
NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

EDUARD NIKOLAEVICH BURDZHALOV (1906–1985)

Tucked away on the back page of the 11 January 1986 issue of *Uchitel'skaia gazeta* is a short notification that E. N. Burdzhhalov, a man “committed to the moral ideals of a Communist pedagogue,” had died. Bearing the collective signature of his colleagues at the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute, where Burdzhhalov had taught since 1959, the obituary makes no mention whatsoever of the paramount role Burdzhhalov and his scholarship played in undermining the Stalin cult in Soviet historiography and in establishing new norms for historical writing. The unknowing reader would never guess from reading this obituary that Burdzhhalov had stood at the center of a major historical controversy during 1956 and 1957, when he served as assistant editor of *Voprosy istorii*, the leading Soviet history journal. Nor would the unknowing reader learn that Burdzhhalov had written one of the most significant historical works to have been written in the Soviet Union since World War II and what many scholars, both Soviet and western, consider to be the most authoritative study of Russia's February Revolution of 1917. The purpose of this essay is to help set the record straight.

Eduard Nikolaevich was a true representative of the romantic period of the Russian revolution; his career and fate became inseparably linked to the CPSU already at an early age, when civil war, terror Red and White, and incessant tragedy tore apart the social and political fabric of the old order. Prospects of a new way of life appealed to the young Burdzhhalov who belonged to that generation, educated by the fledgling Soviet state, whose members assumed positions of influence during the tumultuous 1930s. Burdzhhalov was every bit a Stalinist, but by the time Stalin died, Burdzhhalov had gradually come to the conclusion that the party in general, and the historical profession in particular, had deviated from the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. What distinguishes Eduard Nikolaevich from many others of his generation is that he decided to do something about it.

Burdzhhalov was born into a middle-class Armenian family in the colorful Volga city of Astrakhan' in 1906. In 1912 the family moved to Baku and, fleeing the Turks, back to Astrakhan' in 1918. Eduard Nikolaevich enrolled in a local gymnasium, but his secondary education ended soon thereafter. At the age of 13, he began working as a clerk in a military transit camp. That same year he left home and moved into a dormitory for young Komsomol activists. His spirited commitment to the Communist youth movement earned him the nicknames of “Komsomolskii Kirov” (Kirov was in Astrakhan' at the time) and “Komsomol Baby.”

After the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan in 1920, Burdzhhalov returned to Baku with his family and involved himself in the local Komsomol organization. His heroes were Lenin and Shaumian and the twenty-six commissars executed during the civil war. He was not to forget them when he took up his pen to write history, nor was he to forget the oppressed nationalities of the Russian empire, “the prison of nations.” The internationalist slogans of the revolution appealed to him.

In 1925 Burdzhhalov joined the Communist party and in 1926 enrolled in a *rabfak* (workers' faculty) at Moscow University. After completing his secondary education in 1929, he entered the history department at Moscow University, where he studied with E. A. Morokhovets, S. A. Piontovskii, V. P. Volchan, and S. V. Bakhrushin. While still a student, he began what would become a brilliant teaching career by offering courses at the university's *rabfak*, at the Kolkhoz Institute, and in the history department. Although Burdzhhalov wished to continue his education, the party dispatched him to work in the Tula party organization's city committee in 1933 and to teach at the Tula Agricultural School. It was a grim assignment for someone who wished to carry out scholarly research.

Nevertheless, it was in Tula that he met and married a young Jewish worker at the Tula Armament Factory, Gosia Borisovna Plotkina. It was love at first sight. Their son, Feliks, was born in 1936. The Burdzhals enjoyed a happy, mutually sustaining relationship: they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary the year Eduard Nikolaevich died.

Returning to Moscow in 1936, Burdzhals assisted in the publication of *Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR* and wrote his candidate's dissertation, "Proletarskaia revoliutsiia v Azerbaidzhane" (published as *Dvadsat' shest' bakinskikh komissarov*). In 1939 he was appointed assistant head of the department of the history of the USSR at the Central Committee's Higher Party School. During World War II Burdzhals worked as a political lecturer in the Red Army. He received numerous decorations for his service at the front; when the war ended he held the rank of colonel. Following demobilization, he managed the lecturers' group of the Central Committee and served as assistant editor of the Central Committee's tedious propaganda paper, *Kul'tura i zhizn'*. He resumed teaching at the Higher Party School and taught in the Academy of Social Sciences. Many of his lectures, orthodox in every respect, were published between 1940 and 1953.

It is hard to say when Burdzhals came to question the party's—and his own—past. The vicissitudes of the historical profession in the postwar period, in particular the official campaign against "cosmopolitanism" during which some of Eduard Nikolaevich's friends suffered, probably accelerated his intellectual journey away from Stalinism. Before 1953, when he was appointed assistant editor of *Voprosy istorii*, he had already sought to leave the Central Committee apparatus. Stalin's death, moreover, inaugurated a period of rapid change for the historical profession. On the eve of the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, *Voprosy istorii* convoked a conference of its readers, who criticized the shortcomings of Stalinist historiography. Following Khrushchev's Secret Speech at the Twentieth Congress, an editorial in *Voprosy istorii*, written by Burdzhals, called for a party history that would eliminate the "outright falsifications" of the past.

It is against this background that Burdzhals, supported by *Voprosy istorii*'s editor, A. M. Pankratova, published "O taktike bol'shevikov v marte-aprele 1917 goda" (no. 4, 1956), and, in response to the first flood of criticism, "Eshche o taktike bol'shevikov v marte-aprele 1917 goda" (no. 8, 1956). In these articles the author, challenging the twisted account found in Stalin's *Short Course*, argued that before Lenin's return to Russia in April 1917, ideological and tactical confusion and disunity characterized the party leadership. Burdzhals showed that in February and March Petrograd Bolsheviks did not look upon the emerging soviet as a revolutionary organ and that the initiative for forming it had come from the Mensheviks.

Burdzhals was trapped in the difficulties of the de-Stalinization campaign. Critics, for both ideological and personal reasons, attacked him throughout the year. The "Burdzhals affair" ended with a Central Committee resolution of 7 March 1957, "O nedostatkh v rabote zhurnala 'Voprosy istorii,'" and with Burdzhals's dismissal from his editorial responsibilities.

Western observers had no inkling of what had become of Burdzhals after 1957, until he appeared at an All-Union Conference of Historians in December 1962. There, he hammered away at the unacceptable condition of Soviet historiography and pointed to a number of distortions committed by his old enemies. Although under fire after his removal from the editorial board of *Voprosy istorii* (his refusal to accept the Central Committee's criticism in 1957 had almost cost him his party membership), Burdzhals had spent the 1957–1959 period in the Academy of Science's Institute of History, continuing his research on the February Revolution. In 1959 he failed by a close vote to retain his position in the institute and, rather than consent to any of the nonacademic positions offered him, chose to go without work for six months. He eventually received a post at the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, where he taught until his retirement in 1976. It was there that Burdzhals defended his doctoral dissertation and earned the rank of professor. In 1967 volume 1 of his two-part study on the February Revolution, *Vtoraia*

rusaskaia revoliutsiia: Vosstanie v Petrograde, was published; in 1971 the second volume, *Vtoraia rusaskaia revoliutsiia: Moskva, front, periferiia*, came out. The publication of volume 1 shows the extent to which Soviet historiography had gradually come to accept Burdzhhalov's scholarship on the February Revolution, as well as the extent to which the author had support, not only among prominent historians, but also within the party leadership. The Stalin question was a burning one during the first years of Brezhnev's rule, and it was a fortunate time for Burdzhhalov's book to appear. We cannot rule out the possibility that it would not have been published even a year or so later.

Developing ideas explored in his 1956 articles, Burdzhhalov showed that the Bolsheviks did not direct the February Revolution, which was largely a spontaneous affair, but instead were drawn into the movement by the tide of events. Internally divided and taken by surprise, the Bolshevik party was unable to assume leadership of the revolution, created by workers and supported by the local garrison. The Bolsheviks, Burdzhhalov argued, cooperated closely with the Mensheviks and SRs, who also endeavored to overthrow the autocracy. He even treated Trotsky and Martov in an unusually fresh manner.

Following publication of his work on the February Revolution, Burdzhhalov continued to investigate the revolutionary events of 1917, in the hope of writing a book on the party during the April crisis. Before completing this research, he was stricken by Parkinson's disease. After ten years of determined struggle against the illness, he died in Moscow on 31 December 1985.

Burdzhhalov was a complex man, hard-working, intense, modest, honest, generous, witty. He had a powerful presence, which contrasted with his slight frame and size. Eduard Nikolaevich will be missed by family and friends, some of whom disagreed with his stance after 1953, others of whom discreetly approved his behavior because he was courageous enough to pursue his own, and their own, inner promptings.

DONALD J. RALEIGH
University of Hawaii

TATJANA CIZEVSKA, 1924–1986

Tatjana Cizevska, formerly of the University of Illinois and more recently professor of Slavic languages and literatures at Wayne State University in Detroit, died 23 February 1986. She had been ill with cancer for several years. She was born in Paris, France, on 18 June 1924. Her father was the noted Slavic scholar Dmitrii Ivanovich Chezhevskii. Her mother was the late Dr. Lydia Marshak, who practiced dermatology in Chicago for many years. Cizevska's immediate survivor is her maternal aunt Frances Sobotka, who inaugurated the teaching of Russian at the University of Illinois after World War II.

Cizevska had elementary and secondary schooling in Czechoslovakia, Austria, England, and the United States. She came to this country in 1940 and became a citizen in 1946, having meanwhile earned a BA at the University of Chicago, studying history and Greek. In 1949 she earned the MA from Columbia and in 1955 the PhD from Harvard-Radcliffe, both in Slavic languages and literatures. She was primarily a linguist by training, and her principal scholarly interest was Old Russian letters. Her dissertation advisor was Roman Jakobson.

She worked briefly at Syracuse, Georgetown, Washington, Michigan, and Michigan State universities, as well as at the Human Relations Area Files in New Haven, before going to the University of Illinois. She taught there from 1958 to 1965. In 1965 she moved to Wayne State University, where she taught in the Slavic Department and, in the years immediately preceding her death, part-time in classics.

While at Illinois she received in 1960–1961 a grant from the IUCTG for research in the USSR. She also edited the *AAASS Newsletter* from 1963 to 1966. At Wayne State