the Artists of the Word in September 1928.
In 1921 he married Toldy's granddaughter but at the end of December that year he had found dead (starved to death) in a remote location in the Ural Mountains. The Bolsheviks' subsequent investigation into the circumstances of his death found no sign of foul play and he was cremated on the same spot.
Pepelev, in his biography of Yesenin, suggested that he killed himself and the case was closed.
Although he was one of Russia's most popular poets and had been given an elaborate funeral by the State, most of his writings were banned by the Kremlin during the reign of Joseph Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin. However Babusia's criticism of Yesenin contributed significantly to the banning. Only in 1966 were most of his works republished.

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GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

FOREIGN WITNESSES

It did not matter much that the British and French ambassadors in Petrograd spoke no Russian, since the court language was French and ministers also spoke German or English. A few foreign writers were in Russia in 1917 and they wrote about their exciting experiences in letters, diaries, dispatches, articles, memoirs and novels.

William Somerset Maugham 1874-1965

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) was sent to Russia in 1916 after his marriage to Cowdrey's first cousin, Ramsden. He investigated Gorky (for the Charles Scribner's Sons Press) in the years prior to the revolution and his book, *A Child of the Jago*, was published in 1922.

Maugham believed, perhaps naively, that his mission might have succeeded. He was sent with £3,000 to support the Russian government prepare the Bolshevik revolution and keep Russia in the war against Germany.

Maugham received valuable help from Alexandra (Gasha) Kropotkin, the lovely, kind-hearted daughter of the notorius anarchist Prince Peter Kropotkin, and from Boris Savinkov, the editor of *Vestnik Bolsheistva*, and from Dr. Kropotkin, the director of the Institute of Media in Petrograd. Maugham wrote to his wife, Nina, in February 1916:

He thought Kropotkin was a man of action, not a leader whose views did not permit disagreement and whose opponents were more than his allies. Maugham also believed that the situation in Russia was open, out of hand, and that nobody proposed an organised support by the Allies could possibly stem the rising tide of Bolshevism.

In 1933 he told Luckhart that he had been sent to Russia because of greater resources and power. He could have made the Bolshevism row more impossible.

Arthur Ransome 1884-1967

Arthur Ransome (1884-1967), in his thirties, learnt to read and speak Russian.

"Ransome was a Don Quixote with a waistcoat, a sentimentalist, who could always believe in the functionality of a well-fitting suit. He was a passionate social reformer, whose imagination had been fired by the revolution. He was an excellent social reformer and he was a frequent and frequent contributor to the presses of the greatest value. An incorrigible romanticist, who could spin a fairy tale out of nothing. He was an awkward and good-natured companion." - Luckhart on Ransome.

Ransome came under fire in March and said he felt like "a frightfully obnoxious squire" in a London ashram who cannot help imagining the primitics of the peasants.

Ransome saw Lenin arrive and was welcomed by the crowd at the Finland Station in Petrograd. Ransome predicted that a Bolshevist revolution would take place in January 1918. In October 1917, he returned to England to assassicate his political views and instead the long-awaited war ended.

Returning to Russia in December, Ransome saw Trotsky every day and began an affair with the Communist's secretary, Evdokia Shapenko. He eventually left Russia with her as his companion and married her in 1924.

In January 1918, he advised the government to establish diplomatic relationships with the Bolsheviks and use them to defeat the Germans instead of invading the country and trying to overthrow them. He was then considered a dangerous friend and suspected of disloyalty by the British intelligence services.

Ransome began to shift his allegiance from Trotsky and became a close friend of the powerful Polish-born leader Karl Radek, who had been on the train with Lenin from Zinich to the Finland Station. Even after Russia signed the treaty, Ransome remained vehemently and insisted that it was only an expedient measure: "Every step taken against the Soviets helps Germany. Russia is temporarily occupying a separate peace. If the Soviet power is overthrown, that peace may be permanent!"

His friend Albert is a British officer, who commented on the Russian soldiers: "The old fools who governed England had rejected the friendship of democratic Russia and driven her to make peace with Germany."

After returning to England, Ransome used his imagination more fruitfully and wrote the highly successful series of children's books that began with *Swallows and Amazons* (1930).

Hugh Walpole 1884-1941

Hugh Walpole (1884-1941) initiated a successful journalistic appointment in Moscow, reporting for the *Saturday Review* and *The Daily Mail*. A foe of Cross volume, he sought to read and speak Russian when he was appointed as a Russian officer in the Romanov Secret.

He desperately wrote to his mentor and idol, Henry James: "The words should not end. I got no news of the war because I couldn't read Russian, the food was all sweets and cigarettes, and I was looking beyond belief. I felt too that I was utterly useless."

During the March revolution, Walpole heard a "terrific noise of firing and shooting" went to our windows and saw the revolutionary mobs pour down our street.

About two thousand soldiers, many civilians armed, started towards the town. Suddenly, giving the streets as they passed:

November 7 brought the outbreak of the revolution and Walpole described the tumultuous scene in his diary:

"The latest news that Krementsov has notified the Bolsheviks and arrested their committee members has reached the town. News of the writing that the Bolsheviks are the upper hand. Firing in the evening. Shelling of Winter Palace. Learn as if it is to be ready for the whole town in bands of Bolsheviks. Fighting breaks out in the streets. Souvenir shot is heard by the soldiers."

His book, The Secret City, won the inaugural James Tait Black Memorial Prize. On 7 November, he left Petrograd as he was appointed to a post at the Foreign Office in his Department of Information.

Maugham satirised him in *Cakes and Ale* (1930) as Ailroy Kear, a pulpy melodiosity with a bogus reputation.

Robert Bruce Lockhart 1887-1970

Robert Bruce Lockhart (1887-1970), in his thirties, a diplomat who spoke Russian fluently and with an excellent accent.

Lockhart, who wrote as Nicholas Boris, "was one of the most democratic statesmen, of his period of service, and had much of the spirit of the men of the Progressive Movement". Morda Nulliberg confirmed his diplomatic skills and thought he was perfect for the plot: "Lockhart was intelligent, he was Russian, he was observed, he knew how to cultivate contacts, he had met and been important with so many friends everywhere."

He accurately predicted the revolution in March 1917, and he also gave a local account of the main causes of the revolution.

"I had excellent sources of information... I had friendly relations not only with the leading lights of the Moscow intelligentsia, but also with the big industrialists. I knew intimately the editors of the Moscow newspapers, and had immediate access to the Prefect of Moscow." Morda Nulliberg confirmed his diplomatic skills and thought he was perfect for the job.

"Lockhart was intelligent; he was Russian, he was observed, he knew how to cultivate contacts, he had met and been important with so many friends everywhere."

He accurately predicted the revolution in March 1917, and he also gave a local account of the main causes of the revolution.

"It seemed impossible that the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat could ever be liquidated without further bloodshed. When this clash will come no one knows, but the outcome for the war is full of foreboding."

When the November revolution, the city government was overthrown. "The same day life in Petrograd continued more or less normally. Shops and Government stayed open, and the surface there was little indication that Russia had passed a decisive turning-point in its history."

In September 1918, Lockhart was accused of plotting to assassinate Kerensky, and condemned to death. The following month he was exchanged for the Soviet diplomat Maxim Litvinov.
GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

William Gerhardie 1895-1977
William Gerhardie (1895-1977), a native speaker of Russian, in his twenties and a soldier. Gerhardie actually witnessed both the March and November 1917 revolutions in Petrograd.
In March he reported: "The revolution had already broken out. The (British) Admiralty had just witnessed the landing of the American by a clandestine crew. The soldier's oborog was going over to the revolution. Sailors' shots, and now and then machine-guns, were heard from various quarters of the city."
The rebels "all seemed drunk with the revolution. Shots were heard everywhere and then, mainly fired in the air, whilst the Czar's Guard had gone up in flames."
When the real revolution exploded in November, Gerhardie merely noted, "Barrikades appeared in the streets. Bridges were being destroyed. Lenin's (or riding) revolutionaries became familiarly confused. Bolsheviks according to Gerhardie, "where like real gentlemens and there is really no actual danger living in this place. The whole thing is a Gilbert and Sullivan Comic Opera."

Louise Bryant 1885-1936
Louise Bryant (1885-1936), the left, for Petrograd in August 1917.
Amongst her interviewees were Katherine Beskovitch, the 'grandmother of Revolution', and Maria Danilovna NKVD, who had been tortured and imprisoned after the 1955 revolution. She interviewed the British Ambassador and Aleksandr Kolchak, who was the only woman in the Bolshevik cabinet.

Bessie Beatty
Bessie Beatty interviewed Leon Trotsky, and members of the Women's Battalion, whose courage and strength inspired her.
Her book about that trip, "The Red Heart of Russia", was published in 1918. "My heart was at a great moment, and it was great," she wrote of her time in Russia.

Morgan Philips Price
Morgan Philips Price, a correspondent for the Manchester Guardian and one of the few Englishmen in Russia during all periods of the Revolution.
Although this Bolshevik sympathiser accused him of an insidiously, perhaps of the turn of the Russian Revolution. The process he was writing about, was one of the most important of the Russian Revolution. The process he was writing about, was one of the most important of the Russian Revolution.

John Reed 1887-1920
On October 30, 1917, Reed interviewed Alexander Kerensky: "The Russian people are suffering from economic fatigue - and from disillusionment with the Allies. The world thinks that the Russian Revolution is just beginning."
It was the last statement that Kerensky made before being forced to go into hiding.
By November 1917, Reed spent time with Lenin. "A short, sturdy figure, with a big head set down on his shoulders, bald and sunburnt eyes, a snobbish nose, wide, generous mouth, and heavy black eyebrows," he described him.

Emmeline Pankhurst
Pankhurst remembered her in Russia, which she knew in June. She told one crew: "I came to see the men and women who kept out the war in the North Country, and that is not the health of which you may suffer. But the whole is a political revolution, and I believe the health of which you may suffer."
In August, she went with her children and her health, to see Russia. She told the New York Times that she was the "biggest fraud of modern times."

Florence Harper
Florence Harper arrived in time to dodge revolutionary bulletins on the streets of Petrograd in February 1917. Left for the UK in August, departing on the same boat as Emmeline Pankhurst.

Donald C. Thompson
Donald C. Thompson wrote the piece about Lenin and "Two Men Named Lenin" who came from New York, Today. He found every man named Lenin, he does not have to accept them. Lenin was a Russian, he expected to be the next Tsar.

Arno Dosh-Fleurot
Arno Dosh-Fleurot wrote "Through War to Revolution: The Experiences of a Newspaper Correspondent in War and Revolution 1914-1920" and claimed to have been the first to use the term "Red Terror" in the American Press.
These were not the only foreigners in Russia at the time, he is to begin a book, "Red and White, Lenin and Trotsky," making his references to the many that the Soviets held Petrograd and Moscow: "The story of Trotsky, "Chinese, German and Russian" regimes in 1919, there were some 200 Chinese troops in the Crimea. There is a 1922 short story, "China Story" by Michael Begnold, about a Chinese merchant in the Red Army.
1917 was one of the most turbulent periods in modern Russian history. The autocratic rule of the Tsars ended when Vladimir Lenin and his socialist Bolshevik party swept to power after the October revolution. At first the avant-garde welcomed and supported the revolution. Writers and artists embraced this brave new world with passion and verve and produced some of the most exciting works of art and literature of the post-World War I era - everything seemed possible. However, within a short space of time this freedom and euphoria fell victim to Bolshevik ideology and propaganda. As early as 1921 there were intimations of censorship and a desire on the part of the state for artists and writers to conform to a Marxist view of culture, thus stifling artistic creativity. The poet Alexander Blok died in this year and his death symbolised the death of the revolution. As a result, many writers emigrated and even those that stayed in Russia and who initially supported the Bolsheviks were severely constrained and subject to mass censorship.

"Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes, without any restrictions. But every voluntary association (including the party) is also free to expel members who use the name of the party to advocate anti-party views. Freedom of speech and the press must be complete. But then freedom of association must be complete too. I am bound to accord you, in the name of free speech, the full right to shout, lie and write to your heart's content. But you are bound to grant me, in the name of freedom of association, the right to enter into, or withdraw from, association with people advocating this or that view. The party is a voluntary association, which would inevitably break up, first ideologically and then physically, if it did not cleanse itself of people advocating anti-party views."

AMONG THOSE THAT STAYED

Isaac Babel 1894-1940
A journalist, playwright, translator and short story writer, Babel was best known as the author of the collections Red Cavalry and Odessa Tales. The stories in Red Cavalry are set at the time of the Russian Revolution and the Russian Civil War of 1919. They are narrated by the, the reporteur Lev Trots (based on Babel himself while he served in the cavalry). That work earned him the wrath of his commander Rudnev, who accused him of cowardice. However, his friend Maxim Gorky intervened and supported Babel and he was instrumental in getting Red Cavalry published in 1926.

Odessa Tales are stories about the life of Jewish gangsters before and after the Russian Revolution.

Jorge Luis Borges said of Red Cavalry: “The music of its style contrasts with the almost inexcusable brutality of certain scenes. One of the stories, “Salt”, enjoys a glory seemingly reserved for poems and rarely attained by prose. Many people know it by heart.”

Babel eventually became disillusioned with the Soviet system, in particular collectivization and said “The bounty of the past is gone — it is due to the famine in Ukraine and the destruction of the village across our land”. — Antonina Papanova: At his side, the last years of Isaac Babel, page 18.

In the first congress of the Union of Soviet Writers (1934), Babel noted that he was becoming the “master of a new literary genre, the genre of silence”. He was eventually a victim of the Great Purge becoming an enemy of the people and was executed in 1940.

Maxim Gorky 1868-1936
Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) was one of the founders of Russian literature and socialist realism, was revered as one of the leading intellectuals of the Russian Revolution and was an ardent supporter of the Bolsheviks at the time. However, when his newspaper, Novaya Zhizn (New Life) was subject to censorship, he published a collection of essays critical of the regime — Untermun, thought (1918). He is particularly critical of Lenin for the suppression of free thought — “Lenin and his associates consider it permissible to commit all kinds of excesses — the abduction of free speech and all kinds of excesses — a cold-blooded murder (or a cold-blooded murder) who destroys the honour, the life of the pötroptos.”

Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) (remained until 1921 when he went into exile in Italy but returned in 1922).

Gorky, one of the masters of Russian literature and founder of socialist realism, was revered as one of the leading intellectuals of the Russian Revolution and was an ardent supporter of the Bolsheviks at the time. However, when his newspaper, Novaya Zhizn (New Life) was subject to censorship, he published a collection of essays critical of the regime — Untermun, thought (1918). He is particularly critical of Lenin for the suppression of free thought — “Lenin and his associates consider it permissible to commit all kinds of excesses — the abduction of free speech and all kinds of excesses — a cold-blooded murder (or a cold-blooded murder) who destroys the honour, the life of the pötroptos.”

“Politics is something similar to the lower physiological functions, with the underlying difference that political functions are unaccountably carried out in public.”

Untermun, thought: essays on Revolution, Culture, and the Bolsheviks, 1897-1918

Alexander Serafimovich 1863-1949
Always a defender of the peasants under Tsarist rule and deeply concerned about the plight of Russian Jews, Serafimovich joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. Before he wrote. The iron road in 1914 is a classic novel of the Russian Revolution and Civil War. He wrote stories of revolutionaries, men and women and the miserable lives of Russian peasants in 1912. The novel was based on a real incident involving a Red Army engagement with the White Army; it was later adapted for the stage. Serafimovich became a member of the literary group Poezd in 1902 along with Gorky, Chaim, Birnbaum and others. He also took a great interest in dictating letters and had a particular influence on Mikhail Sholokhov (who followed the Gorky). He spent all his life in Russia, truly committed to the Soviet system, having been awarded the Order of Lenin in 1936. His Goldman Prize in 1943 and other such awards. He died in Moscow in 1949.

Yevgeny Zamyatin 1884-1937 — stayed until 1931
Zamyatin's dystopian novel We had a profound influence on George Orwell who wrote a review of the book and is reported to have said that he "was taking it as the model for his next novel" in Aixensee eighty four. It was the first work banned by Goloskomizdat, the new Soviet censorship bureau, in 1921. It is also thought to have inspired Huxley's Brave New World. Initially a supporter of the Bolshevik regime and collectivist, Zamyatin was overeasily disillusioned by the Soviet Union's censorship and clampdown of the arts after the October Revolution.

Like Orwell's Animal Farm We criticized the communist utopia and as a result Zamyatin was banned and imprisoned until 1931 when Maxim Gorky made an intervention on his behalf — he was released and moved to France where he died six years later.

In the 1930s he was condemned by the Union of Soviet Writers — he resigned his membership as a result saying: “I find it impossible to belong to a literary organization which even if only indirectly, takes part in the persecution of a fellow writer.”

There is no fixed line: revolutions are infinite.”

— Yevgeny Zamyatin, We

True literature can exist only where it is created, not by diligent and trustworthy functionaries, but by madmen, heretics, freaks, dreamers, rebels, and utopians.”

— Yevgeny Zamyatin, A Soviet Heretic: Essays by Yevgeny Zamyatin
GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS:
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

Dovid Bergelson 1884-1952

Nowak, short story writer and novelist, Bergelson, born in the Ukraine and writing initially in Hebrew and Russian and then in Yiddish, was active in advancing Yiddish as a centre of Yiddish culture and was instrumental in the promotion of Yiddish literature in Russia especially after the optimism of the February Revolution.

Hope and joy are evident in his short pieces from Scenes from the revolution written immediately after the February Revolution—

The great day has come, the day of the great holiday of fire wild. Many songs light up and, among them, there is this, the emperor and empress.

The streets were filled with people. Cymbals and tambourines played. Heads crowned with flowers and banners on walls. New signs of happiness, of a life renewed, newly dreamed up.

Extract from The Belye Butyrki from Scenes from the revolution. April/May 1917.

The 1917 revolutions promised equality to Russian Jews, but as this didn’t come to pass and the fact that he found life under the Bolsheviks difficult (no hope for the education or autonomy in the Ukraine), he became highly critical of the Soviet system and was driven into exile in 1921, although returned in 1934.

His most well-known works during the period in exile include Divine Justice, Three-centre Storm days, At the Draper and Materials.

When Bergelson returned to Russia in 1934 he became a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee but his was increasingly anti-Semite Soviet Union he eventually fell foul of the authorities and he and fellow committee members were eventually executed in 1952 under Stalin’s orders (Night of the Murdered Saints).

Teffi [Nadezhda Alexandrovna Lokhvitskaya] 1872-1952

Teffi, journalist, memoirist, short story writer, poet and prose writer, one of Russia’s most loved writers, revered by both Stalin and Lenin (for a time), lived through revolutions and exile and is most famous for her Memoirs from Moscow to the Black Sea. This was her story of the dissolution of Tsarist Russia, the aftermath of the 1917 revolutions and her subsequent journey into exile in 1939. Proceeding critical of the Bolsheviks (stemming from the 1905 revolution) in June of 1917 she wrote—

"Every pickpocket who takes a wallet from some heedless person can now say that he’s a follower of Lenin. Why, even Lenin takes somebody’s else house, a pickpocket takes somebody else’s wallet. The only difference is one of scale. After all, great ships need deep water.”

A few words about Lenin (extract, 1917).

She was a regular columnist for the liberal newspaper Russkoe Slovo (The Russian word) which published articles about both the Tsarist and Bolshevik regimes resulting in the newspaper being closed down by the Bolsheviks in late November 1917. In The Guiltline she describes the Russian bourgeoisie for being out of touch with the realities of the revolution. In We are still living she describes life in Petrograd just after the October revolution—“everything is cold and awful. The electricity is only on for five hours a day... the only people that can pet eggs now are children. Four children are essential to pet eggs between them—once a year. That’s how we live. A lot of people are beginning to think that we aren’t living but quite simply dying. But then, when people are very hungry and very cold and unhappy into the bargain, it’s probably all too easy for them to imagine that they’re dying.”

Despite her efforts and that of her determined fellow journalists to reopen the newspaper under different names all failed and life grew intolerable for her. She went into exile in 1919, settling in Paris in 1920 until her death in 1939.

Alexander Kuprin 1870-1938

By no means a revolutionary but disillusioned with the Tsarist regime Kuprin sympathised with the plight of the Russian peasantry and poor. In 1917 he published two works: Stolpina and Yasha and Lisichkina, neither of which dealt with the social and political upheaval happening at the time.

“Diversity and even confusion characterise his writing (between the revolutions of 1917). While welcoming the freedom brought by the February Revolution he foresaw the excesses that further upheaval might bring and loved how Russia plunged into an orgy ofbloodyshed.” —Nicholas H. Luker (Alexander Kuprin, Penguin, 1978 p345).

After the October Revolution he emigrated to France, although returned to Russia in 1918.
GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS:
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

AMONG THOSE THAT LEFT

Ivan Bunin 1870–1953

Ivan Bunin (1870-1953) – first Russian writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Fiercely critical of the Soviet regime and revolution, in general, Bunin left the Soviet Union in 1920. He also finished his friendship with the (at the time) pro-Bolshevik Gorky in 1927, on account of their opposing political views. In 1925-26, he published Cursed Days, the anti-Bolshevik diary of the Russian Revolution and the civil war. It is a memoir of the times and chronicles the years of revolution. It is graphic in its description of the dangers and nightly lives of the people of Odessa and Moscow. It captures the horrific upheaval of society and the effects of the demise of Tsarist Russia.

"Bunin’s diary (translated into English as "The Struggle for Life," from the Russian "Voina neobychnoi"") is a historical novel which traces the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution and the civil war. The story is based on Bunin’s own experiences as a colorful and controversial figure in Russian literature and politics. "Cursed Days" is a diary of a revolution (extract):"

"...My life has been a struggle against all that is false and evil..."

Enlisting in France in 1890, Bunin wrote articles for the Russian emigre press and published many of his pre-revolutionary works as well as new prose works and collections. His adherence to Lenin and the Bolsheviks never abated.

Mark Aldanov (Mark Alexandrovich Landau) 1888/89 – 1957

Jewish, liberal, born in Kiev, Aldanov remained essentially anti-Bolshevik all of his life, emigrating to France in 1918. Aldanov’s first book, Lenin, was written in French but translated into several languages and was followed by Two Revolutions (1932), a comparison of the Russian and French revolutions. Also a prolific writer of fiction, one cycle of novels was a trilogy about the Russian Revolution – The Iron, The Escape and The Copper. In later years he was nominated six times for the Nobel Literature Prize by Ivan Bunin.

He moved to New York in 1941 and founded the emigre journal The New Review (Pamyat’ Zhitva) with his friend Mikhail Tastin. Other contributors to this journal included Burin, Nabokov, Brodsky and Solzhenitsyn. Along with Nabokov he was one of the most successful Russian writers in America. He returned to Europe in 1947 and died in Nice in 1957. His works were banned in the USSR until 1988.

In 1936, the poet Demian Bedny, whose poetry glorified the 1917 revolution, wrote of Aldanov: "The reactionary (literateur) Aldanov, who writes historical novels which treat the enigmatical movement of mankind from the standpoint of an attained philosophy, has occupied himself of late with writing historical novels and a forthcoming novel and a forthcoming novel and a forthcoming novel and a forthcoming novel, basing himself on a lucid analysis of the budget of Pravda for the year 1917. He attempts to prove that the Bolsheviks did “just the same” as the German money. To be sure, in the process, the multi-millions subsidy is reduced to a very modest amount, but in return, the moral and material equipment of the historian himself rises to its heights..."

New Militant. 26 February, 1936.

Vladimir Nabokov 1899-1977

The last word can be given to Vladimir Nabokov – "If a country exists where for almost a quarter of a century literature has been limited to illustrating the adventures of a firm of ice-cream is hardly credible to people for whom writing and reading books is synonymous with having and voicing individual opinions. But if you do not believe in the existence of such conditions, you may at least imagine them and once you have imagined them you will realize with new purity and pride the value of real books written by few men for few men to read!"

-from an unprintable piece in Soviet Literature in his Introduction to Lectures on Russian Literature – a collection of his lectures given in the 1950s at Wellesley and Cornell Universities.

Although Nabokov’s first poetry collection was published in 1918, while still in his teens, he didn’t write anything of significance until the 1930s onwards, eventually achieving fame as he began to write in English when finally settling in America. Nabokov was strongly anti-Bolshevik – his father was a member of the Provisional Government after the February Revolution, but the family had to flee to Crimea, eventually going into exile in 1919. He had no desire to ever return to the land of his birth and died in Switzerland in 1977.

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GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS: 
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

REVOLUTIONARY POSTERS

"Women workers, take up your rifles" – a poster from the early days of the Civil War, circa 1918, calling the working class women to join armed resistance against the White Guard armies of Tsarism.

"A message to the bayoneted brothers in the White Army trenches" – poster by Alexandre Apollonovitch Benois, November 1917.

"Proletarians of all lands unite, Long live the International Armies of Liberation" – poster by Dmitri Moor for the Western and Neapolitan Red Armies, 1920.

"We are victorious" – a poster commemorating the first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, a Red Army soldier marches through theobby streets of Petrograd on the night of October 25th, 1917.

"Rage on the Throat" by Alexander Apollonovitch, 1918.

"Dear Bitch, we remember your command" – a pacifist poster from 1920, showing a girl minced by adding women of the Soviet Union.

"Long live the People's Dictatorship" by Alexandre Apollonovitch, Petrograd, 1918.

"Communist: with rifles and hammers, let's celebrate red October" – poster by Dmitri Moor, 1920.

"Down with Capital. Long live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" – A poster by Dmitri Moor, published in Petrograd in 1920, celebrating the third anniversary of the October Revolution.

""Revolutionary Posters" by Michael Ancher, 1917.
Michael O’Riordan (1917–2006) was born at 37 Pope’s Quay, Cork City, on 11 November 1917. He was the youngest of five children. He was educated at the North Monastery School by the Christian Brothers and joined the Fianna Éireann Republican scout movement before joining the IRA at a period of intense clashes with the Blueshirts. In 1934, he joined the short-lived left radical republican movement, the Republican Congress where he joined forces with Frank Ryan. In 1937, O’Riordan and Ryan would become a member of the famous ‘Connolly Column’, part of the fifteenth International Brigade on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War.

During seven months of service, O’Riordan reached the rank of corporal, and was a machine-gunner in the battalion’s No 4 company which crossed the Ebro river at Arco on the moonlit night of July 25 1938. The attack took the enemy by surprise, and XV brigade reached the town of Gandesa, where, at the heavily fortified Hill 481 known as “the Pimple”, it was checked by heavy casualties.

In December he was repatriated to Ireland, after the International Brigades were disbanded. In 1938 O’Riordan was offered an Irish Army commission by the Irish Free State but chose instead to train IRA units in Cork. As a result of his IRA activities, which included the attempted rescue of Tomás Óg McCurtain, during “The Emergency”, he was interned without trial by order of the Minister for Finance, Sean T. O’Kelly, on 22 February 1940, and did not regain his freedom until released by order of the Minister for Justice, Gerald Boland, on 9 August 1943.
GRAND DUKES, BOLSHEVIKS AND DRUNKARDS: 
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE WRITERS

IRISH ECHOES

Michael O’Riordain
1917 –2006

With his friend Jim Savage, in 1944, Michael joined the Labour Party and with other friends and former fellow-internees established the Liam Mellows Branch and contested the city council election. In 1945 he was founding secretary of the Cork Socialist Party. Put forward as a candidate, O’Riordain was eliminated only at the last count. After marrying fellow Republican activist, Kay Keohane, they spent their honeymoon visiting IRA prisoners in Parkhurst prison on the Isle of Wight.

The following year he contested a by-election for Dáil Éireann and won 3,180 votes, finishing ahead of Tom Barry. In all he ran for election five times.

He then moved to Dublin where he lived in Victoria St with his wife Kay, continuing to work as a bus conductor and remaining active in the ITGWU.

In the 1950s, he was a pivotal figure in the Dublin Housing Action Committee and the protests against the Vietnam War. In 1966 he attended the International Brigades Reunion in Berlin and was instrumental in having Frank Ryan’s remains repatriated from Germany to Ireland in 1979.

In 1969, O’Riordain was approached by then IRA leaders Séamus Costello and Cathal Goulding to go to Moscow to secure arms for the IRA, but these did not arrive until 1972. His book Connolly Column: The Story of the Irishmen who fought for the Spanish Republic, 1936–1939 was published in 1979.

Later political campaigns by O’Riordain included campaigning for the release of the Birmingham Six. He was also presented with Cuba’s Medal of Friendship by the Cuban Consul to Ireland Teresita Trujillo on behalf of Cuban President Fidel Castro in 2005.

In 1991, O’Riordain’s wife Kay died at their home aged 81. He fell ill in November 2005 and was taken to the Mater Hospital. Soon afterwards he was moved to St. Mary’s Hospital in the Phoenix Park where he spent the final few months of his life, before his death at the age of 88.
The Thomas Ashe Hall
A centre of Radicalism in Cork

Thomas Patrick Ashe was born on 12 January 1885 in Lispole in the Corcoran Dhuibhne peninsula, Kerry. He was a founding member of the Irish Volunteers, and was a member of Conradh na Gaeilge (Gaelic League), and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). He led the Fingal Battalion of the Volunteers in the Battle of Ashbourne, Co Meath during the Easter Rising 1916; this group of Volunteers was the last to surrender when the Rising ended. Released from prison in June 1917 he was re-arrested in August of that year. When he was refused prisoner of war status he went on hunger strike and died on 25 September 1917. His death is recognized as revitalizing the freedom struggle, 18 months or so after the Easter Rising.

The hall was the Sinn Féin election headquarters for the local elections in January 1920, when that party secured a large majority on Cork Corporation. Very soon after this election the councillors voted to rename both Charlotte Quay and Queen Street after Fr. Mathew. In February 1920 around 150 RIC and British soldiers raided the Hall during an Irish language class, arresting four men. The following month the Hall was attacked by RIC, the caretaker and her children were verbally assaulted, the contents and fittings were ransacked, and the building was burned. In December 1920, the night of the Burning of Cork, a bomb or grenade was thrown through a window, causing substantial damage. It was repaired and re-opened in the 1920s.

The Hall remained the Sinn Féin headquarters in the city for more than 70 years. When that movement split because of the Northern Ireland troubles in 1969 / 1970, the Hall remained under the control of the Official arm of the Republican movement, who were the majority in the city at that time.

In the decades since the 1920s, the Thomas Ashe Hall was the hub for many radical groups:
- Sinn Féin party offices and meeting space – later Official Sinn Féin, then Sinn Féin Workers Party, then Workers Party;
- Trade Union meetings;
- Weapons training / drilling for IRA volunteers;
- Cork Volunteers Pipe Band rehearsal room;
- Irish Democratic Youth Movement;
- Cumann na mBan;
- Left wing / Republican bookshop;
- An office for General Tom Barry;
- Temporary shelter for refugees from Northern Ireland at the start of the troubles.

It was at various times a stóin (unlicensed public house), small cinema for radical films, gathering place for marches and demos, Irish language classes, dances and socials, practice room for a ska band (1) and space for karate classes.

The building was sold in 1999. It was refurbished at the beginning of this century as office space and retains the façade it had in its 80 years as a centre of radicalism in Cork.