A SPACE CALLED HOME: HOUSING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EVERYDAY
IN RUSSIA, 1890-1935

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation posits that management of the everyday is a fundamental part of the modern project. Far from being a vague or nebulous concept of what life could be, the management of the everyday was linked to concrete programs, which had a tangible effect on ordinary people and the spaces they lived and existed in. Furthermore, although the management of the everyday could be (and was) deployed by states and other institutions for ideological purposes, the overall concept of managing the everyday cannot be linked to any single ideological movement. As a result, it is possible to trace strong continuities in the management of everyday life, even in cases in which there were deep social, political, cultural, and/or economic ruptures.

I examine the management of the everyday in juxtaposition to the concept of the home in late Imperial and early Soviet Russia. I propose that looking at how the home functioned during the tumultuous revolutionary period offers us a new way to understand everyday life and its continuities, even in times of great social and cultural shift. I argue that reformist and revolutionary movements in Russia placed the ‘home’ and related conceptions of belonging at the center of their campaigns to create a new everyday life, and that these campaigns reveal remarkable degrees of similarity, despite belonging to radically different political traditions. My dissertation examines how these different visions treated the home as lived space, the built environment and the even unbuilt environment, and how residents reacted to, shaped, and resisted these campaigns. Contests and negotiations unfolded in domestic sites and relations such as the kitchen, the landlord-tenant relationship, and nighttime flophouses.
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INTRODUCTION: LIVING IN REVOLUTION

“How do you live in revolution?”¹ The character Ivan Karamazov proposed this question in Fedor Dostoevskii’s 1880 novel, and similar questions have interested scholars in the intervening decades. Since the rise of *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of everyday life)—a movement formed to attempt to understand the German public’s relationship to the Nazi state and its ideology—historians have attempted to turn the everyday into a methodologically viable project. The advantages could be transformative; in his work *The History of Everyday Life*, Alf Lüdtke proposed that such a work could position ordinary people as both the subject and object of history, illustrating how they were shaped by the structures and institutions of history while they themselves shaped those same structures and institutions.² It offered a lens into what these experiences looked like during periods of immense turmoil—the “extraordinary everydayness” that Sheila Fitzpatrick chronicled in her work on Stalinism—as a means of reconciling the grand narratives of history to the lives of ordinary people.³ Most recently, there is a burgeoning wealth of scholarship focused on the lived experience of the (broadly defined) revolutionary period in Russia, which is interested in questions of how people experienced the everyday during tumultuous times.⁴

¹ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Brat’ia Karamazov* (Moscow: AST, 2007), 165. In the quote, Ivan Karamazov uses the word *bunt*, which translators including Ralph E. Matlaw have translated as revolution, although a more accurate version might be rebellion or revolt. Regardless, although the word *revoliutsiia* is not used explicitly, the broad connotations of upheaval and change fit within the broader conception of the Russian revolutionary period, a narrative that my work promotes.
As these works have shown, everyday life was seen as something that could be changed, manipulated, and used—in a word, managed. They have also shown how ordinary people adopted, pushed against, or were indifferent to these attempts at management. However, they have often focused on how this process occurred in terms of massive events, like the rise of totalitarian political parties (such as Lüdtke’s work) or dramatic transformations of major structures like food productions (as Fitzpatrick discussed). To understand how one lives in revolution, it is necessary to also trace the day-to-day and quotidian process. It is necessary to explore the meaning of everyday spaces and processes.

This dissertation posits that management of the everyday is a fundamental part of the modern project. Far from being a vague or nebulous concept of what life could be, the management of the everyday was linked to concrete programs, which had a tangible effect on ordinary people and the spaces they lived and existed in. Furthermore, although the management of the everyday could be (and was) deployed by states and other institutions for ideological purposes, the overall concept of managing the everyday cannot be linked to any single ideological movement. As a result, it is possible to trace strong continuities in the management of everyday life, even in cases in which there were deep social, political, cultural, and/or economic ruptures, such as the October Revolution of 1917. Finally, although those with capital (economic, social or other) were most able to create plans for a new everyday life (and to then put those plans into action), ordinary people were far from uninvolved in the creation of these campaigns, as they shaped, created, and pushed back against the narratives of everyday life that were created in their name.

Russia’s fraught relationship to modernity has been well studied (and often oversimplified), but in the context of the management of the everyday, Russia fully embraced the modern project. In both the late Imperial and early Soviet periods, government officials, municipal workers, and reformers—in a word, planners—saw the everyday as a transformative battleground. Through institutions and organizations on a variety of scales—ranging from local charity groups to municipal organizations to the state—they planned and implemented programs designed to shape the lives of average people. For example, in the Soviet period (which actively embraced the terminology of everyday life, or byt), state-level institutions promoted the creation of a new everyday life (novyi byt), neighborhood and other hyper-local groups formed Cultural-Everyday Life Institutions (kul’torno-bytovie uchrezhdeniia) were involved in creating and running cafeterias, children’s playgrounds, bathhouses, libraries, and more. These programs were focused on urban spaces, because the average Russian city was undergoing massive and rapid urbanization that placed much of its population in a state of perpetual precarity.

At the center of this question over the management of urban everyday life was the “housing question” (in Russia, zhilishchnyi vopros). This was due, in large part, to the massive material deficiencies in housing stock in most Russian cities throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the late Imperial era, planners consistently returned to the same statistics that pointed out how dire the housing situation of the average urban resident was. The inequality of the Russian city could be expressed neatly in charts, which laid out how much space the average resident had (too little), whether it could be considered hygienic through standards like dampness or access to fresh air (usually not), and how many people slept in the same room together (too many). These charts and data points—usually but not exclusively

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5 TsAGM, F. 1495, op. 1, d. 585, l. 8 includes a list of the cultural-everyday life institutions in just the Frunzenskii neighborhood of Moscow.
focused on St. Petersburg/Petrograd and Moscow—created a view of the city as something deeply broken. Although reformers and municipal officials tried to address the problem through individual construction projects, a more systematic solution of the problem seemed out of grasp. After 1917, although the Soviet state had a degree of centralized control that liberal reformers and municipal officials never did, the rhetoric of the housing question often still prioritized individual examples over more systematic ones. Even when referring to transformative projects like the 1935 General Plan, Soviet officials still pointed to small-scale changes; in a speech by Lazar’ Kaganovich, he focused on the story of Mikhail Iakovlevich Bubentsov, a worker who had lived with his family in a squalid basement room before the revolution, who had since been moved into the house of a former English consul in central Moscow.\(^6\)

This dissertation, however, is not focused on the particularities of how the “housing question” was or was not solved. Instead, it is interested in what these campaigns to manage everyday life—and the reactions to them—tell us about the idea of home, and vice versa. As academics of many different regions have pointed out, the idea of ‘home’ is perhaps one of the most provocative notions in multiple languages, precisely because it evokes not only memories of a physical space, but also ideological conceptions.\(^7\) To reflect this interest, in the title of this dissertation, as well as throughout the introduction and the rest of the text, I often use the word ‘home’ to describe the domestic space, instead of housing. In some ways, this inclination is

\(^6\) L.M. Kaganovich, *Za sotsialisticheskuiu rekonstruktsiiu Moskvy i gorodov SSSR* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1931).

\(^7\) The Americanist Linda McDowell writes in her work *Gender, Identity and Place* that “the term ‘the home’ must be one of the most loaded words in the English language—indeed in many languages.” (71) She then goes on to cite Geographer David Harvey’s analysis of the trope of the ideal home in Heidegger's German language work, as well as the French theorist Gaston Bachelard’s analysis as the home as a meeting place of memory and image. See: Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 71-72.
antithetical to the sources themselves, which tend to use the more clinical term “housing stock” (*zhilishchnyi fond*) and measure housing in square meters (or *arshin* or *sazhen’*).

To explore this concept of home, especially in relationship to the management of the everyday, it is useful to begin with a quick overview of the recent literature on housing in twentieth century Russia. Andy Willimott’s work *Living the Revolution* on communes in the early Soviet period touches on this broader significance of the home. As the first word of the title—living—suggests, Willimott firmly positions his work as a contribution to the concept of experience. If communes were, as Willimott argues, more than “fleeting examples of revolutionary utopia,” then an experientially-attuned history of life in them can offer insight into how people built socialism from the ground up. Communes, he notes, have often been relegated to the sidelines in early Soviet historiography because they never became anywhere close to the dominant form of housing. He successfully argues, though, that their impact on Soviet culture far exceeds their number. Communes were a means through which Soviet citizens put their theoretical ideas about socialism into practice. Through communes, they aimed to not only create a “new everyday life” (*novyi byt*, a term for a restructuring of the day-to-day occurrences that is commonly referenced by historians), but also a “new life” (*novaia zhizn’*, a term that implies a transcendence over the past). “I have built communism on the second floor!” exclaims a character in a 1930 play cited by Willimott in the conclusion.⁸

This emphasis on lived experience illustrates how housing needs to be understood as more than the sum of its material parts. Willimott’s communards were often working with dilapidated housing stock in need of major repair, but they used it as a space to build a social

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environment in a specific ideological image. In addition, Willimott focuses heavily on the concepts of new everyday life/novi byt (as well as new life/novaia zhizn’), devoting particular attention to how the communards themselves participated in this process, as well as how they were eventually shut out by state institutions. But because his monograph focuses on a very specific group of people—those who were interested enough in the idea of socialism to attempt to put it into practice on the scale of the everyday—it is hard to take Willimott’s conclusions about these transformations and apply them more broadly. Not all individuals are as ideologically motivated—what happens in terms of the non-commune housing?

Here, Rebecca Friedman’s work on temporality helps to bridge the gap between Willimott’s object of study and my own. In an essay in the forthcoming The Soviet Home: Domestic Ideology and Practice, Friedman uses the concept of dust to explore how temporal layering occurs in domestic time. Like dust settling on to an object, domestic spaces are littered with these pre-attached layers of meaning. Under modernity, people feel the impact of these temporal layers, and interrogate the role that historical time plays in their lives. This example is helpful because it emphasizes that the continuities that exist are not coincidental, but rather a marker of modern time. Furthermore, it is not possible for anyone to shed these temporal layers, even a Soviet state that tried to prioritize the rational and economic in an attempt to get rid of the layers of poshlost’ and meshchanstvo (two hard-to-translate terms that roughly mean banality and petit-bourgeois philistinism). Even in homes that tried to break with what had come before—to stride forward into the novyi byt and novaia zhizn’ (new everyday life and new life, respectively), like those of Willimott’s communards—the past was layered on to the homes like dust. My work, like Friedman’s, emphasizes the continuities across the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, devoting attention to the impact these temporal layers had on everyday
experience. In terms of this dissertation, this temporal layering is crucial for explaining how campaigns to manage everyday day built off of each other, even across ideological divides.

To connect these themes more specifically to the term “home,” we need to move to the late socialist period. Christine Varga-Harris’ recent monograph *Stories of House and Home* is particularly helpful. Writing about the mass-housing program under Khrushchev, she notes that the scope of the program far exceeds the number of apartment units it was able to provide. Even though it produced massive amounts of housing stock, there were still many families that were unable to move out of their older, more crowded housing. But despite these difficulties in implementation—a difficulty that other scholars including Steven Harris, Lynne Attwood, and Mark B. Smith have noted—Varga-Harris argues that the narrative of homecoming retained its resonance. To understand how housing was a "terrain upon which state and populace endeavored to create a viable socialist society," she argues that you need to understand the spaces that surround it, objects contained within it, and ideas people hold for it.10

Taken together, these works provide a clear and well-balanced definition of home in modern Russian history, out of which we can construct a working definition of the term ‘home.’ To begin, ‘home’ needs to have meaning to the people who live in it. Willimott’s communards are devoted to their project because they had an interest in building socialism. It is backwards-looking, not in the sense that it is (necessarily) regressive, but in that it builds layers of meaning based on past experiences and memories. Finally, it is contingent, not only on the physical space surrounding it, but on the objects and items within it. It is, in short, a space of personalized spatial, temporal, and physical attachments.

The concept of the home—an idiosyncratic, even personalized idea—will always be in tension with a desire to manage the everyday. This does not mean that resident’s individual concepts of their home were always in conflict with the visions of planners; indeed, this dissertation will explore many moments of overlap. Rather, what it means is that the management of the everyday is predicated on a structural manner of thinking that is, at its core, impossible to reconcile with the messy concept of home. This tension is at the core of my dissertation.

Finally, as home is a universal category, my project also invites global comparisons. And when Russia is viewed in comparative perspective with Western Europe or the United States for the same period, Russian cities are almost always treated pejoratively, as failures to embrace modern standards of living. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, reformers and officials eviscerated the Russian city in comparison to examples like London, Berlin, Vienna, or New York. 11 In more contemporary scholarship, even deeply nuanced studies of the effects of modernity that focus on lived experience still use Russian cities as almost a foil, a space that embraced a perverted underdeveloped modernism; take Marshall Berman’s *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* as a particularly prominent example. 12 Although Russian and Soviet scholars have pointed to the deep similarities that run between Russia and Europe—David Hoffmann, for example, points to the parallels in state power, mass categorization of populations, and scientism, among others—these points are often only

11 The journal *Gorodskoe delo* (*City Affairs*) was particularly prone to such articles. For example, see the follow: S. I. Rapoport, “Novyi zhilishchnyi zakon v Anglii.” *Gorodskoe delo* 2, No. 1 (Jan 1, 1910): 37-42; K. Pazhitnov, “Zhilishchnye usloviiia rabochego klassa na Zapade i u nas.” *Gorodskoe delo* 2, No. 19 (Oct 1, 1910): 1307-1315; A. Sokolov, “Zhilishchnaia politika organov mestnogo samoupravleniia v Anglii.” *Gorodskoe delo* 3, No. 3 (Feb 1, 1911): 229-237.

mentioned in conversations with other Russianists. Hoffmann’s essay, for example, appears in a collection titled *Russian Modernity*. And even among Russianists, there can exist a tendency to dwell on the themes of shortages, deficiency, and failure. For example, even studies of housing question in the Khrushchev period reduce the early twentieth century to a narrative of inadequacy, casting the housing policy of the 1950s as the first time the Russian state had been able to meet its revolutionary goals.

Although there remained deep material deficiencies throughout the late Imperial and early Soviet periods, and although the *zhilishchnyi vopros* remained far from being put aside, I would caution against an approach that focuses solely on a narrative of success or failure. The housing question need to be understood in more than just square meters of housing created. This dissertation examines how the home was understood not just as a physical space, but also as a conception that was constantly shifting. To fully contextualize these changes, we now turn to three lines of inquiry that connect this dissertation to larger historiographical and scholarly fields.

**Lines of Inquiry**

My work focuses on three lines of inquiry. Firstly, I examine extensive literature on the city in history, as a means of grounding the concerns of the “housing question” in the particulars of the urban environment. As a part of this section, I devote particular attention to the ways that working class voices have been brought into the urban history conversation. Secondly, I use

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14 Steven Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow’s Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life After Stalin* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 12.
housing to explore the city as a polyphonic site. As an ancillary argument, I discuss how this polyphonic narrative informs my argument about the liminal nature of power and control in revolutionary-era Russia. Finally, as my project deliberately moves back and forth across the revolutionary divide of 1917, I argue that although there were ruptures between the late Imperial and early Soviet period, the continuities were far more profound. In this section, I will explore what each of these lines adds to my dissertation project, as well as contextualizing them within a broader historiography.

This history of the home and the management of the everyday were, in large part, a product of their urban environment. Although questions of what the home means have long been of concern, the compaction of urban space gave these questions a particular urgency. This was, by no means, a condition limited to Russia. Urban historians focusing on Europe and the United States have shown how city life affected and was affected by conditions like crime and poverty, while also exacerbating systematic discrimination in terms of race, gender, and class. They have also studied the reverse, and shown how, despite these concerns, the city still offered a vision of positive progress and change, and how this possibility inspired planners to change it (even against the protestations of urban denizens). In the words of Daniel Rodgers, “the city stood at the vital center of transatlantic imaginations.”


16 Take, for example, the famous example of Haussmann, who reshaped Paris in order to the city of revolutions more manageable. See: Peter Hall, Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation, and Urban Order (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), chapter 24 (“The City of Perpetual Public Works, Paris 1850-1870).

As the Russian city had the dubious distinction of a relatively rapid urbanization, historiography reflects the effects of these changes, and many authors focus on the traumatic effects of them. For example, Daniel Brower, in his 1990 work *The Russian City Between Tradition and Modernity*, argues that this process created a city that was, for the majority of people drawn to it, a fundamentally alienating entity. It was, basically, a duality—divided between a version that served the upper classes, and a version that estranged the urban poor.18 On the other side of the revolutionary divide, Karl Schögel explores the effects of the General Plan on Moscow, noting that although the massive restructuring was supposed to make the city more accessible, it often had the opposite effect, and hurt the very people it was supposedly designed to protect.19

Most scholars, however, see the rapid urbanization as an ambiguous process that created both challenges and opportunities. Mark Steinberg analyzes the production of the image of St. Petersburg as a means of studying the ambivalent, amorphous, and often-contradictory views of urban modernity that existed in turn-of-the-century Russia. In writings and other cultural productions of this time, St. Petersburg is viewed as both as site of hope and despair, of both possibility and fear. Steinberg not only examines these ideas about the image of St. Petersburg, but also shows how they are indicative of a larger understanding of what modernity means. For residents writing about the experience of the city, they noted that the advantages it provided came fraught with high costs.20 These costs and advantages were gendered: as Barbara Alpern Engel explored in her work on women’s migration to the city in the late Imperial period, the city

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offered an alternative to some of the patriarchal village traditions, but in turn, introduced women to specific urban challenges.\footnote{Barbara Alpern Engel, \textit{Between the Fields and the City: Women, Work, and Family in Russia, 1861-1914} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).}

Focusing on cities also allows this dissertation to be in conversation with the extensive historiography on how working populations engage with this urban environment. Indeed, works from the 1980s and 1990s that focused on the lives of working class and the poor in urban centers during the revolutionary period frequently bring housing into the conversation. Several prominent works, including Diane Koenker’s \textit{Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution} (1981), Joseph Bradley’s \textit{Muzhik and Muscovite} (1985), and David Hoffmann’s \textit{Peasant Metropolis} (1994), explore the issue of a lack of housing as one of many factors complicating the lives of the urban working class and poor in the revolutionary period. Drawing on quantitative data, Bradley illustrates that the population boom in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century put a tremendous strain on a housing stock that was largely comprised of one- or two-story wooden buildings.\footnote{Joseph Bradley, \textit{Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), chapter 6, esp. pp. 197-199.} Koenker’s work explores what this means in the context of 1917, by illustrating that the “special problems of everyday life”—of which housing was a large part—need to be considered alongside political and labor grievances in order to understand revolutionary ferment.\footnote{Diane Koenker, \textit{Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), chapter 2, quote on p. 43.} Then, moving into the Soviet period, Hoffmann highlights how the nascent Soviet state failed to provide a substantial material change for the average urban resident; this frustration, combined with the working class population’s refusal to act how Bolshevik officials expected, led to a clash of expectations between members of the working class and
representatives of the Soviet state. These works, in short, provide an invaluable lens into how the space of the home contributed to residents’ understandings of the city, by tracing how the inability of officials and other elites to produce a satisfactory answer to the housing question led to the home becoming one of many sources of tension.

In each of these works, though, the primary object of study is the city; the home is one of many means used to examine it. What happened when we foreground housing, and use it to examine the city? The advantage to studying something as ubiquitous as the home is that there is no shortage of vantage points from which to view it. My dissertation traces how the multitude of vantage points of the home also provides a nuanced and complex vision of the city. Worries about the deficits of the urban home, as well as plans to change it, provide us with a means to better understand how urban space was understood and envisioned, and how the issues of rapid urbanization and overcrowding factored in.

If the city was a site of so many voices and opinions, how does my dissertation bring them together? In addition (and more importantly), how does the project incorporate voices from a variety of backgrounds, so that we can consider the voices of urban planners alongside residents or political officials? My dissertation uses a polyphonic narrative, a term I am borrowing from the literary theoretician Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin.

Within the historical discipline, the prevailing tradition for the last several decades has been to seek out history from below: to try to find the voices and perspectives that, for reasons of power and archival bias, had been previously cut out of the historical record. This project has

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25 To attempt to trace a comprehensive understanding of the “history from below” movement is beyond the scope of this work, but in lieu of a comprehensive historiography, here is a quick note. E.P. Thompson popularized the term in a brief note in the Times Literary Supplement (see: E. P. Thompson, "History from Below", Times Literary Supplement (7 April 1966): 279–80); since then, it has encouraged
radically transformed history as a discipline, and has allowed historians as a whole to study fields that simply were not considered feasible earlier. For example, the idea of a “history of everyday life,” or alltagsgeschichte—a field that this dissertation is firmly indebted to—only makes sense within the context of a historical discipline that considers average people and their everyday activities to be worthy of study.26 However, I have chosen to methodologically describe my project as polyphonic, because a “from below” narrative does not provide a complete view of the home.

Yet despite the advantages that a “from below” has provided to the study of housing—for example, see the works of Bradley, Koenker, and Hoffmann in the previous line of inquiry—it also closes off ways to explore the historical construction of the home. Because the home was such a crucial site for the management of everyday life, it frequently attracted the attention of municipal employees, state officials, other societal organizations, and individual reformist-minded people. These organizations and individuals were interested in shaping the home into their vision of what it should be, and in the process, crafting a new type of everyday life (byt). As a short hand, I refer to these organizations and people as elites, because they had the social, political or economic capital to allow their voices to carry greater weight, both during their lives and in the historical record; I will also elaborate more on this category in my first chapter.

These elites wanted to shape the space and conception of the home. They had different methods to do so. Reformist individuals and organizations in the late Imperial period would often focus their efforts on self-contained projects, such as constructing an apartment building or other residential space in the manner they deemed to be most beneficial to residents, hoping that historians to interrogate their conception of sources, voices, and history itself. See: Antoinette Burton, ed., Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) for a summation of the effects of the “from below” movement on the historical discipline.

26 Lüdtke, The History of Everyday Life.
the change in material conditions would allow (or require) residents to restructure their everyday lives. Take, for example, the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs, which was formed for the purpose of creating homes for the Moscow city workers whose salary could not cover what other city officials considered to be adequate housing. Formed in 1910, the Society asked for donations from other city employees, from which they were able to eventually build a four-story apartment complex in southern Moscow. Other projects focused on particular aspects of the home. The kitchen, as a symbol of gender relations and the double burden of working class women, made a particularly meaningful target in the fight against social atomization, as mentioned earlier in this introduction. Others focused on a legal approach: in journals like City Affairs (Gorodskoe delo), it was not difficult to find economists, journalists, and academics advocating for laws to protect residents from issues like overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and drastically rising prices. As the management of housing became increasingly centralized in the Soviet period, changes to housing policy largely occurred at the state level, as issues ranging from the role of landlords to rental costs to the amount of space to be given to a resident were decided at the top levels of state bodies, before becoming inevitably more loosely put into practice at the municipal and local level. Any history of housing needs to include these voices, which a completely “from below” methodology cannot do.

I have chosen instead to use the term polyphony to describe my methodology. In his work Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics, Mikhail Bakhtin proposed that the concept of polyphony involved “a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness.”²⁷ The purpose of such a work, Bakhtin wrote, is not to merge the voices together into a single teleological end point, but to instead focus on the variety of perspectives that exist. The goal is to explore “a

plurality of consciousnesses,” “each with its own world.”\textsuperscript{28} The result is a narrative that provides “full and equally valid voices.”\textsuperscript{29}

I borrow this concept to create a polyphonic methodology: one that puts together the voices from below with the voices from above. Such a methodology allows us to understand how conceptions of housing and the home were contested and shaped by the people living within them, as well as how these definitions from below were in conversation with those created by people in positions of power and authority. It allows us to interrogate interactions within groups, how people within the same organizations or social groups have presented differences in both the problems they see and the approaches they suggest. Of course, the polyphony that Bakhtin described is a feature of fictional works; the take for a historical narrative is significantly different. Any polyphonic historical is—through virtue of the gaps in the historical record and the authors’ distance from the events themselves, to name just two issues— incomplete. What polyphony can do, though, is to find and draw attention to the moments of analytical promise. It is those moments that this narrative is clustered around. To put it another way, just because the voices we can recover are incomplete and fractured does not mean they cannot provide valuable historical insight, provided that they are properly contextualized.

If we take the Bakhtinian consideration that all voices are “equally valid,” how do we bring in the very real dynamics of control and power?\textsuperscript{30} Unequal power interactions occur quite frequently in housing questions and disputes, and the terms of the power dynamic shift considerably throughout the revolutionary period. The landlord who could evict tenants in courts that were generally sympathetic to property owners in the late Imperial periods would have found him or herself struggling to stay on top of a shifting language of housing ownership and

\textsuperscript{28} Bakhtin, \textit{Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics}, 6–7.
\textsuperscript{29} Bakhtin, \textit{Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics}, 8.
\textsuperscript{30} Bakhtin, \textit{Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics}, 8.
control under the Provisional Government or in the early Soviet period. They may have eventually been able to gain Sovietized legitimacy through membership in an institution such as a housing committee, but even then, they were still at risk of eviction. Another example could come from below: if a person could be ascribed an identity as a worker in the early Soviet period, they could, together with other workers, claim a building (or a part of a building) for the purposes of creating a commune. This power allowed them to displace even Soviet employees (sluzhashchie). It is examples like these of shifting and unstable power dynamics that led me to disagree with scholarship that characterizes housing policy an instrument of control, used to reward and (more often) punish residents. That being said, it is still important to note the power dynamics that were at play. The interactions traced throughout this dissertation are rarely examples of equal power dynamics, and any polyphonic narrative needs to be constantly aware of the stakes of those dynamics.

Finally, we arrive at the issue of continuity. That my dissertation moves across the revolutionary divide of 1917 is itself an argument. In an understandable collective desire to create distinct historiographies of both the Late Imperial and the early Soviet periods, the result has been the reification of 1917 as a division marker. Two recent works published during the centenary of 1917 emphasize this division. One work—Russia in Flames by Laura Engelstein—moves across the divide from 1914 to 1922, but posits that 1917 should be understood as a complete rupture in terms of power. The October Revolution and surrounding events were so transformative, Engelstein writes, that “power was not simply there to be seized; it had to be

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31 Hasegawa notes that property owners, including landlords, were used to sympathetic judges and other court officials, and they were very surprised when the situation shifted in 1917; see: Hasegawa, Crime and Punishment in the Russian Revolution, 75. This was most likely because landlord societies worked diligently to establish connections to local and municipal courts. See chapter 4 for more detail.

32 For example, see Mark Meerovich, Nakazanie zhilishem: Zhilishchnaia politika v SSSR kak sredstvo upravleniia liud’mi, 1917-1937 (Moscow: Rosspen, 2008).
reconstructed.”33 The second work—*Crime and Punishment in the Russian Revolution* by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa—takes a more concentrated approach and focuses solely on 1917 in Petrograd. In his examination of the role of crime, Hasegawa argues that it was the inability of local organizations to stem the violence that lead Bolshevik leaders to promote more authoritarian worldview. He proposes that it was this relationship to violence that informed the Bolshevik regime in the decades to come, a narrative that posits 1917 as the beginning of a fundamental shift.34 Even in works that move across 1917—as more works are increasingly doing—the chapter structure usually still divides the work into pre-1917 chapters and post-1917 chapters. In contrast, my work is structured so that every chapter moves across both the late Imperial and early Soviet period. Each chapter therefore acts as not only a thematic encapsulation of my larger argument, but also as a comparison of the approaches to and understandings of the home across the revolutionary period.

A history of the home is particularly well suited for exploring continuities, even in moments of intense historical change. The concept of the home—how people live in a space and create their own everyday conception of belonging—is a complicated praxis that cannot easily shift. Leon Trotsky famously wrote *The Problems of Everyday Life* to confront this exact question, noting that even if changes are made to the structure of Russian society, domestic life could continue to exist unchanged. Using Gleb Uspenskii’s *Morals of Rasteriaev Street* as an example, he wrote, “But in the relations of husband and wife, parents and children, in the domestic life of the family, fenced off from the whole world, Rasteriaevism [representative of the “old everyday life”] is still firmly implanted. We need years and decades of economic growth

and culture to banish Rasteriaevism from its last refuge—individual and family life—recreating it from top to bottom in the spirit of collectivism.  

Yet a simple retractionism is not enough to explain the linkages between the late Imperial and early Soviet periods. In both cases, we see examples of how average residents used shifting political categories and meanings to their own advantage. Moreover, there were also strong continuities between the elites and planners of the late Imperial and early Soviet periods. Indeed, although they were motivated by very different political agendas and goals, the liberal reformers of Russia’s late Imperial period and the officials from the early Soviet period had remarkably similar attitudes toward the home, particularly the urban working class home. Both saw it as a space that needed to be controlled; they blamed many of the problems of life in urban Russia, such as overcrowding and disease, on this lack of top-down control. Take, for example, the idea of the communal kitchen. It emerged informally in urban Russia as groups of workers and the urban poor used shared cooking spaces as a means of coping with massive overcrowding. Municipal officials and reformers in the late Imperial period took this idea and implanted it in their designs for new types of housing, in an attempt to turn the kitchen into a communalized space that could push back against the social atomization wrought by rapid urbanization.

My dissertation also does not ignore the moments of ruptures. Take, for example, the treatment of marginalized urban spaces, such as the outskirts (prigorod/okrestnosti) or the nighttime shelters (nochlezhki). In the late Imperial period, local officials and liberal reformers tried bureaucratic regulations and city-sponsored building projects to gain greater control over these spaces. The Soviet state took a different approach. By 1935, much of the former outskirts of Moscow had been administratively absorbed into the city through the Moscow General Plan,

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and the most infamous collection of nighttime shelters in the Khitrovka neighborhood had been demolished.

In short, there is no space like home. Although many would consider it a quintessentially private space, the home is anything but, as it has often been used as a site on which conceptions of the domestic and of belonging can be shaped. The process of shaping, defining and controlling the meaning of ‘home’ is born out of a version of modernity, which supposes it is not only possible but also good to exert a standardizing pressure and create a stable and unified vision of the home. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russia this desire for standardization ironically resulted in multiple, often-conflicting definitions of what the ‘home’ could be. The core of my dissertation is a question of how the space of the home was ascribed meaning, and how those meanings were defined by, as well as had an impact on, the people who lived in, created and discussed them.

**Dissertation Structure**

My dissertation is comprised of five chapters. The chapters are structured thematically rather than chronologically, so that each of them covers both the late Imperial period (approximately 1890-1917) and the early Soviet period (approximately 1917-1935). The first chapter, titled “The City: Housing and the Formation of Urban Russia,” examines the responses to massive and rapid urbanization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and argues that the “housing question” was a fundamental part of that conversation. Planners struggled with
how to address specific concerns like overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, and high costs of living, as well as broader societal issues like crime and poverty.

While the first chapter focused on the city as a holistic whole, the second chapter—titled “The Margins: Nighttime Shelters, Outskirts, and Narratives of Danger”—looks at two types of spaces that operated largely outside of the realm of planner’ control in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the outskirts of the city (prigorod or okrestnosti) and the inner city slums, as embodied by the nighttime shelter (nochlezhnyi dom/nochlezhka, alternatively pejoratively translated as flophouse). It was the fear that these spaces were unplanned and therefore uncontrollable, I argue, that to attempts to reform and govern these spaces in the late Imperial period, before eventually leading to their destruction in the early Soviet period.

Chapter three, “The Kitchen: Communalization, Hygiene, Labor, and a New Everyday Life,” turns to a specific space within the domestic space. The early Soviet state wanted to re-shape the kitchen. Having declared it a relic of the past and a soon-to-be-casualty of the struggle to create a "new everyday life” (novyi byt), Soviet officials aimed to communalize and even professionalize the space of the kitchen. These campaigns, however, obscure a much longer history of the kitchen: not only were many urban kitchens already communalized out of necessity, but reformers in the late Imperial period had made earlier attempts to transform the space, using hygienic concerns as justification. This chapter traces debates over the space of the kitchen across the long revolutionary period, examining how plans to re-design it highlight deep similarities between liberal reformers of the late Imperial period and Soviet activists.

In chapter four, “The Landlords: Liminality and the Exertion of Power,” the dissertation changes its focus from spaces to people. In debates over the nature of the city in early twentieth century Russia, landlords often appeared at its center, because of the role they played in shaping
urban life. Their role in shaping the urban environment made them valuable to planners, while also placing them in opposition to them (as their goals often differed from planners in both the late Imperial and early Soviet periods). This chapter examines the role of landlords (domovladel’tsy) as a way to explore the complexity of urban everyday life and politics during the revolutionary period. Examining their changing social position tells us about the liminal nature of power during the revolutionary period: how they struggled to maintain their control over the housing stock while being maligned from multiple political angles, how they pushed against attempts at social marginalization, and at how they tried to game a system that was increasingly hostile to them.

Finally, the fifth chapter turns to the residents themselves. In this chapter, titled “The Residents: Vignettes from a History of Home,” I use archival traces to examine the ways residents shaped their own housing, and what this tells us about their conceptualization of home. Using petitions, letters, newspaper records and legal documents from the early Soviet period, I explore how residents of different social groups and background navigated a shifting political environment, and how their negotiations can offer insight into what they found valuable, and how they defined “home.”
“Russia is beginning a transformative journey to a country of cities,” the writers of the journal *City Affairs (Gorodskoe delo)* asserted in an article published at the end of 1915.\(^{36}\) On one level, this statement was an exaggeration, written by people who wanted to emphasize Russia’s urbanization as a means of drawing attention to questions of city development. Although the pace of Russian urbanization grew throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Russia was still far from becoming a “country of cities.” Despite this agenda, though, a basic truth remained true: Russian cities were growing in population, and they were growing quickly. Although rural populations still dwarfed their urban counterparts (and many urban residents were migrants with only a transitory relationship to the city), the expansion of the Russian cities was unprecedented.

In the midst of this massive urbanization in the late Imperial period, intellectuals, reformers, municipal officials and other interested in urban development—who we might, as a group, call planners—conceptualized, described and reimagined the idea of the Russian city. They outlined their plans to put the management of the everyday into practice, and they did so by attempting to answer the “housing question,” or *zhilishchnyi vopros*. The changes wrought by massive and rapid urbanization were daunting, even just in the context of housing: high levels of population growth threatened to overwhelm the current infrastructure, residents were compelled to move into closets, corners, or out to the city’s outskirts, hygienic problems grew in severity, outbreaks of diseases occurred, and the cost to live in the city kept growing. In short, the “housing question” in urban Russia seemed perched on the border of the catastrophic.

This crisis did not abate in the early Soviet period. After years of war and revolution, the urban housing stock that remained was in massive need of repair. Wartime requisitioning and high prices meant that damaged buildings often remained as such; even major cities like Moscow struggled to pass decrees that would have required property owners to perform basic maintenance, such as making sure the building frame was not in danger of collapsing, removing waste from the building, or making sure the building had some form of working heat source (either a pech’ furnace or some other form of central heating). While the chaos of World War I, the February and October revolutions, and the Civil War period did cause a temporary massive reduction in population—many cities saw their population fall by almost half—those numbers quickly rebounded, and the problem of overcrowding surged back to the forefront of planners’ worries and anxieties. Although the Soviet government pushed for cities and neighborhood organizations to implement a new institutional structure to allocate housing stock, gaps in implementation meant that there was still no clear systematic solution in place.

As a result of the overwhelming problem that these shortages and deficiencies posed—in both the late Imperial and the early Soviet periods—there was no shortage of plans to attempt to solve the housing question. After all, if Russia was becoming a “country of cities,” then the issue of how people experienced their everyday life within the city was of paramount importance. This chapter examines the different ways that the housing question was approached from above, by exploring how elites of various political backgrounds attempted to solve the issues of overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, and material deficiencies.

This chapter also sets the stage for the larger dissertation by introducing many of the institutions, organizations, and people that will appear throughout this work. By virtue of the fact

37 TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 4341, ll. 4-5. These requirements were discussed by the Moscow Commission on the Housing Question in August 1917. The committee recommended that the city council (duma) pass the requirements, but no record of such a decree existed in the municipal records.
that this chapter is focused on how Russian cities were viewed by people who wanted to shape them, it focuses on the voices of people who were able to (or at least tried to) enact large-scale change at a municipal level. These people, as a group, had the social, political or economic capital to allow their voices to carry greater weight, both during their lives and in the historical record. For the purpose of this narrative, they have been labeled as planners, a word that evokes their desire (and, sometimes, their ability) to manage the everyday by shaping the material environment of the city.

Reforming the City: Anxieties, Hopes, and Plans in the Late Imperial City

In an article published in March 1914 in *City Affairs*, an unnamed author outlined an annual process. Every spring, the author wrote, the construction season began “and all of the building, once again, will take place under the mark of complete chaos.” Urban development in Russia, the author bemoaned, “tore ahead irresponsibly,” not only in the “anarchical jurisprudence” of the countryside, but in “how housing stock is built and how the construction is outlaid.” The result of such carelessness, year after year, was stunting the growth of Russian cities. Cities with an “eternally inquisitive and creative soul of the West” like Vilnius or Tallinn relied more on planning than Moscow, Odessa or Warsaw. “It is time for Russian cities to wake up from their stupor,” declared the author.38

There was no shortage of voices that critiqued Russian urban development; this article, simply entitled “Planning” (*Planirovka*), was one of many. This section will begin by exploring how authors, such as this anonymous *City Affairs* employee, described the problems of

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the city. It will then move into looking at how various institutions—particularly municipal organs and societies/charitable organizations—attempted to solve the housing question.

Before we examine how these authors described the housing crisis, it is useful to explain what type of housing was being discussed. Housing in the late Imperial period can be broadly broken into two categories: that which was owned by its residents, and that which was rented. Owning housing was, although not entirely uncommon, still a sign of economic prosperity. It also meant that unless the owners were wealthy enough to afford the housing outright, the owners were landlords; many urban residents who owned even a small home often rented out portions of their property.

The majority of urban residents were renters. While some apartments were rented to family groupings, the transitory urban labor market meant that it was also very common for groups of (mostly male) migrants (otkhodniki) to rent together. Women, constrained by an internal passport system that systematically gave legal control over their migration to male relatives, made up a minority of urban residents; those who did move to the city often only found employment in gendered fields like prostitution and domestic work. In the case of both men and women, a high percentage of urban residents were new arrivals to the city. And whether they lived with family members or fellow urban migrants, they often rented out a single room or

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39 In his work on Petrograd in 1917, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa points to the divide between owners and renters as one of the central dividing points between the urban populace. While there are gradations that should be taken into account (which I address in chapter 4), there was certainly a division between the two groups. See: Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Crime and Punishment in the Russian Revolution: Mob Justice and Police in Petrograd* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 75.

40 Small-scale landlords owned a significant amount of the housing stock in pre-revolutionary urban Russia; they were also socially integrated into the property owning community, as landlord societies and social groups actively recruited them into their membership ranks. See chapter 4 for more detail.


section of a room (corner). The poorest segments of the urban population relied on nochlezhnye doma, or nighttime shelters.

These issues connect to one of the larger questions of this dissertation: the differences and connections between the idea of housing and home. In their descriptions and chronicles of life in these marginalized spaces, outside observers directly wondered whether they could be considered homes. Some seemed to deny the possibility outright. “The true lynchpin of moral and familial existence—the home and the hearth (dom i ochag)—are destroyed by these social calamities,” wrote an author about the stresses presented in nighttime lodgings. “On the issue of the housing question, we stand significantly lower than the uncivilized (dikikh): troglodytes had caves, Australians have huts, American Indians have hearths, but the contemporary proletarian hangs in the air (visit v vozdukhе).” These questions of home had very real implications for how outside observers and officials treated these different types of housing, and played particularly strongly into the marginalization of certain forms of housing (as discussed in chapter 2).

Because practices like room sharing and the “corner” system were so ubiquitous, it should not be surprising that the most commonly discussed topic was overcrowding. Perhaps the most prolific writer on this subject was the economist Konstantin Alekseevich Pazhitnov. Pazhitnov began by addressing the housing question within the context of broad questions about class in contemporary Russia; his 1908 work Polozhenie rabochego klamma v Rossii (The Position of the Working Class in Russia) addressed topics including working conditions, pay rates, and medical assistance. Insisting that questions of working class life did not end at the workplace, Pazhitnov devoted a significant part of his 1908 text to “workers’ housing” (rabochie

He continued to address the issue in stand-alone articles published in City Affairs, including “The Apartment Question in Moscow and in Petersburg” and “The Apartment Question in Petersburg.”

In both his book and City Affairs articles, Pazhitnov relied heavily on statistics. In an analysis of Moscow from The Position of the Working Class, he used a survey of 11,180 apartments to describe the average conditions within the city. Each apartment was measured, and then divided by the number of residents to determine rough estimate of space per capita. Of the 11,180 apartments, 4909 (or 30.8%) provided less than seven square feet (one square fathom) of space per capita, 6271 (or 39.4%) provided seven to ten square feet (or 1 to 1.4 square fathoms), 2767 (or 17.4%) provided 10 to 13.5 square feet (or 1.5 to 1.9 square fathoms), 1111 (or 7%) provided 13.5 to 17 square feet (or 2 to 2.4 square fathoms) and only 864 (or 5.4%) provided more than 17 square feet (or 2.5 square fathoms). In his commentary, Pazhitnov explores the effect that these quantitative measurements had on the qualitative lives of urban residents. “Even excluding children and taking just adults into account, then every person needs at least 1.5 square fathoms [10 square feet] of air…” writes Pazhitnov. Over 70% of apartments in this survey failed to reach even this minimum level of personal space. Although these survey results refer to all of Moscow without differentiation in terms of neighborhoods or regions, Pazhitnov also noted that overcrowding was not evenly dispersed throughout the city. In the outskirts of Moscow (na okrainakh), for example, although the apartments were larger (some houses were not even

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46 Pazhitnov, Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii, 219.
47 Pazhitnov, Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii, 224.
subdivided into multiple apartments), the large apartments were subleased into closets and corners, a process that obviously decreased the per capita living space.\footnote{Pazhitnov,} 

To what extent were these overcrowded conditions typical of modern Europe, and to what extent were they particular to Russia? Pazhitnov was clear that although the prominent cities of Western Europe had not solved the housing question, the situation was indeed most dire in Russia’s major cities. Whereas London had an average of 7.9 residents per residential building, Moscow averaged 28, and St. Petersburg dwarfed both at 52.\footnote{Pazhitnov, "Kvartirnyi vopros v Moskve i v Peterburge,"} At the scale of an individual room, the statistics are no better: whereas the average room in London housed less than 4.5 people, Moscow stood at 8.2 and St. Petersburg at 8.1. Pazhitnov also notes that London was not an anomaly in Western Europe; Vienna averaged 4.4 people per room, Berlin stood at 4, and Paris averaged only 2.7.\footnote{Pazhitnov, "Kvartirnyi vopros v Moskve i v Peterburge,"} 

While Pazhitnov clearly saw overcrowding as a moral issue on its own, the problem was also particularly dangerous because it linked into another trope of the conversation surrounding the housing question: hygienic conditions. Crowded apartments, Pazhitnov argued, were “the foci of disease.”\footnote{Pazhitnov, Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii,} Another economist, Ivan Khrisoforovich Ozerov, saw a similar cause and effect relationship, writing that “inferior housing” was responsible for the spread of disease. As a result, he wrote, “many residents go to the grave prematurely because of it.”\footnote{Ozerov, Bol’shie goroda,} To explore the precise impact of urban life on the residents’ bodies, the writers used two approaches: a scientific analysis, which aimed to recreate the experiences of an average working class resident, and a moralistic approach, which delineated the dire consequences of inaction. The combination of scientific analysis and moral implications frequently included in these writers’ works represented

\footnote{Pazhitnov, Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii, 218.}
\footnote{Pazhitnov, "Kvartirnyi vopros v Moskve i v Peterburge," 1163.}
\footnote{Pazhitnov, "Kvartirnyi vopros v Moskve i v Peterburge," 1164.}
\footnote{Pazhitnov, Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii, 218.}
\footnote{Ozerov, Bol’shie goroda, 11.}
a peculiarly modern manner of understanding how people fit into cities. They presented their anxieties about urban development in both quantitative and qualitative ways.

Take, for example, the work *Popular Hygiene (Populiarnaia gigiena)*, published by Doctor (zhenschina-vrach) M. I. Pokrovskaia in 1893. In the introduction to the work, Pokrovskaia laid out the stakes of hygiene—defined as “eliminating the conditions that make possible the spread of disease and early death”53—by connecting it to nationalist sentiment. “The strength of a nation looks like each of its members,” she wrote. “A sickly and weak people cannot become rich, strong and great.”54 In terms of housing, the problem was particularly acute for the urban poor. “Statistics show that improving the housing of the least fortunate leads to groundbreaking declines in the overall death rate,” she wrote.55 To prove this assertion, she traced the death rates on different floors of urban apartment buildings. Those who lived in the basements or on floor five and above (both of which were considered to be the least desirable type of apartments) had significantly higher death rates. Residents of basement apartments died at a rate 25.3 out of 1000 people per year, and those who lived on floors five or above died as a rate of 28.1/1000; meanwhile, those who lived on floors one, two, and three, and four died at rates of 22.0/1000, 21.6/1000, 21.0/1000, and 22.6/1000 respectively.56

Pokrovskaia proposed addressing the problem by paying particular attention to the construction materials used to produce urban housing stock. “The materials with which we will build our housing have a profound effect on our health,” she asserted.57 Wood, the most common building material, had the advantage of providing ventilation, but it performed poorly at protecting from the cold. Brick and stone houses provided much more protection from the cold,

57 Pokrovskaia, *Populiarnaia gigiena*, 162.
but could often be too damp, particularly in the basements. Pokrovskaya proposed that the ideal home should be built of stone or brick, but needed to include lots of entry points—doors, windows, and fortouchki (small windows)—to prevent any part of the apartment from becoming too damp. She also devoted particular attention to basement and high-story apartments, the spaces that had the highest mortality rates. Basement apartments, which “distinguish themselves as having the most anti-hygienic qualities,” should be designed so that the top of the apartment would have access to sunlight and air through small windows near the ceiling. For those who lived on the top floors, Pokrovskaya drew attention to the issue of staircases. “If we want to build more multistory buildings, we need to pay attention to the staircases,” she wrote. “Staircases should be grand, well-lit, clean, and well-ventilated,” noting that current versions were often dark, musty, and stifling.

Both Pazhitnov and Pokrovskaya’s work highlights the combination of scientific and moralistic styles of writing, a style that was common in articles published by City Affairs and other similar publications. In the scientific style, these authors might occasionally focus on a single individual or a group, but far more often, he referred to an “average” worker or resident, or created statistical conclusions from aggregated data. A reliance on quasi-scientific and statistical methods might suggest that these descriptions were devoid of empathy or the human toll of issues like overcrowding and disease would be buried under a series of calculations, but this was not the case. Rather, the writers used generalizations and averages to stress the universality of the problems. By drawing conclusions from data sets of thousands of people, the

58 Pokrovskaya, Populiarnaia gigiena, 163-168.
59 Pokrovskaya, Populiarnaia gigiena, 179.
60 Pokrovskaya, Populiarnaia gigiena, 180.
authors justified their reasons for raising the problems, as the sheer numbers pointed to the fact that these problems were not faced by a small group, but rather by a significant proportion of city residents. At the same time, while the scientific side of the analysis was likely intended to prove the validity of the problems, the authors also devoted specific attention to a moralistic, non-quantitative analysis of the resulting misery. This part often either referred to the ways in which the city had failed its residents or to the duties officials and other elites should ideally provide to people to ameliorate the problems of urban life. Such writing also leant the descriptions a higher degree of urgency. In short, it took abstracted data and traced out the implications of those numbers on human bodies.

How did these descriptions of the housing crisis translate into concrete plans for change and reform? While some of the authors mentioned above cultivated relationships with state institutions—Ozerov, for example, served on the State Council (Gosudarstvennyi sovet) beginning in 1909—more worked with municipal governments. Municipal government, as Daniel Brower has demonstrated, became increasingly important in the post-Great Reform-era (post-1861), due to shifting power dynamics and the onset of increasingly rapid urbanization.

While there were some attempts to address the housing question at the municipal level, there was no systematic approach. The Moscow City Duma (Moskovskaia gorodskaiia duma) involved itself in the housing question primarily through beautification campaigns, which were designed to help maintain the existing buildings within the city, but were of no help in producing additional housing stock. The Moscow City Management (Moskovskoe gorodskoe upravlenie)

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62 Information from Russkii biografcheskii slovar’ (Russian Biographical Dictionary).
64 L.F. Pisar’kova, Gorodskie reformy v Rossii i moskovskaia duma (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk, 2010), 375-386.
took a more active role in promoting construction, particularly in soliciting and using donations to build housing for the poor. Interestingly, many of these donations came from the estates of large-scale landlords, who, upon their deaths, bequeathed significant donations to the city that were to be used to build housing for low-income individuals and families. Although these campaigns did succeed in producing individual housing projects, the larger housing question remained mostly unresolved.

As the municipal governments were unable to solve problem on their own, they turned to other networks: specifically, those of charities and other societies and institutions designed to provide aid and assistance. Although these institutions were not officially connected to governmental apparatuses, their shared goals and visions of what the city should be often placed them in close proximity. To illustrate how close this proximity could be and how such institutions could do what municipalities could not, it is helpful to look at a specific example: the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs Among Officials of the Moscow City Management (Obshchestvo dlia udovletvoreniiia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu gorodskomu upravleniiu).

The Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs was founded for a very specific purpose: to provide aid for lower level employees of the Moscow City Management. Due to rising costs within Moscow, municipal officials were increasingly unable to afford sanitary housing; in a 1911 report, a survey sent to municipal workers revealed that 69% lived in “damp, chilly apartments,” 66% lived in apartments without access to plumbing, and the average resident had access to 8.6 square meters of space (or 1.9 squared sazhens). These substandard apartments were also not inexpensive; some municipal employees reported spending up to 70% of their income on housing. To illustrate how close this proximity could be and how such institutions could do what municipalities could not, it is helpful to look at a specific example: the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs Among Officials of the Moscow City Management (Obshchestvo dlia udovletvoreniiia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu gorodskomu upravleniiu).

65 See: TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 1982a and F. 179, op. 21, d. 2272 for one such case, in which the landlord Solodovnikov donated a large portion of his estate for the purpose of creating housing for the poor. For more on this case (and other similar ones), see chapter four.
of their salary on housing expenses.\textsuperscript{66} In their 1909 petition to the Moscow Mayor to create the Society, they stated this issue upfront. “The recent increase in apartment prices in Moscow has reflected heavily on the material living conditions of city employees in general, especially those who have lower- and medium-range salaries,” they wrote. “This circumstance led us to the idea that the fight against unfavorable housing conditions through self-help could yield positive results; therefore we decided to establish a society among municipal employees to meet their apartment needs.” In this petition, the Society’s founders also noted that although the Moscow City Management had approved of the existence and purpose of the Society, they were officially unaffiliated with any city government structures.\textsuperscript{67}

After securing mayoral approval, the Society began fundraising in 1910, with the goal of being able to produce and provide affordable housing for poorer employees of the city government.\textsuperscript{68} The Society asked wealthier employees of the Moscow City Management to contribute a small portion of their income (1\% for a 10 month period), so that they would be able to begin construction on one or more new apartment structures.\textsuperscript{69} By 1913, they had created 384 apartments, spread across Moscow in multiple apartment buildings.\textsuperscript{70} Although the vast majority of people provided housing in these buildings were Moscow municipal employees, they also provided housing to people in other public service industries, including the railroad, hospitals, and schools.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{66} TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d. 5, l. 1ob.  
\textsuperscript{67} TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d. 5, l. 7.  
\textsuperscript{68} Housing was to be made available on a first come, first serve basis for employees making less than 1500 rubles per year. See: A. Zhuravlev, “Dom gorodskikh sluzhashchikh.” \textit{Gorodskoe delo} 5, No. 5 (1 March 1913): 300.  
\textsuperscript{69} TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 3-4.  
\textsuperscript{70} Zhuravlev, “Dom gorodskikh sluzhashchikh,” 300.  
\textsuperscript{71} Obzor deiatel’nosti Otechestva dlia udovletvoreniia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu Gorodskomu Upravleniiu za 1914 god (Moscow: Gorodskaya tipografia, 1915), 6.
In a very concrete way, the history of the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs is a successful one. The members identified a problem, and set to work to correct it. Through dedicated fundraising, planning, and construction, they were able to make a tangible impact in the lives of the hundreds of municipal employees who would move into their apartment complexes. Indeed, as the organization matured, they worked to further cultivate this image. In an annual report from 1914, they outlined how their housing provided not just a place to sleep, but amenities like communalized kitchens, washrooms, and yards with areas for children to play. They also published a series of photos showing the buildings that they had commissioned. Several of the pictures, including the one listed below, made a point of including the residents themselves in the photos. The message was clear: the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs had done more than just create housing stock: they had made spaces that residents could turn into homes.

![Figure 1: From the 1914 Annual Report of the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs, showing children in the courtyard on the housing complex at Donskaia St., No. 21.](image)

72 _Obzor deiatel’nosti Obshchestva dlia udovletvoreniia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu Gorodskomu Upravleniiu za 1914 god_, 73.
Yet the very need for such a society points to a broader failure to address the “housing question” in any systematic manner. The housing crisis was potent enough that even the organization designed to oversee urban development could not protect its own employees from the chronic issues of shortages, overpricing, and unhygienic standards. And indeed, it was not even the Moscow City Management itself that was able to solve the problem for its employees, as the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs was an independent institution.

In a vacuum of both state and local power, the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs was not the only institution to emerge; other local social and charitable organizations also formed to address these issues. Housing Partnership Societies (obshchestvo zhilishchnogo tovarishchestva) were formed so that residents could pool their resources together to build housing that met their needs. Such a project was only feasible for those who had enough resources to join such a pool, although some groups also aimed to create housing for those who could not afford membership. “The Partnership has a goal of acquiring or producing healthy, comfortable, and affordable homes (domov…zdorovykh, udobnykh, i deshevykh) for members of the Partnership and members of the surrounding working class population in St. Petersburg and its surrounding area,” read the charter of one such society, founded in 1911.73 There were also Municipal Improvement Societies (obshchestva blagoustroistva), which emerged in the late nineteenth century and flourished in the early twentieth, and aimed to provide individuals with a means to systematically contribute to the material improvement their cities.74

73 For example, see: Ustav tovarishchestva na paiakh dla ustroitstva zdorovikh zhilischch v S.–Peterburg i ego okrestnostiakh (St. Petersburg: Tipgr. P. P. Soikina, 1911).
74 Ivan Petrovich Shimkov, Ustav s”ezov predstavitelei i chlenov obshchestv blagoustroistva (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi sovet, 1906). For a more recent work on the topic, see: Aleksandr Iur’evich Morozov, “Obshchestva blagoustroistva” v moskovskoi gubernii: Organizatsiia i deiatel’nost’ (1898-1917 gg.) (PhD Dissertation, Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Oblastnoi Universitet, 2007).
Outside of these societies and charitable groups, there were also attempts to reform or even create individual cities, following systematic planning schemas. Take, for example, the city of Tsarskii Les, a city founded on the outskirts of Riga that was designed to be the first Garden City in the Russian Empire. Planned by the German architect Hermann Jansen, the purpose of the city was to use Ebenezer Howard’s basic idea and create a city that provided the benefits of both town and country. The primary benefits of such an arrangement, wrote A. Ensh in an article on the city in *City Affairs*, was hygienic. Strict building regulations were put into place to provide housing that was “healthier and more affordable” than that available in the city proper. Each house was to be constructed at least 14 feet away from both the street and other houses. The houses were to be no higher than 42 feet high (or, in the case of houses made primarily from wood, 28 feet), and all houses were to be designed in “cottage (dacha) style.” Basement apartments were to be banned (except when they were used to house domestic workers [prislugi], who were apparently not considered to be important enough to warrant the protection of the urban planners). The size of such houses, as well as the casual assumption that residents would have the ability to hire a domestic worker, both point to the fact that the ability to reside in Tsarskii Les or similar Garden Cities was not financially feasible for most.

Although public societies and charities had largely dominated the conversation over the housing question, by the 1910s municipalities had begun to take concrete steps to deal with the issue more systematically. In Perm’, municipal officials became involved in the creation of nighttime shelters. In Moscow, the City Duma created the Commission on Housing Questions

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78 See Chapter 2 for more on this topic.
(Komissiia po zhilishchnym voprosam) in 1912.\textsuperscript{79} The Commission met several times a year until it was dissolved in early 1917. It was primarily designed to coordinate donations given to the city by wealthy landlords, which were to be used to construct housing for poor populations.\textsuperscript{80} In 1912, the Moscow Duma also created the Commission for the Beautification of Exteriors, to provide resources for building owners to perform substantial repairs to their properties.\textsuperscript{81} Wartime stresses also increasingly pressed the municipal organs into more action; in 1915, the Moscow Duma issued its first rent freeze, citing the impact that wartime inflation had had on the city’s most vulnerable population as motivation.\textsuperscript{82}

After the February Revolution, things began to shift even more rapidly. By August 1917, the Moscow Duma had created a new institution, the Committee on Municipal Housing Policy (Komissiia po munitsipal’noi zhilishchnoi politike).\textsuperscript{83} From the moment of its foundation, the Committee proposed steps that were far bolder than those put forth by its predecessor. As a means to provide housing to the growing refugee population within Moscow, for example, they proposed requisitioning all vacated properties—including “half-empty private houses (osobniak) and large apartments”—in order to provide that space to those who needed it.\textsuperscript{84} The Committee also divided the city into 15 subdivisions and began to appoint officials to work with local populations in these subsections.\textsuperscript{85} The speed with which the Committee on Municipal Housing Policy worked was notable, suggesting that municipal officials had long wanted to enact substantial changes but were unable to do so under the Imperial state.

\textsuperscript{79} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 3122.
\textsuperscript{80} See Chapter 4 for more on this topic.
\textsuperscript{81} Pisar’kova, \textit{Gorodskie reformy v Rossii i moskovskaia duma}, 383.
\textsuperscript{82} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 3448, l. 2-7ob. This topic is also addressed in chapter four.
\textsuperscript{83} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 3, d. 1831, l. 1.
\textsuperscript{84} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 3, d. 1831, l. 2.
\textsuperscript{85} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 3765, l. 9ob.
Before transitioning to the Soviet period, it is worth mentioning that there was no real break between the people involved in this conversation in the late Imperial period and those from the early Soviet. Multiple writers from *City Affairs* continued to study and write about the housing question into the Soviet period; the economist, Konstantin Pazhitnov, for example, wrote several works on the pre-revolutionary working class while affiliated with the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (*Akademia nauka SSSR*), and other earlier works of his (including *The Position of the Working Class in Russia*) were reprinted.\(^8^6\) Although there were large institutional shifts, these broad changes mask that, oftentimes, it was the same people involved in very similar conversations.

**State Power and Local Power in the Soviet Period**

In 1935, Moscow was in the middle of transformation. The 1935 General Plan had, in the words of historian Karl Schlögel, transformed much of the city into a “construction site” at an “unprecedented pace.”\(^8^7\) New boulevards were cut through vast swathes of the city, buildings were torn down to be replaced with public spaces or new construction projects, and even parts of the famous Kitai Gorod wall were demolished. Although the General Plan put particular emphasis on Moscow, the purpose of the experiment was to transform Soviet cities more broadly. In fact, the goal of the General Plan was a complete transformation of Moscow and

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\(^8^6\) For example, *Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii* was reissued in 1923, and *Promyshlennyi trud v kreposnutui epokhu* was published in 1924. Another *Gorodskoe delo* author, V. Tverdokhelbov (whose writings are prominently featured in chapter two) began working for the Moscow City Union of Housing Rental Cooperation “Mosgorzhilsoiuz.” See: TsAGM, F. 1495, op. 1, d. 117, l. 14 for his involvement.  
other urban centers into “socialist cities.” A socialist city, in the words of planner Nikolai
Miliutin, would capitalize on the current model of the city—an “old-fashioned” model that was
centered around “the small family apartment” and “laid out around a central market”—creating a
city that could improve the “cultural and living conditions among the population.” 88

But to what extent did the average city actually change throughout the first decades of the
Soviet project? In theory, the Soviet state had an advantage that late Imperial municipal officials
never had: it was willing to deploy top-down centralized power for the purposes of changing
urban development, and solving the “housing question” in particular. The Moscow General Plan
was, in many ways, the epitome of this strategy: a plan to literally reconstruct a city from the
street-level, to transform it into a new paradigm of what a socialist city could be. And yet, when
we look at the steps taken to alleviate the housing crisis, a similar history to that of the late
Imperial period emerges.

In the months following the October Revolution, the Soviet state launched its first
attempts to address the housing question. As a part of this process, in 1918, housing stock in any
city with a population over 10,000 was municipalized and transferred to the control of local
officials. 89 Local officials were also to be in charge of collecting rent (or assigning individuals to
collect rent on behalf of the local Soviet organs). The next year, in 1919, the Commissariat of
Health issued a decree that stated every Soviet citizen should be provided with no less than 8.25

88 N. A. Miliutin and Arthur Sprague, trans., Sotsgorod: The Problem of Building Socialist Cities
(Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974), 50-51. Although Miliutin was a major voice in the urban planning
community, his seminal work focused on the construction of new cities, rather than the changes to pre-
existing ones.
89 “Ob otmene prava chastnoi sobstvennosti na nedvizhimosti v gorodakh. Dekret Vserossiiskogo
Tsentral’nogo Ispolnitel’nogo Komiteta Sovetov Rabochikh, Soldatskikh, Krest’ianskikh i Kazach’ikh
Deputatov” in Sobranie ukazanenii i raspriazhenii pravitel’stva za 1917-1918gg. Upravlenie delami
Sovnarxoma SSSP (Moscow, 1942), 833-836. For more information on this law, see chapter four.
square meters of housing stock per person. As historian Lynne Attwood points out, the norm was largely symbolic, as very few people were able to secure this much space for themselves.90

Each of these changes has one significant similarity: they were to be carried out by local organs and institutions. To examine how such local power operated, it is helpful to look at the situation in Moscow in the years immediately following the revolution. Although many cities had only an overarching municipal organization (gorsovet, short for gorodskoi sovet, or city council), Moscow was divided into neighborhood organizations (raisovet, short for raionnyi sovet, or neighborhood/district council). Further devolving responsibility, gorsovety or raisovety operated through committees; in Moscow, the division assigned to address the housing question was the Housing-Land Department (zhilishchno-zemel’nyi otdel).

These local institutions were assigned with putting into practice the transformative decrees from larger state institutions. They were, essentially, in charge of the day-to-day process of managing the everyday. As early as December 1917, Moscow raisovety were establishing housing committees (domovye komitety, or domkomy), which were intended to take the role of landlords (although as chapter four argues, landlords often joined the domkomy themselves, as a means of integrating themselves into the Soviet system).91 Raisovet employees were responsible for leading evictions and property seizures.92 They were also able to provide exceptions to evictions and property seizures.93 A number of residents wrote to their raisovet with requests for waste pickup or disposal, suggesting that they were involved with that process as well.94

90 Lynne Attwood, Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 32.
91 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 1-2. This topic is further addressed in chapter 4.
92 For example, see TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 11.
93 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 53, ll. 12, 21, and 53.
94 TsAGM, F. 2348, op. 1, d. 54, ll. 139-143, 146-148.
All of these tasks were made more difficult by the fact that local officials often had only a loose idea about the people or property in their jurisdiction. Some raisovety distributed makeshift censuses to try to get a sense of both the local population and amenities. For example, in early 1918, the Sokol’nicheskii raisovet distributed a page-long questionnaire to district residents. In the questionnaire, they asked for information on the building (if there was a kitchen and/or interior plumbing, what type of heating the building used, whether the corridors were lighted), its management (whether it was being run by a landlord or a housing committee, as well as the rent rate), the interior of the house or apartment (the dimensions of the bedrooms, how many people were currently living there), and the general neighborhood (what stores and schools were located within close proximity). Although they received some responses—at least the couple dozen that remain in the archival record—none of the questionnaires was filled out to completion. In other cases, raisovet employees also used surveys and searches to create lists of the property available. Furniture, always in short supply, was particularly sought after. Some searches were particularly invasive, and detailed the contents of a home down to the silverware, like a search conducted over six-and-a-half hours in the Rogozhsko-Simonovskii neighborhood that resulted in a six-page (front and back) long list of all items in the house.

Throughout this process, resident frequently pushed back against what they saw as overreaches of power by the raisovety. Eviction orders were a particularly strong rallying point. In one case from 1919, residents from three neighboring houses on Kalinnevskaya Street in the Sokol’nicheskii neighborhood held a meeting to discuss an eviction order the raisovet had given them. According to a letter written by the residents, the eviction order argued that because they had no written contract allowing them to rent the houses and their oral lease was invalid, their

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95 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 27-50.
96 TsAGM, F. 2348, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 104-104ob.
97 TsAGM, F. 2348, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 51-56ob.
buildings were to be taken by administrative eviction to be used by the Transportation Department of the city government. The residents refused to obey the order, and argued that if it was carried out they would have no choice but to return to their villages, a process that would “cause irreparable harm to the well-being of the residents, which is unacceptable in this time of labor.” The residents of the three houses elected a representative to negotiate with the raisovet and the Transportation Department.98 This was far from the only case of such pushback, as other residents and even former landlords challenged the rulings and enforcement of the local Soviet institutions.99 Privately, even the raisovet employees worried about their own efficacy. “The picture is bleak and serious: many residents refuse to pay rent, arguing that there is no help from our side,” read a 1920 report written by the head of the Sokol’nicheskii raisovet Housing-Land Department to the head of the raisovet. “I deem it necessary to send an advance of funds from the center to cover rent payments to avoid an epidemic and as a precaution against a complete catastrophe in terms of plumbing and fire protection.”100 A second report from the same year noted that of the 61,095 rooms in the district, 14,566 were still in need of major repair.101

Despite these concerns, gorsovet and raisovet remained the primary institutions in charge of the housing question. By the mid-1920s, the role of the gorsovet and raisovet had moved from basic maintenance to more structural questions. In a 1925 meeting between representatives of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee and the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee—top institutions of the state and party, respectively—they sketched out what the expanded role of local organizations should be. They decided much of the work of the gorsovet should be focused on maintaining existing systems; for example,

98 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 68, ll. 10-11, quote on l. 10.
99 For example, see: TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 56, l. 82, in which a landlord refuses to obey an eviction order.
100 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 75, l. 4.
101 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 75, ll. 58-58ob.
municipal organs were responsible for managing basic utilities (and making sure they were paid for), performing necessary repairs to municipalized housing stock, and collecting rent from municipalized housing and other buildings. In addition, though, the meeting notes indicated that *gorsovet* should become more involved in transforming the character of the cities themselves. “It is necessary to strengthen local revolutionary vigor through use of municipalization, evictions, compaction (*uplotnenie*), the enforcement of existing decrees, etc.” read one memorandum.\(^{102}\)

As the role of municipal institutions was shifting they were asked to take on additional tasks, new organizations and local movements were emerging to confront the housing question. One of the most prominent involved parties was the burgeoning housing cooperative movement, organized under the institution The Central Union of Housing Cooperation, or *Tsentr Zhilsoiuz*. *Tsentr Zhilsoiuz* and other ‘housing-rental cooperative partnership’ institutions aimed to create a type of housing in which residents would assume a large degree of control in domestic decision-making. The institution was intended to act as an umbrella over the thousands of ‘housing-rental cooperative partnerships,’ or ZhAKT (*zhilishchno-arendnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo*) homes, spread throughout the Soviet Union. These housing-rental cooperative partnerships were usually small: most had control over a single building (or even just part of a building) and had just a few dozen members. *Tsentr Zhilsoiuz* was supposed to monitor the progress of the movement, while simultaneously providing guidance to subtly steer the local governance of individual housing-rental cooperative partnerships. Although *Tsentr Zhilsoiuz* gave residents the

\(^{102}\) RGASPI, F. 78, op. 7, d. 40, ll. 165-170.
ability to decide how to manage their own housing, the institutions assumed that those decisions would eventually lead to increased communalization.103

Housing cooperatives were first founded in the early years of War Communism, but they grew substantially during the NEP period.104 In 1922, the Bureau of the Unions of Housing Cooperatives (Бюро союзов жилищных товариществ, or Биуро союзов zhilishchnykh tovarishchestv) launched a journal, titled Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo (Housing Partnership: Housing and Construction), later shortened to just Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo (Housing Partnership). The purpose of the journal was two-fold: to draw new members into the housing cooperation movement, and to provide those who were already in it a sense of how other members had addressed overarching concerns.

As a part of the second goal, Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo ran several recurring features. One feature, “Housing Affairs in Court” (Zhilishchnye dela v sude, occasionally titled Housing and Court/Zhilishche i sud), presented a brief overview of illustrative or prominent court cases, so that residents could see how disputes had been resolved.105 A second feature, Q&A (Voprosy i otvet) outlined common questions that the journal editors imagined readers had. These questions ranged from queries about what happened to people who did not pay rent (and how quickly they could be evicted), to pets (which were discouraged for sanitary reasons), to the recourse a resident could take if they were sharing a room with a person who was “impossible to live with” (they could bring the matter to a People’s Court, which would issue a

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103 The housing-rental cooperative partnership movement (zhilishchnoe-arendnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo, or ZhAKT, plural ZhAKTy) became a common form of housing in the 1920s. There was a less-common form of housing also managed by Tsentrozhilsoiuz called the housing-construction cooperative partnership (zhilishchnoe-stroitel’nnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo, or ZhSKT), in which residents pooled their capital with the goal of eventually being able to build a new residency.
104 Attwood, Gender and Housing, chapter 3.
105 Because the Soviet legal system was based on civil law (as opposed to common law), precedents and stare decisis had little bearing on future cases, meaning there was little reason for having these summaries other than their illustrative potential.
ruling).\textsuperscript{106} There was also a feature called “They write to us [Letters]” (Nam pishet), which encouraged residents to ask questions, or provide examples of exemplary behavior or complaints. In all three of these features, the emphasis was on providing a model for residents to follow, or providing answers in the case of gaps.

By 1927, though, Housing Partnership had drawn to a close. Leadership of the movement splintered into local chapters; for example, the Moscow City Union of Housing Rental Cooperation “Mosgorzhilsoiuz” was founded in 1932. The ZhAKT movement continued into the mid-1930s. A report from Mosgorzhilsoiuz stated that 15 ZhAKT houses had been founded in the city in just one week in May 1932,\textsuperscript{107} and a report from 1935 indicated a desire among Mosgorzhilsoiuz employees to become involved in the Moscow General Plan.\textsuperscript{108} Perhaps most importantly, their members remained confident that the organization could produce substantial change. In 1935, eleven women from Moscow wrote a letter to the Mosgorzhilsoiuz board, asked them to preserve a few of the “old style” apartments, so that people of future generations could “remember that only a communist collective uprising creates new people with the honor of feeling themselves human.” These obshchestvennitsy (political active volunteers) wanted to make sure that other generations could see the type of non-collective housing—“this philistine way of life, which has locked housewives into their own shells, exiling them from culture”—that they assumed would soon no longer exist.\textsuperscript{109} By 1937, though, Mosgorzhilsoiuz had been shut down.

Why organizations like Mosgorzhilsoiuz ended have been debated by other scholars. In her work Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia, Lynne Attwood focuses on the gendered failings

\textsuperscript{106} These cases are from 1923 (Vol. 2, No. 8), October 11, 1925 (Vol. 4, No. 39), and August 1926 (Vol. 5, Iss. VIII).
\textsuperscript{107} TsAGM, F. 1495, op. 1, d. 1, l. 32.
\textsuperscript{108} TsAGM, F. 1495, op. 1, d. 117, l. 3.
\textsuperscript{109} TsAGM, F. 1495, op.1, d. 375, l. 19.
of the housing cooperative movement. Women, Attwood writes, were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the new style of housing promoted by housing cooperatives, but the leaders of the movements were unable to make their movement appealing to the very women they were trying to help. In articles written for another journal about housing cooperation, *Housing Affairs (Zhilishchnoe delo)*, writers frequently relied on the trope of the backwards woman, creating a hostile atmosphere which pushed women to the margins of the movement. Furthermore, women rarely ascended to the administrative leadership of housing cooperative movements. In short, Attwood argues that the movements failed to provide a viable “new everyday” for the women who might have joined them.\(^{110}\)

In his work on a different housing movement—communes—Andy Willimott suggests another reason for the gradually decline of alternative forms of housing in the 1930s. Communes, and their varied approaches to a socialist everyday, did not align comfortably with a growing state centralism. As the state grew confident it its ability to answer the housing question in the mid-1930s, it was increasingly unwilling to let communards create their own solution. The downfall of the commune, Willimott notes, was a gradual one, but by 1932 the commune movement was largely over.\(^{111}\) As Attwood and Willimott suggest, a combination of factors—likely including centralization and the stifling or marginalization of voices on the ground—doomed the *Mosgorzhilsoiuz* and similar efforts.

By the 1930s, there certainly was a movement towards state centralization in terms of urban planning. In a 1931 outline of what would become the General Plan, Lazar’ Kaganovich (a high-ranking member of the Soviet Politburo and one of the central figures of the General Plan) explained the role that the state should play in urban development. The goal was to “break not

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\(^{110}\) Attwood, *Gender and Housing*, chapter 3.

only the apparatus of bourgeois land-owning power, to not only expropriate banking, commercial and industrial capital, but to destroy the bourgeois-merchant-and-landlord dominance over the urban economy,” he wrote.112 “City management (gorodskoe khoziaistvo) serves one purpose, one task: how to better take care of the working class population, and to improve working class neighborhoods,” Kaganovich continued. “Before the revolution (and currently in capitalist countries), housing existed in the clutches of capitalist and served to further the exploitation of the entire working class and laboring masses, while the same housing in the Soviet states is communualized and serves the working class.”113

Kaganovich did note that there had been change before this point. “The October Revolution liquidated the old form of capitalistic politics and city management. Bourgeois apartments, as well as renovated and aristocratic houses, were settled by workers (rabochimi i rabotnitsami) who had previously lived in basements, barracks, corners, and dark and dirty outskirts (iz podvalov, kazarm, koechno-kamorochnykh kvartir, i temnykh i griaiznykh okrain),” Interestingly, the most prominent example of change that Kaganovich pointed to in his work was a single worker and his family.114 Mikhail Iakovlevich Bubentsov, wrote Kaganovich, was a worker who had lived with his family in a squalid basement room before the revolution, an example used in the introduction to this dissertation. After the revolution, Bubentsov applied for new housing, and he and his family were granted a 15 square meter room in a large house in central Moscow. As an addition benefit, Kaganovich added, the house had been owned by the former English consul before the revolution.115 Focusing on Bubentsov and his family was, in all likelihood, a rhetorical move designed to show the human impact of more abstract policies. But

112 L. M. Kaganovich, Za sotsialisticheskuiu rekonstruktsiu Moskvy i gorodov SSSR (Moscow: OGIZ “Moskovskii rabochii”, 1931), 3.
113 Kaganovich, Za sotsialisticheskuiu rekonstruktsiu, 4.
114 Kaganovich, Za sotsialisticheskuiu rekonstruktsiu, 3.
115 Kaganovich, Za sotsialisticheskuiu rekonstruktsiu, 5.
for a state focused on transforming the city in very broad terms, using a single example stands out.

For all Kaganovich’s rhetorical devices, in terms of housing, the eventual effects of the General Plan on Moscow were far less than its planners intended. A 1937 report to Kaganovich stated that, of the 800,000 square meters of housing stock that were planned to be constructed in the first two years of the General Plan, only about 200,000 had been completed. Of this housing stock, a large portion was made from wood (as opposed to the more sturdy brick or stone), and a large portion of it was barrack-style, which Soviet planners had long opposed for being unhygienic.\footnote{RGASPI, F. 81, op. 3, d. 192, ll. 177-186.} The working class, as well as the other residents of Moscow, were far from “fully served,” and the much of the core issues surrounding the housing question remained unanswered.

Conclusion: Cities Transformed?

In 1935, an employee of the Moscow City Soviet proposed a movie that would never be made. In a letter to Lazar’ Kaganovich—the aforementioned Politburo member involved in the General Plan—Dediukhin laid out his idea. He wanted to produce a movie that would illustrate how quickly Moscow had changed since 1917 and the October Revolution, but did not believe that a documentary approach would be sufficient. In the “satirical-comedic” film that he proposed, two architects from 1915 would find themselves suddenly placed in the Moscow of 1935. The city would have been so transformed in the intervening twenty years that these two architects, despite their comprehensive knowledge of “old Moscow”, would initially not even recognize the city. The construction of “new schools, clubs, and other institutions,” coupled with
the destruction of churches and other aspects of the Moscow of “whispers and whisperers,” would essentially make the city a completely new entity.\footnote{RGASPI, F. 81, op. 3, d. 191, ll. 123-123ob. The document never includes Dediukhin’s first name.}

Dediukhin’s film operates on a basic principle: that the Moscow of 1935 was a fundamentally different space than its prerevolutionary self. The movie he proposed only works if the urban space (as embodied by the particular example of Moscow) had been so radically shifted that it would essentially be unrecognizable to a person who was skipped forward magically in time. But was it? While there were certainly changes in the approach to the city between the late Imperial and early Soviet periods, neither proved eminently successful. In the late Imperial period, municipal institutions struggled to address the housing question in any systematic way. In contrast, the Soviet state initially gave local gorsovet and raisovet extensive control over the management of housing, but it was a power they struggled to wield.

In terms of physical differentiation, although Dediukhin proposed that the architects would notice the “destruction of old houses,” such a claim is questionable. Much of the housing in Moscow and other cities was from the same housing stock as the pre-revolutionary period – a standing testament to the failure of any broad, systemic resolution to the housing question. Indeed, even the allocation of housing often echoed this reality. In a hand-drawn map from 1921, Soviet officials listed who lived in which rooms in an apartment, and then literally wrote new names over their old map. For a housing allocation system that often worked by moving people around pre-existing housing stock, this process would have been far from uncommon.\footnote{GARF, F. R-4085, op. 22, d. 616, l. 4.} In short, there was much more to link the late Imperial and early Soviet periods together than there was to distinguish them from each other.
CHAPTER 2: THE MARGINS: NIGHTTIME SHELTERS, OUTSKIRTS, AND NARRATIVES OF DANGER

As the previous chapter has shown, there was no shortage of worries about the city. Not all urban spaces, however, elicited the same amount of worry. Certain parts of the urban environment—described by the prominent journalist Vladimir Giliarovskii in 1873 as the “hovels” on the outskirts, as well as the “writhing, rotting pit” of nighttime shelters in the center of the city—were described and perceived as particularly worthy of concern. In the descriptions of these spaces, the tropes of marginality abound. They had few (or no) municipal services. They were more likely to suffer outbreaks of diseases due to poor hygienic conditions. They were sites of criminal activities, perhaps even to the point that they were outside of the rule of law. And, most importantly, they housed thousands of people, many of them recent migrants to the city (who were deemed to be particularly impressionable to the worst behaviors these spaces were said to foster).

In late Imperial Russia, municipal officials, reformers, and members of charitable societies became increasingly involved in the management of housing within these marginalized spaces, both on the outskirts (prigorod/okrestnosti) and in nighttime shelters (nochlezhki/nochlezhnye doma). This involvement took many forms, ranging from annexation (or attempts at it), to the construction of subsidized nighttime shelters and prigorod housing, to the creation of codes regulating both subsidized and for-profit temporary and informal housing. In the discussions that emerged over this involvement, these elites framed their involvement in terms of responsibility and governance. Nighttime shelters and informal settlements on the edges of cities had proliferated, they argued, because there was not enough other housing to keep up

119 Vladimir Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi (St. Petersburg: Azbuka-klassika, 2015), 29-30; 42.
with the ever-growing demand that rapid urbanization had wrought. They posited that it was their responsibility to exert governance over those spaces. This chapter examines how these elites attempted to govern the activities of the people who lived in these marginalized spaces.

At the same time, this chapter also considers the broader implications of this focus on responsibility and governance. Although these spaces attracted elite attention because of problems in material and hygienic conditions, they also drew focus precisely because they had resisted governance thus far. The narrative that emerged as a result of these regulatory and charitable campaigns created an image of these spaces as not just marginalized, but dangerous. This narrative of danger allowed the Soviet state to target these marginalized spaces for destruction. Soviet officials launched campaigns against the nochlezhki in cities across the new Soviet Union, using the argument that they were inherently exploitative. State centralization under the Soviet system gave those officials a degree of control over these spaces that had not existed in the late Imperial period, and areas like the famous Moscow slum of Khitrovka were targeted for demolition. The desire to physically change these spaces up-ended even the legal requirements that prevented members of the working class from being evicted. This chapter examines how these campaigns emerged out of and eventually superseded the narrative of danger that had been created in the late Imperial period, and examines how the destruction of these marginalized spaces was felt by their former residents, on both a practical and nostalgic level.

This chapter will move from the outskirts to the inner city, from the prigorod to the nochlezhki, tracing out both the ways in which these spaces produced their own meanings, while also looking at the broader similarities that exist between these marginal spaces. It will then use this shared meaning of marginalization as a way to look at responsibility. How did planners—
ranging from local government officials, to members of charitable societies, to a nascent bourgeoisie—treat these spaces, and how did they attempt to govern and control them? This chapter draws on archival records from the city of Perm’, a municipal center on the edge of the Ural Mountains that was growing rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; a close examination of its response illustrates the ways that regional centers responded to the challenges of rapid urbanization. Finally, this chapter moves to the Soviet period, examining the Soviet campaigns against the nochlezhki, while also tracing former residents’ reactions to the massive changes, and considering what this example tells us about the meanings of home and housing.

How the Outskirts and Nighttime Shelters Functioned as Spaces

In 1873, Vladimir Giliarovskii came to Moscow for the first time. Although he would come to be known as a respected journalist whose chronicles of urban life remain among the most prominent of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, at the time, he was just another traveler making his way in from the outskirts of Moscow to its center. On a train heading to Yaroslavl Station, he passed through the outskirts of the city—“rotten” places, filled with “uneven rows of small, worm-eaten hovels.” Arriving at the train station, Giliarovskii found the city services, which had been completely absent in the outskirts, were still lacking; he ran into a post holding a streetlight, because the lamp had failed to illuminate even itself. As Giliarovskii and his travelling companions moved closer to the center, they encountered an

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120 Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 29-30.  
121 Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 31.
increasingly dysfunctional city: for example, the sewers leading into the Neglinka River had been clogged by the overwhelming amount of waste, and as a result were backing up sewage into several of the central squares.\textsuperscript{122} This reached its apex at Khitrovka Market, which he described as a “writhing, rotting pit,” constantly “obscured by smoke” that moved through the market like “streams into a swamp.”\textsuperscript{123} Although it was called a market, Khitrovka was most notorious for its housing. “Two and three-story building around the square were filled with nighttime shelter, in which up to ten thousand people could take shelter and spend the night,” Giliarovskii wrote.\textsuperscript{124}

Like Giliarovskii, we begin on the outskirts. In the introduction to an edited collection on the concept of urban peripheries, authors Richard Harris and Charlotte Vorms note the difficulty of writing about such spaces in a global context. As these peripheral spaces mark the boundary between the city and the countryside, they often exist within an uncertain administrative and legal boundary. They take different forms—urban sprawl, for example, is quite different than villages that slowly become incorporated into the city. Indeed, even discussing what to call them is a difficult task, as the different names for the spaces—the outskirts, sprawl, peri-urban developments, suburbs, just to name a few in English—all have very different connotations.\textsuperscript{125}

The Russian context is no different. Although the two terms \textit{prigorod} and \textit{okrestnosti} (which can be roughly translated as peri-urban/suburbs and outskirts/environs, respectively) were commonly used to describe the areas on the urban edge, the spaces these terms were describing could vary wildly. In his memoir \textit{Beyond the Nevskaia Gate}, worker Aleksei Buzinov described his housing, which was just outside of the city limits on late nineteenth century St. Petersburg. Despite being officially in the \textit{prigorod}, the area was heavily industrialized. Located across the

\textsuperscript{122} Giliarovskii, \textit{Moskva i moskvichi}, 39.
\textsuperscript{123} Giliarovskii, \textit{Moskva i moskvichi}, 41.
\textsuperscript{124} Giliarovskii, \textit{Moskva i moskvichi}, 42.
street from a factory, the two-story wooden building contained six apartments, including Buzinov’s, all of which “were packed with workers to the point of overflowing.” \(^\text{126}\) “Our room was tiny and had one window, which looked onto a small courtyard, which was always black with a thick layer of ash, through which not a single blade of grass could break,” he writes. “The window was never opened, so that the heavy and greasy soot from the industrial output did not pour into our room.” \(^\text{127}\) Yet despite the industrial surroundings, Buzinov still used more agricultural words to describe his distaste with the housing, calling it a “neglected barn” (zabroshennyi sarai). \(^\text{128}\) And the other residents of the area found humor in the clash between the supposedly peaceful countryside and the less-than-idyllic reality. Buzinov notes that, in response to the “steely noise” (zheleznyi shum), workers would repeat these stanzas of a well-known poem for ironic effect: “You cannot hear the city noise / For past the Nevskiia Tower, it is silent.” \(^\text{129}\)

Yet not all prigorod settlements were as industrialized, noisy and busy as Buzinov’s environment. In her work *Stalinist City Planning*, which focused on the city of Nizhnii Novgorod, Heather DeHaan noted that Soviet officials hoping to better control the outskirts of the city had to contend with small wooden structures that could pop up “like mushrooms.” Although these buildings continued to be built in the Soviet period—frustrating Soviet planners, who were unable to secure permission to evict the workers who lived in them and demolish the houses—they had roots going back in late Imperial period. These houses, which were often closer to the peasant cottage (izba) than to city housing, did not appear on maps (as they had not been built with official approval from any governmental institution), but their presence dotted the

\(^{126}\) Aleksei Buzinov, *Za Nevskoi zastavoi* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1930), 9. The house was located on Obshchestvennyi pereulok, across the street from Fabrika Palia.


\(^{129}\) Buzinov, *Za Nevskoi zastavoi*, 9-10. In Russian, the poem reads: “Ne slyshno shumu gorodskogo / Za nevskoi bashnei tishino.”
landscape, creating obstacles where Soviet planners saw just blank space on their maps. In short, there was no single version of the outskirts.

Further complicating the matter was another definitional question: where did the outskirts begin, and should they part of the city, or separate from it? There was no single answer. Although there was an administrative divide, it was often not clear which officials had responsibility to provide services to which communities. Theoretically, city officials and city duma were responsible for providing public works and other services to areas that were under the jurisdiction of the city, whereas zemstva (or local elected councils, sing. zemstvo) were responsible for the outskirts, as well as rural areas. Their responsibility for the outskirts, though, was more tenuous in practice, and many municipal leaders and reformers worried that zemstva were failing to provide even basic services for the residents.

The journal *City Affairs* devoted a significant amount of attention to the topic. In an article entitled “On the Annexation of the Outskirts to Petrograd”, the author V. Tverdokhlebov noted the lack of city services, both in terms of sanitation, infrastructure and public transportation. Just five to six versts from Nevskii Prospekt (Avenue) in the center of St. Petersburg, the residents of the outskirts did not have “roads, walkways, plumbing or even sewers!” Tverdokhlebov wrote. In another article on the role of the outskirts published a year later in the same journal entitled “The Treatment of Villages Near the City and the Annexation of the Outskirts to the Cities”, author K. Roshchin wrote that the outskirts lacked services such as

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130 Heather D. DeHaan, *Stalinist City Planning: Professionals, Performance, and Power* (University of Toronto Press, 2013), esp. chapter 6. Officials used the word “spontaneous” to describe such forms of housing (pp. 129-130).
131 V. Tverdokhlebov, “O prisoedinenii prigorodov k Petrogradu.” *Gorodskoe Delo* 1 (1915): 11. Five to six versts is approximately 3.5 to 4 miles.
sanitation and firefighting. The issue of infrastructure in the prigorod was not just the purview of one magazine; in his monograph Large Cities: Their Problems and Means of Management, the economist Ivan Ozerov lamented the lack of “paths of communication” within the outskirts; without proper roads, transportation and contact, the prigorod would remain isolated from the city, even as its residents performed labor within the urban area.

Tverdokhlebov blamed the zemstva for the poor conditions of the outskirts. There was little financial incentive, he noted, for the zemstva to invest in the outskirts, as the residents were poor and connected to the city. “Zemstva ignore them [the outskirts], expending practically nothing for their improvement: they are just a source of income and exploitation; lacking any influence on the landowning zemstva, the city outskirts are their unfortunate stepchild.” The lack of investments in public services translated into inadequate, unsanitary and overall deficient housing for the approximately 800,000 thousand people who lived on the outskirts of St. Petersburg alone.

These authors argued that the solution—or at least the path towards a solution—for the inadequacies of housing in the prigorod lay in a change of responsibility. Roshchin noted that the “city point of view” had solidified around the idea that all settlements on the outskirts of the city, regardless of their size, should be incorporated into the autonomous municipal government (gorodskoe samoupravlenie). Tverdokhlebov was a strong advocate of this view. “The only rational solution to this question,” he wrote, “is the annexation of the outskirts into the city of Petrograd, as it is in the best interests of both the city and the outskirts themselves. Only by

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133 Ivan Kh. Ozerov, Bol’shie goroda: Ikh zadachi i sredstva upravleniia (Moscow: Publichnaia lektsiia, 1906), 10-11.
making these ‘unincorporated’ outskirts part of the capital is it possible to properly plan and noticeably develop them.”

Tverdokhlebov continued by noting that cities in Western Europe had pursued such a path, and their housing had improved dramatically as a result. This was not, he insisted, an accidental development, but the result of concerted municipal action. Both Russian and Western European cities had experienced the same conditions of rapid growth (albeit in different decades): “The population grows, housing grows more congested, houses grow taller, and are gradually driven out of the center, where the shops, offices, and social services are located—and the city, like a giant cuttlefish (karakatitsa), begins to stretch out its feelers further into the darkness, into the fields and the woods, with a radius that sometimes reaches across dozens of versts.” The problem with this process, Tverdokhlebov then added, was not the expansion in and of itself, but the fact that, in Russia, it had happened “chaotically, without any plan or organization.”

For smaller cities, these municipal officials and activists proposed a less radical restructuring. In a solution attempted in Odessa in 1910, the city government and nearby zemstva merged their budgets together; this solution had allowed resources to be shared more equally, wrote Roshchin, while citing Tverdokhlebov as agreeing with him that this method was the most practical solution for smaller settlements with a population under 50,000. Such a plan—to enlarge the role of the city to cover the outskirts—only makes sense if it would have a benefit to the city. If the outskirts remained a legally separate entity, it would be difficult to justify spending sparse city resources on them. These city officials, however, foresaw a different future. These plans reveal the assumption that many of these municipal officials were making: the

outskirts, although not yet a part of the city, would inevitably become a part of the municipal structure. Their vision of the city, in short, was a geographically expansive one, in which it was simply a matter of time until the areas on the outskirts of cities became part of their metropoles.

Both of these plans—annexation and budget merging—share a common element: they assumed that the city should play an enlarged role in the management of the outskirts. In short, they assumed that the city and municipal officials should be responsible for the outskirts. If the outskirts were not to be annexed into the city government, than at least the city and zemstva would need to work together, to ensure that funds were not squandered (with the implication that the zemstva would waste the funds if left to their own devices).

Yet the prigorod was not the only space in which city officials and reformers were interested. Moving closer to the center of the city, with space increasingly at a premium, the forms of informal and non-permanent housing reflected this constriction. In cities increasingly dominated by the concern of “overcrowding,” one way in which housing changed to match these limitations was to becoming increasingly non-permanent. In other words, many forms of housing became leased on a day-to-day basis, and although people could stay there for long amounts of time, there was less incentive to do so. There were several types of housing within this archetype of non-permanent housing, but the most well known were the nighttime shelters, or nochleznye doma/nochlezhki. Nighttime shelters were not the only form of new housing to emerge, though: as migration to the city became increasingly common, other forms of housing designed to cater to travelers or the newly arrived were built. Traktiri and postoialye dvory, both

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140 In a 1913 report by the “Moscow City Management: Chronicle of the Meetings of the Commission on the Housing Question,” the author of the report cited the nighttime shelters around Khitrovka Market as proof that there was not adequate housing within the city. The authors used this point to propose building additional municipal-run shelters, a topic to which this chapter will return. See: TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 4403, l. 4-5.
of which roughly translate to inn, became ubiquitous, especially in larger cities.\textsuperscript{141} Whereas nighttime shelters only provided a place to sleep, these inns often provided other services, such as food, alcohol, or a place to rest and feed horses. The presence of these additional services meant that the sanitary condition at them was often known for being even worse than in nighttime shelters.\textsuperscript{142} *Kharchevnii* and *piteinye doma* were other types of institutions that were more associated with food, but would often also provide a place to sleep overnight (even if that place just happened to be the same tables on which people would eat).\textsuperscript{143}

These forms of housing, as a general category, were new additions to the city. As contemporary authors pointed out, under serfdom, there was much less need to have housing for low-income new arrivals. Nighttime shelters and similar forms of temporary housing had only begun in the 1860s and 1870s.\textsuperscript{144} The first building officially labeled a nighttime shelter (*nochlezhnyi dom*) was not opened in the capital St. Petersburg until 1869.\textsuperscript{145} They grew rapidly, as many unskilled workers (especially seasonal workers, like those involved in construction projects) came to the cities for short amounts of time.\textsuperscript{146}

In an article for the journal *City Affairs*, the author K. V. Karaffa-Korbut bemoaned the late beginning of such forms of housing, and attributed the deficiencies in Russia’s shelters and inns to the fact that they had not existed as long as those in Western Europe. Whereas, for example, St. Esprit en Greve had functioned as a shelter in Paris since the fourteenth century,

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\item\textsuperscript{141} K. V. Karaffa-Korbut, “Norchlezhnye doma v bol’shikh russkikh gorodakh.” *Gorodskoe delo* 4, No. 10 (May 15, 1912): 627.
\item\textsuperscript{142} Karaffa-Korbut, “Norchlezhnye doma,” 631.
\item\textsuperscript{143} Both of these forms of housing are listed by the Perm’ City Management as types of housing present in the city in 1878; see: GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 20, l. 27. In Giliarovskii’s *Moskva i moskvichi*, he notes that many inns let customers sleep on their tables after closing time; see “Khitrovka” and others.
\item\textsuperscript{144} Karaffa-Korbut, “Norchlezhnye doma,” 628.
\item\textsuperscript{145} Karaffa-Korbut, “Norchlezhnye doma,” 691.
\item\textsuperscript{146} A. N. Rubel’, “Zhilishcha bednogo naseleniia g. S-Peterburga.” *Vestnik Obshchestvennoi Gigieny* (April 1899): 1-22.
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Russia had no such tradition to draw on.\textsuperscript{147} As a result, Karaffa-Korbut noted, these forms of housing became known as unhygienic sites from which epidemics began. And indeed, with each wave of disease, city governments passed new regulations. Some of the distinctions between nochlezhki and other forms of similar housing, like inns (traktiri and postoialye dvory) emerged only as a result of this regulation. As hygienic concerns mounted, many cities passed codes that distinguished nighttime shelters from other forms of housing.\textsuperscript{148} In Perm’, for example, a code passed in 1892 required that all nighttime shelters clearly label themselves as such, with large signs reading “nochleznii dom” above all entrances.\textsuperscript{149} Although it was certainly not the only form of substandard housing within the center of Russian cities, nochlezhnye doma became the most well known because of such required branding.

As a result of their notorious position within Russian society—a position that was bolstered by the labeling that many cities began to require—nochlezhnye doma became pathologized, known as sites filled with disease and crime. Even in descriptions that were sympathetic to the residents, the presence of crime and disease was always noted. Perhaps the most extreme examples were descriptions of the children of Khitrovka. “Whenever there is poverty, there are children—the future convicts,” wrote Giliarovskii. “Anyone who was born in Khitrovka and managed to survive to adulthood in its terrible conditions would end up in prison. Exceptions were rare.”\textsuperscript{150} He chronicled how orphaned children of Khitrovka were used by the adult residents during the day: “Children were worth money. A dirty woman (griaznaia baba), often with a terrible disease herself, would take an unlucky child…and carry him around on some frozen street,” he wrote, “to rouse sympathy among passersby for the ‘poor mother and

\textsuperscript{147} Karaffa-Korbut, “nochlezhnye doma,” 628.
\textsuperscript{148} Karaffa-Korbut, “nochlezhnye doma,” 631.
\textsuperscript{149} GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 20, l. 223.
\textsuperscript{150} Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 65.
fatherless child.’ There were cases in which the infant would die of exposure in the morning, and the woman, not wanting to lose the day, would carry the corpse around for hours.”¹⁵¹ After being used in such a way, the children went to live in the same nighttime shelters that the adults occupied, as the residents shared the large rooms “with no distinction by age or sex.”¹⁵² These passages were meant to stoke pity in a number of different ways; in addition to the overall poor conditions and lack of hope of a better future, these children were essentially forced to live in these temporary nighttime shelters for their entire lives. These spaces, which had been crafted as stopgap measures, were being used as more than that. It was descriptions like Giliarovskii’s that generated more interest in reforming these spaces.

They also drew attention because of larger concerns connected to hygiene and crime. Although the nochlezhnye doma were geographically bounded, the problems associated with them were not. In other words, there were concerns that these sites would be the origin of hygienic and criminal problems that would quickly spread across the city. Newspapers and journals of a variety of political and social viewpoints all contained articles labeling these sites as the place from which disease and crime could spread.¹⁵³ Take, for example, the issue of health concerns. The lack of services in both the prigorod and in nochlezhnye doma made them both particularly susceptible to outbreaks. In Karaffa-Korbut’s article, for example, he notes that, due to the lack of lighting within nochlezhnye doma, attendants would sometimes fail to notice the bodies of those who had died the night before.¹⁵⁴ A report from Odessa stated that 77% of typhus patients had caught the disease in nighttime shelters.¹⁵⁵ The lack of municipal services in the

¹⁵¹ Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 58.
¹⁵² Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 64.
¹⁵⁵ N. Shcherbina, nochlezhnye doma, kak priiuty bednogo rabochego naseleniia (Kiev: Universitetskaia tipografiia I. Zavadzkago, 1879), 2.
prigorod meant that concerns about pandemics were multiplied there. Crime, too, was also a worry that spread outside of the borders of these spaces; recall Giliarovskii’s description that almost all children born in Khitrovka would end up in prison, or note his claim that there were markets for stolen goods run with the catch phrase “buy a nickel’s worth for a half-penny!” (na grosh piatakov)

Adding to the urgency was the idea that these nighttime shelters were housing an increasingly large percentage of the cities’ population. As a report from 1912 stated, 36.5% of the residents of the Miasnitskii District of Moscow lived in a nighttime shelter. Noting that having such a high percentage of their population living in nighttime shelters was unacceptable, municipal officials began to become involved in the management of these spaces. This involvement began as an administrative intervention; individual cities passed codes, which attempted to regulate the behavior of both the owners and tenants of nighttime shelters. However, by the early twentieth century, many cities also took an additional step and began to look into creating their own municipally run nochlezhki.

On its surface, this solution makes little sense. If their concerns over these spaces can be reduced down to pure numbers, to percentages of city residents in one form of housing or another, then creating more buildings of nighttime lodgings, even if they were municipally run, would only add to that total, and increase the total number of urban residents living in them. However, municipal officials argued that one of the primary problems with nochlezhki was that they were being run solely with the goal of gaining a large profit margin; if municipal

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157 Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 65 and 99.
organizations were able to use donations and city funds to subsidize the shelters, they might be able to function better.\textsuperscript{159}

In short, nighttime lodgings were of concern to late Imperial officials and reformers because they could not control what happened in those spaces. The creation of municipally run shelters fixed that problem; although the municipally run variants functioned spatial in the same way as the for-profit nochlezhki, city officials and reformers could exert control over them. They could dictate, at least on paper, the limitations and guidelines of the space. For a group of people who often felt themselves trapped “by the power of darkness below and the darkness of power above,” the ability to ascribe meaning to a space was not insignificant.\textsuperscript{160} To see how this plan functioned in practice, we turn to the specific example of Perm’.

The Creation and Management of Housing for the Poor in Perm’

A closer examination of a single city offers a better opportunity to explore both the situation caused by this lack of spaces for people to live, as well as the solutions that were proposed for it. Located on the banks of the Kama River on the western side of the Ural Mountains, Perm’ was a growing city with well-populated surrounding regions. In 1897, the population of the city proper was around 46,200, whereas the entire district (Permskii uezd) had

\textsuperscript{159} Karaffa-Korbut, “Nochlezhnuye doma,” 637. The section of this chapter of Perm’ also examines the reasons municipal officials became involved in the management of nighttime shelters.

\textsuperscript{160} The quote is from Laura Engelstein, The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-siècle Russia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 24.
a population of 312,200; by 1914, the population of the city had increased to 68,100. This combination of a rapidly rising urban population, as well as a large number of people dispersed in settlements close to but not within the city, meant that Perm’ was confronted with the question of how both forms of housing would affect it.

The first step taken was regulation. As nighttime shelters were prominently located in the center of the city, and were becoming increasingly cast as the epicenter of outbreaks, they drew the attention of municipal officials as early as the 1870s. In 1878, the Perm’ City Management (Permskoe gorodskoe upravlenie) asked owners of all nighttime shelters to voluntarily take steps to improve the sanitation of their buildings. This voluntary approach was quickly abandoned, and in 1892, the Perm’ City Management passed a set of mandatory regulations in response to a series of outbreaks. The list of 22 rules included many sanitary regulations that might be expected in an ordinance passed in response to a health crisis: for example, it required regular cleaning of the facilities, created concrete requirement for ventilation (fortochki or windows in every room), and banned livestock (with a particular focus on chickens) from the premises. Others dealt with the issue of overcrowding, which were also intended to help create a more sanitary environment. One such regulation required that every tenant needed to be assigned a specific place to sleep, and that the then-common practice of telling tenants to find a place on the floor was to be banned. Interestingly, though, the new regulation code also included a number of what might be called moral statutes, or codes aimed to impact the behavior of tenants outside of hygienic concerns. Card games, or any activity that could “disturb the peace” of the space were to be banned. Strict gender divisions were also to be enforced, as each room was to be designated

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162 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 20, l. 27.
for a single sex. These regulations demonstrate that although the primary reason for increasing regulation was a concern about disease, that city officials were also interested in a control of these spaces in a manner that extends beyond hygienic concerns. Disease may have prompted these regulations, but the codes in Perm’ and other cities were an attempt to redefine proper behavior in a much broader sense.

The question of creating regulations for spaces that are defined by their lack of regulation—in this case, the outskirts—is a more difficult question. It is clear that the Perm’ City Management was very interested in being able to track any and all construction that was happening within and around the city. Beginning in the mid-1880s, they began to require all private construction projects (i.e., any project that was not run through either the state or local government) to apply for approval. It is impossible to know to what extent this regulation was followed, but a large number of petitions were submitted. The completeness of the applications, though, varied: while some included the requested design or layout of the building, many others just listed the address and the owner. The city could also only require that buildings within the city limits submit their plans for approval; as was the case in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the municipal officials had no control over the actions taken outside of city limits in the prigorod and okrestnosti.

In addition to creating a regulatory apparatus, the Perm’ City Management also began to take steps to create and control its own housing, which would be rented to poor residents at or below cost. This process began hesitantly. In 1884, two brothers, Mikhail and Vasilii Fedorovich Kamenskii, approached the city with a proposition: they would donate a building that they owned—a two-winged house located at 74 Petropavlovskaja Street—to the city, which would be

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163 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 20, l. 223.
164 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 47 and 48. The plans for 1886-1888 take up two volumes.
165 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 47.
able to turn it into a municipally owned and operated “nighttime lodgment for the poor”
(nochlezhnyi priiut dlia bednykh). The city, however, would be responsible for all costs related to
running the building.\textsuperscript{166} After about four months of negotiation, the city agreed to take the
building, and began to create the first municipal shelter in the city.\textsuperscript{167}

This donation marked the first, but not the last, collaboration between the city
government and an individual looking to provide a donation. In 1912, the merchant Nikolai
Vasil’evich Meshkov approached the city with a proposal: he wanted to work with them to create
a space that would not only “provide shelter to the poor who lack a permanent abode”, but would
also provide basic health care to those residents.\textsuperscript{168} “The construction of an appropriate shelter,”
he wrote in a letter dated March 14, 1912, “will decrease the rate at which infectious diseases
spread; the need for such a construction project, with the goal of improving the overall health of
the city, is irrefutable.” He asked that the shelter be named after his mother, Elena Ivanovna
Meshkova.\textsuperscript{169} The city council quickly agreed, and plans were drawn up to create a shelter that
would hold 450 men and 50 women.\textsuperscript{170}

Unlike the earlier donation, in which the Kamenskii brothers wanted to relinquish control
of the building as quickly as possible, Meshkov remained closely involved in the process of
transforming the building into a shelter. Meshkov maintained his desire to have medical facilities
on site; first, he was able to secure having a small pharmacy (apteka) included on the

\textsuperscript{166} GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 43, l. 1.
\textsuperscript{167} GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 43, l. 3.
\textsuperscript{168} Meshkov would become one of the most prominent residents of Perm’; in addition to his role as a
merchant and his philanthropic work, both mentioned in this section, he also worked for the People’s
Commissariat of Transport of the USSR (Narkom putei soobshcheniia SSSR). His home, which was
confiscated by the state after 1917, is now the site of the Perm’ Regional Museum (Permskii
kraevedcheskii muzei).
\textsuperscript{169} GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, ll. 1-1ob.
\textsuperscript{170} GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, ll. 3-4.
premises. He also lobbied for the installation of a washhouse (prachechnaia), although at the same time, insured that the city would be responsible for all utilities payments related to them. They also agreed to create an affordable teahouse and cafeteria (deshevaia chainaia i stolovaia), a laundry site designed to “disinfect” residents’ clothing, and a staffed medical clinic on site.

Although the construction of these amenities continued for years after—the showers, for example, had not been completed by 1915, at which point the primary engineer working on them was sent to the front—the main shelter was completed by November 1912. In early 1913, the city lobbied the Governor, asking him to give Meshkov the title of an Honorable Citizen of the City of Perm’ (pochetnyi grazhdanin goroda Permi). The action, the letter read, demonstrated Meshkov’s “pure Christian beneficence on behalf of the poor.” The letter also mentioned that Meshkov, who had made his money as a merchant primarily through his fleet of ships on the Kama River, was looking to expand into railroads, and as a result, was strongly pushing the creation of a railroad line running south from Perm’ to Ufa, Orenberg and Tashkent. Although it is unclear if this mention caused officials to lend any additional support to Meshkov’s efforts, it is likely that both the honorific title and the mention of Meshkov’s railroad project were designed as both a measure of gratitude to Meshkov, as well as an incentive to encourage future collaborations with individuals, who would see the results that such donations could have.

171 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, l. 46.
172 For information on the showers, see GAPK F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, l. 73. For more on utilities payments and responsibility, see GAPK F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, ll. 12-13. In a report on the premises to the Governor, a representative from the city government did note that Meshkov remained heavily involved in fundraising for the cost of utilities and maintenance, even if he was not officially responsible for it; see: GAPK F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, l. 48.
173 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, l. 48ob. For more on cafeterias, see chapter 4 (on kitchens).
174 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, l. 73.
175 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, ll. 3-4.
176 GAPK. F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, ll. 49-49ob.
177 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 221, l. 48ob.
With two municipal nighttime shelters to run, the Perm’ City Council (Permskaia gorodskai duma) needed a way to manage its newfound responsibility. It created a new institution in 1914: the Perm’ Municipal Trusteeship for the Poor (Permskoe gorodskoe popechitel’stvo dlia bednykh). After its founding, in addition to assuming control of the existing shelters within the city limits, the Trusteeship also began negotiations to construct a new shelter. Continuing the trend of working with people and institutions outside of municipal organizations, the Trusteeship reached out to the commission, which had recently fundraised and planned for the Voznesensko-Feodosievskiaia Church (built 1902-1904). Together, the groups began to raise funds to build a third nighttime shelter, which would be located close to the local labor market (birzha truda), a site at which unemployed, under-employed or irregularly employed people tended to congregate.

In March 1917, just days after the abdication of Tsar Nikolai II, the Perm’ Municipal Trusteeship for the Poor attempted to address concerns beyond the city limits, as it requested funds from the city council to buy a farmstead (usad’ba) on the outskirts of the city. This dwelling, they wrote, would be transformed into a shelter for the poor living in that area. It is unclear if the timing of the request was connected to the larger political news; perhaps, in the uncertainty that such large political shifts are bound to bring, this small organization decided to try to expand outwards, and leave its mark on spaces outside of the official city limits. Whatever their motivations, the Perm’ city council was amenable to the move, and they transferred funds to buy the dwelling a day after the request was made. It is unclear how much progress on creating the shelter was made, and by 1919, the Soviet state had disbanded the Perm’ City

178 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 275, l. 2ob.
179 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 275, ll. 1-1ob.
180 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 275, l. 2.
Management, as well as all of its subcommittees such as the Municipal Trusteeship for the Poor.\footnote{O. A. Kuskova et al., eds., Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Permskoi oblasti: Putevoditel’, tom I, fondy dosovetskogo perioda (Perm’: Komitet po delam arkhivov Permskoi oblasti, 2005), 41. This guidebook gives information on the archival records of the Permskoe gorodskoe upravlenie, including information about the disbanding of the institution in 1919.}

In the midst of much larger political changes, it can be difficult to trace how the spaces that had been managed by the Municipal Trusteeship for the Poor continued to function. Some transformed, and did so quickly: the nighttime shelter funded by Meshkov was acquired by the newly formed Perm’ University (\textit{Permskii universitet}, now Perm’ State University), which transformed it into an academic building.\footnote{Natal’ia Dmitrievna Alenchikova, “Ot nochlezhnogo doma k universitetu: Istoriia glavnogo korpusa universitetskogo gorodka v Permi.” \textit{Vestnik Permskogo universiteta} 3 (2011): 134-138.} In 1921, when the Department of Communal Services returned to the question of how to maintain these forms of housing, local officials quickly released a report that stated that dormitory-style housing (\textit{obshchezhitiia} or \textit{gostinitsy}, in addition to \textit{nochlezhnye doma}) in Perm’ needed massive repairs to meet these new standards, particularly to their heating systems.\footnote{GAPK, F. R-8, op. 1, d. 80, ll. 1-10b.} This report began the process of transforming these spaces into sites managed according to a centralized set of standards across the Soviet Union, rather than the extremely localized networks that had dominated the Imperial period. It is to that subject that we now turn.

\textbf{Missing the Pit: Transformations and Destruction in the Early Soviet Period}

In late 1930, officials at the Moscow Oblast’ Management of Real Estate, or MOUNI (\textit{Moskovskoe oblast’noe upravlenie nedvizhimymi imushchestvami}), debated a question that, on
its surface, was very familiar to them: a question of eviction. As the primary regulatory institution for the Moscow region, when a certain building or neighborhood became overcrowded, they would use their right of eviction and resettlement (vyselenie and vselenie) to move residents (usually former landlords or other people of questionable backgrounds) from living space to living space.\footnote{See: TsGAMO, F. 2266, op. 1, d. 1 for more information on landlord eviction, especially in the late 1920s, see chapter four.} But this time there was something different: the evictees in question were members of the working class.

If there was one guiding principle in Soviet evictions from the 1920s and 1930s, it was that the working class was immune from them.\footnote{The class dynamics of eviction is discussed in chapter five.} Evictions were designed only to provide workers with housing, never to deny them of it. Even Soviet officials took a backseat to the working class in these matters. In one particularly noteworthy case from 1918, a pregnant Soviet lower level official (sluzhashchaia) was expelled from her living space by workers who wanted to turn the building into a commune; in an appeal request, she noted that the workers insulted her by calling her a “non-laboring element” and when she protested, one yelled “Get out and shut up, I’ll kick you out today!”\footnote{GARF, F. R130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 162-162ob.} The case was decided in favor of the workers because, in spite of their alleged threats and verbal abuse to a pregnant Soviet official, Soviet eviction law was crafted to support them.\footnote{GARF, F. R130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 181. This case is discussed in length in chapter five.} There was even supposed to be a city-run “maneuverable fund” (manevrennyi fond) of housing stock, to be used for newly arrived workers.\footnote{GARF, F. 1235, op. 23, d. 1251, ll. 3-6ob. See also the Sovnarkom decree “O zhilishchnoi politike” from 4 January 1928.} Although Soviet institutions were unable to provide significantly more living space for the average urban working class resident throughout the 1920s and 1930s, they were able to legally enshrine a promise of
stability for them. But, in the case of this one building, officials broke from precedent and order the eviction of every resident, working class or otherwise, from the building.

An exception in eviction law and precedent was to be made was because of the type of housing: the building housed 3153 workers in small “corner” lodgings (na ugli); another report said that the building was a nighttime shelter (nochlezhnyi dom, which was a type of housing where all residents would have to vacate the premises during the day). The eviction of the workers, most of whom worked at three textile factories in the Leninskii district of southern Moscow, was scheduled to take place on 15 Dec 1930, in the dead of winter. Before the eviction, a secret report written by members of the Moscow Soviet noted that “several groups of workers have submitted oral petitions about their removal,” hoping to have the order reversed. The same report noted that it was unlikely, should the evictions proceed as planned, that there would be enough housing for all of the workers. “We strongly urge you to take this [lack of replacement housing] into account and take any and all measures to retain the workforce.” The Moscow Soviet’s worries about a lack of places to move proved to be correct. Although officials were using municipal resources to build barrack-style (kazarm) replacements, the first replacement was finished only in January 1931 (one month after the evictions), and some of it was still not completed as of 1 March 1931.

Problems with construction aside, the choice to replace a nighttime shelter building with barracks raises further questions. The two types of housing have more in common than not, particularly in terms of space allocation. For example, in a 1924 design by architected L.A. Vesnina, which was highlighted in the collection *Workers’ Housing: Example Projects*, each resident was to be provided with about 1.3 square meters of living space (not including

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189 TsGAMO, F. 2266, op. 1, d. 69, ll. 4-5.
190 TsGAMO, F. 2266, op. 1, d. 69, l. 6.
191 TsGAMO, F. 2266, op. 1, d. 69, l. 4.
communal cafeterias and washrooms), in rooms that they would share with ten other residents.\textsuperscript{192} In practice, barracks often provided even less space, and had many of the same sanitary issues that nighttime shelters did. In a report from 1932 on the barracks used to house workers building the Moscow House of Government, the author described the barracks as being “in an unsanitary condition.” In addition to only providing six or seven meters of space for every ten workers, “there is not enough light,” “there is no fuel for winter,” and “the poor quality of the food exceeds all limit.” The report also indicated that this situation was far from unusual.\textsuperscript{193}

Figure 2: L.A. Vesnina’s 1924 layout of a “barrack for 30 people.” The layout includes three bedrooms for ten people each, kitchen, custodian station, and washbasin.\textsuperscript{194}

Yet despite the deficiencies that Soviet barracks-style housing had, they were still seen as a site of possibility. In a 1935 work titled *A Red Corner in the Dormitory*, the authors A. Semenov and G. Khamdeev detail how they used barracks meetings (*besedy po barakam*), reading circles, and cultural events to “transform the barracks into clean and cozy housing” and “raise the political and cultural level” of the 400 residents.\(^{195}\) The authors took special care to note that they included programming and activities for the children who lived in the dormitory; the implication of this statement being that, unlike the depravity that characterized children’s lives in the nighttime shelters, Soviet dormitories and barracks offered a means to raise culturally and social attuned children, even in cramped settings.\(^ {196}\) In short, works like *A Red Corner in the Dormitory* presented barracks-style housing as a flawed but ideologically promising form of housing.

However, this still does not answer the main question about the nighttime shelter in the Leninskii District: Why did the Soviet officials, in this short series of secret documents, decide to evict the 3153 workers? They did so before alternative housing was available, and they did so against the protests of both the Moscow Soviet and the working class residents. The available documentation is sparse and provides little insight into officials’ reasoning. The best answer, although speculative, requires us to look back to the late Imperial period.

As the previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated, marginalized spaces like *nochlezhki* and the *prigorod/okrestnosti* were of a constant concern to municipal officials and liberal reformers. They wrote dozens of pamphlets, articles and even monographs on the dangers that such places presented, in which they evoked many of the common tropes of disease and

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\(^{196}\) Semenov and Khamdeev, *Krasnyi ugolog pri obshchezhitii*, 22-23 and 47.
crime. Municipal officials and liberal reformers were further spurred to action by the urgency of reports like this from “the pit” (‘Iama’, to cite the title of one of Giliarovskii’s chronicles). Municipal officials and reformers were consistently worried about their inefficacy in regulating for-profit nighttime lodgings. Although many cities passed extensive codes regulating the management of nochlezhnye doma, they were often ineffective; recall that the city of Perm’ had passed two codes—one to be voluntarily adopted, and then one that was mandatory—before it began to run its own shelters.  

Soviet officials must have worried about these marginalized spaces, just as their late Imperial counterparts had. Although short memoranda leave little room for discussions of the meaning of space, it is clear that something distressed them enough about the space to warrant unprecedented evictions. To understand what that something might be, I want to turn to an autobiographical musing about a much different space. In his work Native Nostalgia, historian Jacob Dlamini wrote about the complexity of meaning for his former home—a poor black township in South Africa that, according to the archival record, never existed. “The master narrative blinds us to a richness, a complexity of life among black South Africans, that even colonialism and apartheid at their worst could not destroy,” he wrote. “This is not to say that there was no poverty, crime or moral degradation. There was. But none of this determined black life in its totality. Our family did not have electricity for the first eleven years of my life, but this did not mark my life as dim or lacking in any way.” In other words, Dlamini’s writings assert that these places can have rich and complex meanings. However, these meanings exist almost exclusively outside of state strictures, and for this very reason, they can seem dangerous to

197 For more on nochlezhki and disease, see: Karaffa-Korbut, “Nochlezhnye doma,” 627-643, esp. pp. 628; for more on nochlezhki and crime, see P. Vsesviatskii, “Prestupnost’ i zhilishchnyi vopros v Moskve.” Seminar po ugroznomu pravu M. N. Gerneta (Moscow: Tipografiia Uprav, 1909).
198 GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 20, l. 27 (for the voluntary code) and l. 223 (for the mandatory code).
199 Jacob Dlamini, Native Nostalgia (Ausland Park, South Africa: Jacana, 2009), 19.
officialdom. Even if barracks were materially similar to nighttime shelters, they were ideologically more promising and therefore trustworthier. And just as archival officials denied that Dlamini’s hometown had existed, Soviet officials took the step of evicting workers from this housing structure and closing it down.

This building in the Leninskii District was not the only source of temporary housing to be shuttered in the early Soviet period. Soviet officials famously shuttered the four nighttime lodgings around the Khitrovka Market in Moscow in the late 1910s and early 1920s.200 Writing about these massive evictions in 1934, Giliarovskii noted, “Moscow is becoming part of the plan. But to build a new Moscow in place of the old, where for nearly one thousand years it was cobbled together piecemeal, in a manner most convenient to its builders, it takes a special force. This is possible only in a state with Soviet power. Moscow is already on its way to becoming the world’s premier city.” Quoting a song refrain that said “And the future passes before my eyes,” Giliarovskii replied, “And the past passes before mine. Even much of the past is already incomprehensible to the youth, and soon it will be completely obscured.”201

Giliarovskii was not a resident of these spaces of temporary housing. He travelled in them extensively for journalistic purposes, but did not live in them. (Indeed, with rare exception, the descriptions of these spaces that existed—and continue to exist in the historical record—come from people who made a point of reifying the divide that existed between themselves and the residents.) Still, his comments still help to evoke the complexity of these spaces.

Giliarovskii’s comments tell the story of a state bulldozing over space, of “Soviet power” ascribing a completely new identity to the space. But in his description, there is a hint of wistfulness, maybe even a trace of the anger that Svetlana Boym has argued accompanies nostos.

200 Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 69.
201 Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi, 30.
aspect of nostalgia, a restorative longing that wants to put things back as they had been before.\textsuperscript{202}

It was, after all, quite possible to write about the “old Moscow” with no such hint of nostalgia; take, for example, the journalist Mikhail Efimovich Koltsiov’s description of the cityscape as “a jaw with rotting, uneven, chipped teeth.”\textsuperscript{203}

Despite his authorial distance from these marginal and marginalized spaces, Giliarovskii’s quote (and overall work) stands out because it recognizes the deficiencies of these spaces—the lack of space, the hygienic problems, among many others—while also recognizing that these spaces could have had a complicated and multi-layered meaning to the people who lived in them. And, like many spaces of subaltern housing, the inability to control those meanings bothered the elites. That bother was a strong enough force to get a workers’ state to evict workers, to act against principles and laws that it had upheld until that point. We can never uncover what that space meant to the people who called it home, but we can know from the reaction to it that it meant something.

\textsuperscript{203} Slezkine, \textit{The House of Government}, 357.
In 1931, in the midst of a campaign by Bolshevik activists to fundamentally alter the space of the kitchen, a poster was released, depicting a woman wearing an apron who kneels in front of a tub filled with dirty laundry. Just off to her side on a nearby table, a collection of cookware and food wait. As soon as the labor of laundry is done, she will need to prepare a meal. This woman’s work is far from over. Yet breaking up this scene is another figure. A second woman, dressed in a striking red dress, holds open the door of the dank and dusty apartment, revealing the dazzling array of amenities the new Soviet world has to offer. Cafeterias and communal kitchens, along with nurseries, workers’ clubs and factories, wait outside in gleaming modernist buildings. These buildings aren’t empty either: the cafeteria is full of people eating, and on one of the rooftops, a group of women play games and relax. Without the need to prepare food or do other daily forms of household labor, the poster implies, a new world opens up to women.

The woman wearing the apron peers out past the woman in red, looking beyond the space of her kitchen into this new world. Although her head faces away from the viewer, making it impossible to see the expression on her face, her head is perked upwards; she is clearly intrigued by the possibilities arrayed in front of her. The woman in red, standing confidently in the doorway, aims her gaze downwards towards the woman wearing the apron, a smile on her face. She knows this world is alluring. “Down with kitchen slavery!” the text of the poster reads, as a message from the woman in red to the women in the apron. “We have a new way!” The imagery is clear: the kitchen as it had formally existed has been superseded. When faced with these
alternatives, these representations of a new Soviet modernity, what woman would choose to remain laboring alone in a dark kitchen?

Figure 3: “Down with kitchen slavery! We have a new way!” by G. M. Shegal

This chapter traces the history of debates over, and the changing nature of, the space of the kitchen. It examines the anxieties that drove Soviet officials and activists to both attack the kitchen and propose alternatives to it. This poster was one polemical strike within a larger campaign, a campaign that argued while the “old kitchen” was a backwards site that isolated women, the new world of Soviet modernity would essentially make it irrelevant. As is shown

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205 This poster was far from the only vision of novyi byt in the kitchen created by Bolshevik activists. In her monograph The Body Soviet, Tricia Starks opens her chapter on the home with examples of propaganda, showing the benefits of a hygienic, organized kitchen. In one example, the family with hygienic kitchen has an additional child, suggesting novyi byt in the kitchen may reduce childhood mortality. See: Tricia Starks, The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 95-97.
in the example of the poster, Soviet elites focused on the issue of labor and gender, exploring ways in which work done in the kitchen could be changed by the processes of communalization and professionalization. In this vision of the kitchen, women and the domestic labor they performed were cast as both a problem and potential solution, as both the root of backwardness and a solution to that backwardness.  

Yet the Soviet era was not the first time that Russian elites had expressed intense displeasure towards the space of the kitchen. In the late Imperial period, liberal, reform-minded elites had already railed against the space of the kitchen, calling it unhygienic and critiquing its role in gender formation. Their criticisms align closely with those shown in the poster, as they too were deeply concerned about both the space of the kitchen (particularly in terms of hygiene) and the ways in which women operated in the space. These liberal elites also created alternative visions of the kitchen, and in some cases even put these visions into practice in homes they designed for low-income or needy populations. In these houses and apartments, the kitchens were often communalized, both for practical and ideological reasons. The communal kitchen, planned and instituted from above, is famously associated with the Bolshevik project, but its roots go back much further.

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206 The conception of women as both the source of backwardness as well as a source of needed domestic labor is outlined in Elizabeth Wood’s foundational work *The Baba and the Comrade*. See: Elizabeth Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 8.

207 See, for example, TslAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 801, ll. 3-4ob; TslAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 1053, l. 4.

208 Svetlana Boym wrote extensively about the dominance of the Soviet communal kitchen in historical memory. As Boym points out, the restructuring of the Soviet apartment into the *kommunalka* brought with it a host of new names. “The designs for new collectivity and new ways of living demanded a new language,” she writes. This process gave the impression that the *kommunalka*, and all of its components (including the kitchen), were fundamentally new and revolutionary, whereas in fact, many were drawing upon longer historical trends. See: Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), chapter 2, quote on p. 126.
In both cases, the debates over the kitchen highlight a concrete way that planners tried to put their vision of the everyday into practicable action. The kitchen was a nexus of worries and anxieties: it was the site of hygienic concerns, worries about gendered labor, and socialization. By changing the kitchen, planners saw an opportunity to create a common space (present in much of the urban housing stock) that could have a tangible impact on the lives of residents.

The similarities in liberal and socialist visions of the kitchen should not be surprising. As Daniel Beer’s work has shown, although Russian liberals and socialists disagreed strongly on many questions about government, they shared a belief in the possibility of scientific progress. Just as the roots of Bolshevik social programs can be found in liberals’ writings, so too do the liberals’ plans to transform the space of the kitchen bear many similarities to Bolsheviks’ later conceptions. Discourses about scientific progress, as well as the attempts to put the discourse into practice, came out of a shared vision of modernity. This faith in the possibility of modernity gave both ideologies a strong distrust of society’s ability to organize itself; both liberals and socialists insisted that a strong guiding hand would be needed in order to shape society towards their respective visions. This chapter draws attention to those linkages, noting that although reformers’ and Bolsheviks’ plans come from very different ideological backgrounds, the desire to manage the space of the kitchen and questions about hygiene and labor (particularly women’s labor) were shared concerns.

Indeed, we should not underestimate the importance of these linkages, and what they mean for the construction of ideological and political language. Tricia Stark’s recent work The Body Soviet highlights how Soviet officials used discourses of hygiene and cleanliness, wielding them not only as tools for legitimizing social control of the everyday but also as linkages to

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larger utopian visions. The creation of a hygienic and rationalized body, she writes, was touted as
the ultimate victory of the revolution.  
Building off of the importance that Starks ascribes to
hygiene, this chapter argues that the very ability for the Soviet reformers to construct and deploy
such a discourse relied on a framework constructed by Imperial era liberal reformers. Although
late Imperial reformers lacked the political and state legitimation that Soviet reformers would
have, they both approached issues of hygiene and health from perspectives of modernity, and
they shared similar outlooks, ideas, and even actions. Despite Soviet protestations to the
contrary, liberal reformers laid the groundwork for issues like gender and hygiene to become
powerful political motivators.

Although domestic spaces (and the kitchen in particular) offer scholars a very useful
vantage point to study this shared vision of modernity, its implications go beyond both the
kitchen and the home. The kitchen became one of the most ambitious, but certainly not the
only, staging ground for the creation of novyi byt (new everyday life), a term that encompasses
both the desire to create a new future as well as the assumption that Bolshevik elites were the
most qualified to do so. The term novyi byt was commonly used in reference to Soviet elites’
plans to use the built environment in order to produce a cultural change, but was also evoked in
conversations ranging from economics to art. In an era of intense shortages, novyi byt could

210 Starks, The Body Soviet, 3-4. One of the goals of this chapter is to seek out just how such language
affected a particular domestic space (the kitchen) in the Soviet era.
211 For example, in her chapter “The Home: Housekeeping, Social Duty, and Public Concerns,” Starks
shows that Soviet officials promoted the creation of local health cells, or zdraviacheiki, (See: Starks, The
Body Soviet, 6-8 and 121-22). These cells’ task of home inspection is practically identical to plans created
by late Imperial reformers (see: S. Fedorovich, ‘Kvartirmaia inspeksiiia.’ Gorodskoe delo 1, No. 17
(September 1, 1909): 867-70.)
212 Christine Varga-Harris notes in her recently published monograph on Khrushchev-era home that the
domestic space is a particularly useful place to study this negotiation between elite goals and everyday
culture. See: Christine Varga-Harris, Stories of House and Home: Soviet Apartment Life during the
213 The edited collection Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia touches on many of the ways in which
scholars have found the term novyi byt analytically helpful. See: Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman, eds.
signpost the need to come up with new means of working within the limited resources available. And although novyi byt is a Soviet term, the impulses that girded it are more universal; one can see a similar elite dynamic among liberals in the Late Imperial Period. Extending beyond Russia, it is possible to see this elite desire for transformation in spaces as varied as the utopian visions of reformers (such as Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City), as well as in planned capitalist company towns (such as Kohler, Wisconsin). These modernist visions of change, including re-imaginings of the kitchen, also shared another similarity: the assumption that because their programs would be helpful and beneficial to society as a whole, that they did not need to seek the approval or even consent of the urban populations who used the kitchens. Plans to re-design a space, particularly a space used every day, are by their very nature invasive; in these plans, concerns about the disruption of residents are mentioned only peripherally, if at all. In both the late Imperial and the early Soviet periods, plans called for officials or professionals to enter homes, or to shift around residents from space to space.


214 For example, Alison Smith traces debates between foreign elites and housewives over the nature of Russian cuisine in her work on food culture. See: Alison Smith, _Recipes for Russia: Food and Nationhood Under the Tsars_ (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), esp. chapter 6.


216 For an example from the late Imperial period, see: Fedorovich, “Kvartirnaia inspektsiia.” 867-70, which proposed requiring inspections of working class homes to allow municipal inspections to ensure they meet basic sanitary requirements. For the Soviet period, see: N.V. Ostrovskaia, _Rabota molodezhi v zhilishchnoi kooperatsii (Seria kul’turno-bytovoi raboty zhilkooperatsii)_ (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Tsentrozhilsoiuza, 1928), 13-15, which proposed sending youth volunteers into homes to teach women how to cook more effectively.
These plans were not made to limit disruption for residents; indeed, in many cases, the point was that they were disruptive. While drawing attention to the differences in anxieties and worldviews between late Imperial reformers and Soviet planners, this chapter also argues that their plans ignored the views of residents, due to a belief that they knew what was best, as well as a distrust of residents. Perhaps nowhere does this dynamic manifest more clearly than in discussions over communalization. Although many urban kitchens were already communalized due to space constraints, reformers and officials in both the late Imperial and early Soviet periods formulated their own ideas of what planned communalization should look like, and placed those ideas at the center of their plans. It is this interplay between anxieties, planning and distrust that is at the core of this chapter.

Reforming the Kitchen: The Late Imperial Period

For the majority of the population of Imperial Russia—the rural peasantry—the idea of a communal kitchen would have been strange, simply because there was no designated space known as the kitchen in a typical peasant home, or izba. Instead, the hearth served as a multipurpose space, used for cooking, heat, light and, in some cases, certain forms of work. Yet in the increasingly urbanizing environment of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russia, as living spaces were broken up into discrete rooms, the hearth gave way to the conception of the kitchen, or kukhnia. The notion of the kitchen was a fluid one, though, which

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varied in both how it was designed as a piece of the built environment, and how it was used by residents.

In the urban, working-class apartment in late Imperial Russia, there was no single type of kitchen. Indeed, some of the more sub-standard apartments did not give residents access to a place where they could prepare food. Included in this category are not only the notorious nochlezhki (nighttime shelters, which are discussed at length in chapter two), but also apartments rented full time but lacking any amenities. For apartments and houses that did have a kitchen, the quality and access to it varied widely. The majority of housing structures in urban areas were small, one- or two-story wooden houses; these would often have a single room dedicated to serve as the kitchen.218 In some cases, though, the kitchen for residents of one small building would be located in another house, meaning residents would have to leave their building and go to another location any time they needed to prepare food. In the increasingly common multi-story apartment buildings, the layouts of the kitchen varied as well. While some would contain a kitchen in every apartment, many were built to have a single kitchen on every floor, or even one for the entire complex.219

In apartments and houses that did contain kitchens, there was no standard idea on how it should function as a social space. While many houses and apartments did have an independent

218 It is worth noting that the space of the house was used by a variety of social groupings beyond biological relatives. Unlike the modern, Western standard of the single-family home, urban houses in this period of Russian history (and beyond) were commonly shared by groups such as workers’ collectives or arteli. As Hiroaki Kuromiya notes, these arteli were very resistant to change, and remained an important force long into the Soviet period. See: Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch and Richard Stites, eds., Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 73-75.
219 In a report published by the Statistical Department of the Moscow Municipal Authority, the authors urge the creation of a standardized method of accessing rent. As a part of this project, they list the common features of apartments within the city, including within the kitchen. These descriptions are drawn from common features described within this report. See: Otchet statisticheskogo otdelenia moskovskoi gorodskoi upravy: O vyrabotke norm dlia otsenki zhilykh pomeshchenii (Moscow: Gorodskaya tipografia, 1887), 7-8.
room specifically designed for food preparation, the problem of severe overcrowding meant that these rooms often served a dual purpose as both kitchen and bedroom; several residents could sleep on mattresses or cots within the room when it was not being used to prepare food. Many kitchens contained a pech, which was a large brick stove that took up much of the room; in addition to being used for cooking and heating, it was also a sought-after sleeping area in the winter. For those who worked close enough to their residence to return for lunch, the kitchen could serve as a meeting place. At the ring of the factory’s lunch bell, many workers would head home and gather around a large pot, out of which they would all rush to grab the choicest spoonful. In short, the kitchen served as a multi-faceted space.

As the population of Imperial Russia became increasingly urban and questions of what that urbanity meant were raised with growing frequency, a discussion over how urban apartments should be designed attracted the attention of liberal reformers. It was in this vein of critique that reformers began to look at how the kitchen could function within an urban environment. Although these reformers created multiple plans that had varied goals—some aimed to affect public health, others were concerned with the kitchen as a social space—organizing the kitchen into a communal space was the common thread that linked them all together.

As is clearly evident, the kitchen already was a very communal, multi-faceted space. But because the existing form of communalization arose out of necessity, the lack of a central plan was deeply unsettling to many reformers. Although many liberals supported the idea of communal kitchens, they saw the existing kitchens as disorganized at best, and actively harmful

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220 An example of this common practice can be found in the following well-known autobiography: Semen Ivanovich Kanatchikov and Reginald E. Zelnik, ed. and trans., A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia: The Autobiography of Semën Ivanovich Kanatchikov (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 85-86. Kanatchikov writes that he lived for a while in a two-story wooden house in the Nevskii Gate region of St Petersburg (in the south of the city), in which he and a second resident slept in the kitchen on cots.

221 Vladimir Giliarovskii, Moskva i moskvichi (St Petersburg: Azbuka-klassika, 2015,) 146.
at worst. Communal kitchens without central organizing or oversight were to be discouraged and transformed. In her book *Popular Hygiene*, M. I. Pokrovskaiia drew particular attention to the problems of unplanned communal kitchens. In addition to often lacking proper ventilation due to poor construction materials, Pokrovskaiia asserted that unplanned communal kitchens were more likely to be dirty and unhygienic, as no individual residents felt responsible for making sure the area was clean.\textsuperscript{222} Essentially, while seeking to create regulated communalized kitchens in their own planned housing, liberal reforms decried the *de facto* communalization that had sprung up all across urban Russia.

Given the devastation that outbreaks of communicable diseases wreaked upon Russian cities in the late nineteenth century, it should not be surprising that one of the first concerns levelled against the urban kitchen was a matter of hygiene. Of all of the diseases that spread throughout urban Russia in this period, perhaps cholera was the most deadly. An epidemic in 1892 resulted in about 250,000 deaths; after this outbreak, smaller outbreaks continued throughout the first few decades of the twentieth century. Every spring, wrote the commentator E. Sviatlovskii in the prominent reformer journal *City Affairs* (*Gorodskoe delo*), the question of how to prepare for the onslaught brought by the disease was raised; and each year, the disease continued to ravage the cities.

Sviatlovskii saw the kitchen as both the root of the cholera problem, as well as a key to providing an immediate solution. The problem, Sviatlovskii outlined in his 1909 article entitled “The Role of People’s Cafeterias in the Fight Against Cholera,” was that all of the preventative plans to fight the outbreaks were long-term plans that would take years to complete. Creating an improved sewage system throughout the city had great potential to be a long-term solution, but it

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\item[222] M. I. Pokrovskaiia, *Populiarmaia gigiena* (St Petersburg: Tipo-literatografia Iu. Ia. Rimana, 1893), 183-84. Pokrovskaiia argued for the importance of improving hygiene through nationalistic language, writing, “a sickly and weak people cannot become rich, strong and great” (pp. 1).
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was not a feasible plan for the short term. None of the measures currently in place, such as field hospitals, were meant to be preventative; they were all just stopgap measures to prevent as many deaths as possible. In short, the situation was dire. “Hannibal is already at the gates,” Sviatlovskii wrote.\textsuperscript{223} To fight cholera, he noted, Russian officials had launched a campaign to try to stop people from drinking water that had not yet been boiled, but they had never considered how water was used in cooking. “How much food is washed in boiled water?” asked Sviatlovskii, before answering his own question by supposing that, generally, most food was washed in unboiled water if it was washed at all.\textsuperscript{224}

Sviatlovskii believed that the answer to the problem of food preparation lay not in teaching residents of the city to wash their food in boiled water, but to take the task of food preparation away from them. He proposed creating a series of “people’s cafeterias,” where people of all incomes would be able to come and buy a meal that had been prepared using properly boiled water. Having access to such a resource would help to protect the most vulnerable populations from infection. In Sviatlovskii’s vision, the communalization of the kitchen was a protective step, made out of desperation but designed to prevent further death and suffering. Implicit in the subtext of his argument, though, was a claim that this step needed to be taken because residents were unable to take care of their own health.

Sviatlovskii was not the only contributor to \textit{City Affairs} to propose radical steps in the kitchen to curb the cholera epidemic. In a piece entitled “Apartment inspections,” the author S. Fedorovich proposed allowing municipal medical inspectors unfettered access to kitchens across

\textsuperscript{223} E. Sviatlovskii, “Rol’ narodnikh stolovikh v bor’be s kholeroiu.” \textit{Gorodskoe delo} 1, No. 7 (March 25, 1909): 288. Sviatlovskii’s belief that the issues of canalization and plumbing would not be quickly resolved proved to be correct; these two issues would continue to plague Soviet officials for decades.

\textsuperscript{224} Sviatlovskii, “Rol’ narodnikh stolovikh,” 288.
St Petersburg in order to check if they met basic sanitary standards. Although the onus to meet these standards would fall on to the landlords’ shoulders, the plan did still open up the space of apartments to inspectors, without seeking the input or approval of the residents. Fedorovich insisted such a bold step was necessary, as it had been helpful in quashing cholera epidemics in other countries. “The fight with cholera in Hamburg in 1892 showed that the most effective way to fight this ‘asiatic guest’ is, aside from food aid, improvements in diet and sanitary housing,” he wrote. Federovich’s plan would have communalized the kitchen not among different residents, but in the top-down manner, in which elites would have open access to a space that had previously been the domain of just residents. Like Sviatlovskii, Fedorovich did not trust residents to clean and maintain their own kitchens; in his eyes, they needed to be guided with a heavy hand from above.

The plans of Sviatlovskii, Fedorovich, and others ignored the concerns of working-class residents, marginalizing them in discussions of their own housing. It is important, though, to understand that these plans came out of a period in which reformers worried intensely about their inability to enact change. The inability to secure effective legal protections against landlords who kept their dwellings in unsanitary conditions added to these concerns about a lack of control. In one such case from 1908, argued in front of a Moscow Magistrate’s Court (Mirovoi sud), although the landlord S. E. Kostiukov was convicted of ‘renting unsanitary lodgings to

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225 Fedorovich, “Kvartirnaia inspektsiia,” 867-68.
227 Many scholars have noted the pervasive worries liberals had in the late Imperial period about their own effectiveness. See, for example: Beer, Renovating Russia; Laura Engelstein, The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Adele Lindenmeyer, Poverty is Not a Vice: Charity, Society and the State in Imperial Russia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
workers,’ he was fined just 10 rubles. Read against this backdrop of worries about their own efficacy, plans like those of Sviatlovskii and Fedorovich could be seen as expansive and intrusive to residents not because reformers had the power to enact them, but rather because they lacked it.

Reformers in the late Imperial period were not completely bereft of power or control, though. As Adele Lindenmeyr explored in her work on charitable societies, poverty relief and philanthropic organizations offered a way for reform-minded liberals to enact their vision of change in a hostile political environment. One of the places in which liberal reformers could affect the issue of housing was in the creation of low-income housing projects.

The lack of affordable housing around the city meant that many residents relied on these charitable housing projects, which were often led by liberal reformers and reform-minded city officials. In response to this growing need, the Moscow Municipal City (Moskovskoe gorodskoe upravlenie) solicited donations from wealthy estates to create ‘low cost apartments’ for residents. These apartments were not rent-free, but the rent was calculated to be at a rate that was meant to just cover the expenditures involved with running the apartment building. After the death of merchant and landlord Gavrila Gavrilovich Solodovnikov in 1901, for example, one-third of his sizeable estate was given to the Moscow City Management in order to build two large, multi-corpus apartment buildings, which would be able to hold about 2000 people in total. Other, smaller donations were solicited and collected by the Moscow City Management, with the purpose of providing housing to residents who would otherwise likely only be able to afford

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228 TsIAM, F. 1296, op. 5, d. 1., ll. 1-10b and 16. The court case was titled Delo po obvineniiu Kostiukova S. E. v antisanitarnom soderzhanii zhilogo pomeshcheniia, sniatogo dlia pabochikh, and it took place in the Vosnesenskii section of Moscow. Interestingly, in the records of the court case, it is never clearly defined what the sanitary standards were.

229 Lindenmeyr, Poverty is Not a Vice, esp. chapters 5 and 9.

230 TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 801, ll. 27-27ob.
lodging in one of the city’s for-profit nighttime shelters (nochlezhki). Unlike the housing discussed in chapter two, which used the structure of the nighttime shelter but changed the management structure to be run through the municipal structures, these housing structures were designed to provide residents with permanent, long-term housing.

The plans for the apartment complexes built using donated money from estates were not standardized, even within the city of Moscow. Some of the buildings were meant to house families, whereas others were for individuals. Some made the sleeping spaces communal (e.g., in the barracks style) while others kept that space private. Some provided facilities for childcare, such as nurseries (iasli). Intriguingly, despite these substantial differences, one important commonality exists across multiple buildings: the kitchens were designed to be communal.

Making the kitchens a communal space served multiple purposes. From a logistical standpoint, it saved valuable funds, allowing the extra money to be redirected elsewhere. Considering the high demand for affordable housing, creating as much living space (zhilaia ploshchad’) as possible for new residents was a high priority. Such a layout also had an ideological purpose, allowing the reformers to reinforce certain social goals.

Perhaps most important among these social goals was that of women’s roles. The kitchen in Russia, as in many other places, was conceived of as a highly gendered space because women did most of the labor of food preparation. In some writings (such as those from Sviatlovskii and Fedorovich earlier in this chapter), the gendered implications of the kitchen were minimized as authors used gender-neutral language, or called on both men and women to reform processes.

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231 For example, the landlord Goriunov left the city enough money to build a large, multi-corpus apartment building for low-income residents. See: TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 1053, l. 1.
232 TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 801, ll. 3-4ob; TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 1053, l. 4.
connected to the kitchen.\textsuperscript{233} However, in the plans for these affordable housing complexes, the planners were very explicit about the role of gender. In complexes that housed individuals, the majority of whom would be younger men, the communal kitchen could give a space for the few women there to group together and perform the gendered labor of food preparation. In complexes that housed families, the communal kitchens could be spaces for the women in the families to socialize. Indeed, the complex funded by Solodovnikov’s trust included plans to hire a woman to work permanently in the kitchen, in order to teach the poorer women who lived there how to best prepare food and how to interact with each other.\textsuperscript{234} The communal kitchen was clearly seen as a space in which reformers could try to influence the behaviors and social lives of women.

Such housing was specifically for very low-income populations; often the residents were unemployed or irregularly employed at the time of their arrival. And yet even in complexes that were designed to serve very different populations, the communal kitchen remained the dominant vision. One such example was through the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs Among Officials of the Moscow City Management (\textit{Obshchestvo dlja udovletvoreniiia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu Gorodskomu Upravleniiu}), a group first mentioned in chapter one.\textsuperscript{235} Founded in 1910, the Society’s goal was to provide affordable housing for poorer

\textsuperscript{233} In Sviatlovskii’s plans to create people’s cafeterias that residents can use in lieu of their unsanitary kitchens, the most important aspect is that those preparing the food should be professionally trained, in order to guarantee the food is not contaminated. For that goal, he proposes staffing the cafeterias with “doctors, paramedics, female and male nurses, orderlies” (\textit{vrachi, fel’dshera, sestry i brat’ia miloserdiia, sanitary}). See: Sviatlovskii, “Rol’ narodnikh stolovykh,” 291.

\textsuperscript{234} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 801, ll. 27-27ob.

\textsuperscript{235} It is worth noting that although scholars have pointed to the ways in which volunteer and charity societies offered elite women ways in which to enter a nascent civil sphere (see: Lindenmeyr, \textit{Poverty is Not a Vice}, 125), the board of the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs was entirely composed of men. Only men are listed in reports from before the Society’s founding in 1909 (TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d.1, l. 4), from 1910-1911 (TsIAM, f. 174, op. 1, d.5, l. 5ob), and from 1914 (\textit{Obzor detatel’ nosti Obshchestva dlja udovletvoreniiia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu Gorodskomu Upravleniiu za 1914 god} (Moscow: Gorodskaaia tipografiia, 1915), 16.)
employees of the city government. Due to rising costs within Moscow, municipal officials were increasingly unable to afford sanitary housing; in a 1911 report, a survey sent to municipal workers revealed that 69% lived in ‘damp, chilly apartments,’ 66% lived in apartments without access to plumbing, and the average resident had access to 8.6 square meters of space (or 1.9 squared sazhen’). These substandard apartments were also not inexpensive; some municipal employees reported spending up to 70% of their salary on housing expenses. The Society asked wealthier employees of the Moscow City Management to contribute a small portion of their income (1% for a 10 month period), so that they would be able to begin construction. The efforts were successful, and by 1913, they managed 384 apartments, spread across Moscow in multiple apartment buildings.

One of these buildings created by the Society for the Fulfillment of Housing Needs was a five-story building on Donskaia Street in southern Moscow, which housed 78 municipal officials and their families. Each individual apartment was quite spacious, with either three or four rooms and total space ranging from 52.3 to 84.2 meters squared. Given that space within the individual apartments was not at a premium, it might be expected that the apartments would include a kitchen. Rather than place kitchens within the individual, private apartments, though, the designers decided instead to create communal kitchens, accessible to all the residents.

236 Housing was to be made available on a first come, first serve basis for employees making less than 1500 rubles per year. See: A. Zhuravlev, “Dom gorodskikh sluzhashchikh.” Gorodskoe delo 5, No. 5 (1 March 1913): 300.
237 TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d. 5, l. 1ob.
238 TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 3-4.
239 Zhuravlev, “Dom gorodskikh sluzhashchikh,” 300.
240 Obzor deiatel’nosti Obshchestva dlia udovletvoreniia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu Gorodskomu Upravleniiu za 1914 god, 6. Although the majority of residents (43/78) worked for the Moscow City Management itself, some worked for the railroad (9), hospitals (9), schools (7), related “external agencies” (7), and two were on pension.
241 TsIAM, F. 174, op. 1, d. 5, l. 15.
242 Obzor deiatel’nosti Obshchestva dlia udovletvoreniia kvartirnoi nuzhdy sredi sluzhashchikh po Moskovskomu Gorodskomu Upravleniiu za 1914 god, 50-51. The annual report notes that the kitchens
Why was there an insistence that the kitchens be designed as communal? The individual apartments were not particularly cramped; there would have likely been room to include a cooking area. There was also no program in place to train women and force socialization, as there were in housing projects aimed at low-income populations.\(^\text{243}\) In other words, these liberal planners saw value in the idea of a communal kitchen, and not just as a means to conserve space or to teach lower class women about sanitation and elite conceptions of socialization. These kitchens were communal not because material limits dictated that they had to be; they were communal because the planners wanted them to be and designed the building as such.

‘Revolutionizing’ the Kitchen: The Soviet Period

In the period following the October Revolution of 1917, the kitchen remained a site that attracted attention and worry. In some ways, the Bolshevik vision of the kitchen that emerged was driven by very different concerns than those that engaged reformists in the late Imperial period. Although the issue of women’s labor had always been central in discussions of the kitchen, it drew particular attention after 1917. Bolshevik thinkers critiqued the implicit genderization of kitchen labor from multiple angles. For women who were also employed outside the home, the kitchen represented additional work that needed to be done beyond wage labor. “Women’s work is never sweet, but never is it so onerous, never do women live in such hopelessness, as do the millions of working women living under the yoke of capitalism during

\(^{243}\) See the discussion of the housing complexes funded by Solodovnikov’s trust.
the heyday of factory production,” wrote prominent Bolshevik activist Aleksandra Kollontai.\footnote{Aleksandra Kollontai, \textit{Sem’ia i kommunicheskoe gosudarstvo} (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Kommunist”, 1918), 8. Kollontai uses the word \textit{babyi} for women, a term loaded with pejorative connotations.}

For women who did not work elsewhere, the kitchen was seen by many Bolsheviks as an isolating space. The woman who knew no world outside of her kitchen became a trope in certain Bolshevik circles; the poster that opened this chapter is a prime example. This trope served a dual purpose: it fostered pity for women, while also serving as a barometer of the ways in which gendered expectations had changed since the pre-1917 period. In an article written for the newspaper \textit{Evening Moscow (Vecherniaia Moskva)} in 1935, a correspondent named Vladimirov drew upon both purposes. “Before the revolution, having labored for ten to twelve hours in a factory or plant, the worker returned exhausted to his small corner apartment, unable to satisfy his cultural needs. His wife knew no other life outside of the kitchen, doing laundry and childcare.”\footnote{GARF, F. A314, op. 1, d. 194, ll. 10-11.}

Yet out of these worries about labor, as well as hygienic concerns, emerged a similar plan: the dominance of the communal kitchen. Like the liberals of the late Imperial period, Bolsheviks in the early Soviet period saw planned communalization as a solution to the double burden of labor, as well as women’s isolation. Some went even further, proposing the eradication of the kitchen in any form in favor of cafeterias (\textit{stolovaia or bufet}), where residents would be able to buy professionally prepared food. The plans to replace kitchens with cafeterias within apartment buildings never became commonplace; \textit{stolovy}e became much more popular at workplaces rather than domestic spaces. However, the planned communal kitchen became hegemonic on a scale unheard of in the late Imperial period.\footnote{Many scholars have written extensively about the dominance of the communal kitchen in Soviet domestic spaces. See, for example: Boym, \textit{Common Places}, chapter 2; Paola Messana, \textit{Soviet Communal Living: An Oral History of the Kommunalka} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Lynne Attwood,
The ascendant vision of the planned communal kitchen arose as a reaction to a specific series of concerns and worries, the most pressing of which was women’s labor. The space of the kitchen was a highly gendered one, and as a result, the burden of work within the kitchen fell on women’s shoulders. Attacks on the kitchen allowed activists interested in the “women question” (or the zhenskii vopros) to frame their discussion of women’s issues in terms of class. Although there were many activists dedicated to the “woman question,” the idea of framing gender as more important than class was anathema in Bolshevik circles. As Barbara Clements points out in her work on the female members of the Bolshevik Party, most activists actively condemned feminism as a bourgeois ideology and refused to prioritize women’s concerns about class issues. In order to engage women’s and gendered issues, activists had to frame their focus around questions of labor. The kitchen, because of its class and gendered connotations, could therefore serve as an especially important site of contestation.

These activists proposed a solution to the kitchen aspect of the woman’s question, reducing the burden of domestic work on women, both in terms of time and isolation, through planned communalization. By communalizing the kitchens, they argued they could end the isolation of those women who supposedly “knew no other life outside of the kitchen.” Some aimed to go even further through professionalization of food preparation, turning the labor into a waged position. Under these professionalization plans, women would essentially be hired to perform labor they were already doing. Where capitalism had devalued domestic labor, Kollontai argued, professionalization would reverse this course and provide importance to it. "There will

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Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in Public Space (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).


248 For Kollontai’s argument about the devaluation of female domestic labor, see: Kollontai, Sem’ia i kommunicheskoe gosudarstvo, 11-12.
be no domestic ‘slavery’ of working women!” wrote Kollontai. “Women under a communist state will be dependent not on their husbands, but on the strength of their own labor.”²⁴⁹

Plans to communalize or even professionalize the kitchen raised questions about space. As mentioned earlier, due to various constraints in a rapidly urbanizing Russia, the space of the kitchen was rarely used exclusively for food preparation and eating; oftentimes in crowded houses, one or more residents would use it as a place to sleep. Officials debated over whether it should be more clearly delineated as a space connected to food preparation, or if it should retain its multipurpose role. Some even went so far as to propose making the kitchen into a formal bedroom for domestic workers. In the article “The Organization of Residential Kitchens,” published in the journal *Housing Partnership: Housing and Construction* (*Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: zhilishche i stroitel’stvo*), the author (listed only by the initials E.G.) proposed turning kitchens into living spaces for domestic workers and their families. “In connection to [the need to economize space] in the west, especially in Germany, there has been the rise of the so-called residential kitchen, i.e., space used simultaneously for the goal of cooking and residence,” E.G. wrote. E.G. also tried to position his/her proposal in terms of childcare, noting that such spatial arrangements would allow domestic workers to keep a “sharp eye” on any young children they had.²⁵⁰

Although plans to designate the kitchen formally as a living space never fully materialized, the room continued to operate as one in an unplanned fashion. The kitchen-as-living-space issue often became a focal point in apartment disputes, as people would try to move into the kitchen in order to gain residency in a building, and then try to use that residency status...

²⁴⁹ Kollontai, *Sem’ia i kommunicheskoe gosudarstvo*, 22.
²⁵⁰ E.G., “Ustroistvo zhiloi kukhni.” *Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo* 4, No. 47 (December 6, 1925): 885. E.G. also notes that one potential caveat s/he sees about having young children in the kitchen is the possibility that they could create unhygienic circumstances.
to gain access to one of the other rooms. In one such case, elaborated in *Housing Partnership*, a divorced husband brought his elderly mother from the provinces to Moscow to live in the kitchen in the building he had shared with his wife. After establishing his mother as a resident, he petitioned to be given back the room he had shared with his now ex-wife and their two children. A People’s Court (*narsud*) agreed on the basis that the elderly mother needed to be given a proper sleeping room, and evicted the ex-wife and the two children from their room to the kitchen. After the divorced wife then successfully appealed to a Cassation Court, a Provincial Court (*gubsud*) reinstated the wife and children’s right to the apartment, per the original alimony settlement. In response to such disputes, local housing management officials were encouraged to prevent residents from settling in the kitchen.\(^{251}\) One major exception, however, persisted: domestic workers given the dubious honor of being allowed to continue to live in the kitchen. In *Housing Cooperation*’s “Q&A” column (*Voprosy i otvety*), a writer for the journal suggested that, although domestic workers should live in the housing space of whoever had hired them, if the kitchen was habitable they would also be permitted to live there.\(^{252}\) The question of providing domestic workers with housing was, generally, a thorny issue as space was at a premium. In another case, residents of a commune ask if they need to provide a recently hired worker (*prisluga*) with living space; the magazine says only founding members of the commune need to be given housing.\(^{253}\)

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\(^{251}\) "Zhilishchnoe delo v sude: Vselenie materi k synu." *Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo* 4, No. 29 (2 August 1925): 263.

\(^{252}\) "Voprosy i otvety." *Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo* 5, No. 28 (September 5, 1926): 903.

That aside, if the kitchen was to serve as a site of increasingly communalized and perhaps even professionalized food preparation, officials reasoned that it could no longer be used as a living space. Such boundaries were constantly tested, however, both by lower level officials and by residents. The January 1927 issue of *Housing Partnership* published a letter to the editor, in which the author mentioned that he or she lived in an apartment where the kitchen had no heat. As a result, residents frequently cooked on small kerosene stoves in their rooms or in the hallways. As the kitchen was rarely used, the apartment manager was planning on using it to house more residents (how he or she planned to house people in a room with no heat was never mentioned). A reply to the letter, written by one of the journal’s staff members, made it clear that any plans to use the kitchen for a purpose outside of food preparation, for whatever reason, should not be allowed and the residents should try to stop the apartment manager. In addition, the reply added, the apartment manager should be required to provide heating in the kitchen and take any steps needed to ensure the kitchen quickly becomes “used communally.” Exactly how the resident or even the apartment managers were supposed to take these steps is not elucidated, but the message was clear: the kitchen was to be a space meant to serve a specific purpose, and its role as a multipurpose space was to be eliminated.254

With the space of the kitchen more clearly delineated, the spatial requirements for professionalization had been established. If the impetus to professionalize domestic workers—in particular, those involved in food production—existed, though, the means did not. Professionalization required a great deal of funds for salaries, as well as for organization, and immediately following the revolution both of these were in short supply. As a result, there was a large emphasis on volunteerism.

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254 The letter to the editor and the reply can both be found in: *Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo* 6, No. 2 (16 January 1927): 20.
In one call for volunteers, published in the book *The Work of Youth in Housing Cooperation*, the author N.V. Ostrovskaia framed kitchen work as a matter of public health. “In our country, the culture of nutrition and cooking, for all intents and purposes, remains deficient,” she wrote.\(^{255}\) “The issue of hygienic, sanitary housing and food for workers is just waiting to be addressed by young people, by contemporary people who are crucially interested in building their own ‘tomorrow,’ in which they will live and exist.”\(^{256}\) This appeal was based both on duty as well as an underlying idea of superiority: as youths, they had a better idea of what the “new everyday life” should look like, and they had a responsibility to put that into practice. There was no reason, Ostrovskaia wrote, that the kitchens needed to look like the kitchens of their grandparents.\(^{257}\) “Young people need to go and join sanitary health work, to group their energy and interests of young men and women around solutions, to arouse the interest of our fathers and mothers, and to bring about a friendly, collective offensive against the villainous habits and legacy of the dark years of slavery and poverty.”\(^{258}\)

Ostrovskaia’s book was far from the only source to make the appeal and requests for volunteers continued for decades. In 1934, the Ministry for Housing Communal Services of the RSFSR sponsored an article to be run in major newspapers such as *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, that praised a group called the “Young Leninists” for its volunteerism. It was only through this work, the article insisted, that society would move away from the “old life.”\(^{259}\) Groups involved in the management of housing also actively promoted volunteerism among their members, often specifically targeting women. The Central Union of Housing Cooperation (*Tsentrrozhilsoiuz*) printed slogans on banners to encourage women to volunteer. “Amateur labor provides the

\(^{258}\) Ostrovskaia, *Rabota molodezhi v zhilishchnoi kooperatsii*, 15.
\(^{259}\) GARF, F. A-314, op. 1, d. 162, ll. 17-18.
guarantee of victory on the housing front!” “Women, become a builder of the new everyday life through work at a housing cooperative!” Interestingly, this gendered approach contradicted other volunteer organizations, such as Ostrovskaaia’s call and the Young Leninist group, as they specifically used gender-neutral terms.

Outside of this small system of volunteerism, there were also hesitant steps to professionalize aspects of food preparation at domestic sites. Some select, individual homes were touted for containing cafeterias in which residents no longer needed to prepare food. In an article from 1922, a Moscow house nicknamed “Home of the Workers” (Dom rabochikh) was featured prominently in Housing Partnership. The complex, which held about 100 apartments, housed communalized cafeterias in addition to other social services, such as nurseries and reading rooms. As more houses and apartment buildings were designed to include cafeterias, journals such as Housing Partnership praised this trend, by devoting a large portion of its ‘Chronicle’ section to descriptions of these newly created spaces. Communes, or homes in which residents pooled their resources to live collectively, also often included cafeterias. As Andy Willimott notes in his work on communes in the early Soviet period, members used communes both to explicitly foster socialism on their own terms outside of state apparatuses, while also creating their own built environment that allowed them to tackle the shortages present in most housing.

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260 GARF, F. A-7790, op. 1, d. 374, ll. 45-45ob. Other slogans include: “Housing Cooperation: a school of collectivity,” and “Towards a new everyday through Housing Cooperation!”

261 “Iz vidov rabochikh domov: ‘Dom rabochikh’.” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo 1, No. 2-3 (October 1922): 34.


The creation of communal cafeterias within larger communes fit well into both of these goals, as it allowed the members to simultaneously promote their vision of socialism and pool together their resources in a time of scarcity. An article on one such commune emphasized the deliberate creation of cafeterias, touting that, although there was enough space in the complex to include multiple kitchens, all cooking was centralized in order to foster a collective mind set.  

Most of the attempts to create cafeterias in which food preparation was not only communalized but professionalized, though, occurred at sites of work rather than domestic spaces. For example, in 1923, the journal *Woman Worker (Rabotnitsa)* published an extensive chronicle of life at Prokhorovka, a Moscow fabric factory that employed thousands of women. The profile’s purpose was to provide a description of a factory working with the limited means available to create the best possible life for employees. As a result, while working facilities were mentioned, the focus of the piece was on the spaces for workers to live. Featured prominently among these were the newly created cafeterias. These cafeterias, the article read, allowed the mostly female workforce to eat well, without having to worry about the work associated with food preparation. While the article boasted that workers in “America, Finland, Switzerland, Germany” had no such support, workers in this factory could eat warm meals in a communal setting. “The meals are not modest,” claimed the article. As a result, the cafeteria served about 350 to 500 people a day.

Still, even as the idea of the cafeteria as an amenity was linked increasingly to the workplace, rather than to domestic spaces, organizations and their members continued to explore the possibility of professionalizing food preparation within the home. The first moves to organize

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and professionalize domestic labor took place almost immediately following the 1917 revolution. This attempt was led by and focused not on women who performed unpaid domestic labor, but on the large population of domestic workers (*domashnye rabotnitsy* or *prislugy*). In 1918, a group of domestic workers attempted to unionize at the All-Russian Congress and Conference of the Trade Union of Domestic Employees. Although the trade union was short-lived—records from it disappear after early 1920–during its two-year existence, it tried to organize aid for unemployed members, fought for the promotion of women to leadership roles (as the vast majority of its members were women), and tried to organize domestic workers in all nationalized houses.

After the collapse of the All-Russian Congress and Conference of the Trade Union of Domestic Employees, many other institutions became involved in questions of domestic labor. One of the most prominent involved parties was the burgeoning housing cooperative movement, organized under the institution The Central Union of Housing Cooperation, or *Tsentrzhilsoiuz*. *Tsentrzhilsoiuz* and other ‘housing-rental cooperative partnership’ institutions aimed to create a type of housing in which residents would assume a large degree of control in domestic decision-making, decisions the larger institutions assumed would eventually lead to increased communalization. This assumption masked a tension between the desire to allow residents to make decisions about their housing situations (primarily through housing committees, or

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267 As Rebecca Spagnolo notes in her essay “When Private Home Meets Public Workplace,” the number of domestic workers in the early Soviet period actually increased, despite Soviet officials and leaders ideological opposition to the institution of domestic work. See: Kiaer and Naiman, eds., *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia*, 230-55.
268 GARF, F. R-5554, op. 1.
269 See: GARF, F. R-5554, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 77-77ob; F. R-5554, op. 1, d. 2, l. 16; F. R-5554, op. 1, d. 3, l. 16
270 The housing-rental cooperative partnership movement (*zhilishchnoe-arendnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo*, or *ZhAKT*, plural *ZhAKTy*) became a common form of housing in the 1920s. There was a less-common form of housing also managed by *Tsentrzhilsoiuz* called the housing-construction cooperative partnership (*zhilishchnoe-stroitel'noe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo*, or *ZhSKT*), in which residents pooled their capital with the goal of eventually being able to build a new residency.
domkomy), and the expectations that the residents would make decisions in a certain way.

Although groups like Tsentrozhilsoiuz were not primarily interested in regulating domestic labor, their larger interest in making housing increasingly communal went hand-in-hand with a desire to shape the space of the kitchen.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Tsentrozhilsoiuz’s role was primarily a managerial one. The institution was intended to act as an umbrella over the thousands of ‘housing-rental cooperative partnerships,’ or ZhAKT (zhilishchno-arendnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo) homes, spread throughout the Soviet Union. These housing-rental cooperative partnerships were usually small: most had control over a single building (or even just part of a building) and had just a few dozen members. Tsentrozhilsoiuz was supposed to monitor the progress of the movement, while simultaneously providing a sort of guidance to subtly steer individual housing-rental cooperative partnerships in a specific direction.

As a part of this managerial role, Tsentrozhilsoiuz sent out numerous surveys to its members, aiming to assess exactly what sort of ‘new everyday life’ was being created in the thousands of individual ZhAKT homes. Increasingly in these questions, the kitchen became a matter of concern. In surveys from 1925, Tsentrozhilsoiuz’s Department of Communal Education (otdel kooperativnogo prosveshcheniia) began to ask questions about the space of the kitchen and the type of labor occurring there. The survey takers wanted to know whether communal kitchens and cafeterias were available to ZhAKT members. What other “organizations for the creation of a new life” were there, beyond the communalization of food preparation? How involved were women in this work? 271

Tsentrozhilsoiuz officials ascribed so much importance to these surveys because, to them, they did more than just give a picture of the material circumstances of residents; they also gave a

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271 GARF, F. A-7790, op. 1, d. 374, ll. 41-410b.
snapshot of how the quality of living movement was shaping these residents’ everyday lives. The addition of communal kitchens and cafeterias was supposed to reduce the burden of food production and transform women’s labor. As a result, the officials believed, women should be inherently interested in these programs, as they had the most to gain from them. “In view of women’s prominent role in the programs of everyday life,” read a report written by a Tsentrozilsoiuz official, “it is necessary to energetically attract the masses of laboring women to economic, managerial, cultural-educational work and to the building of a new everyday.” Tsentozhilsoiuz even created slogans to try to pique women’s interest and gain greater involvement.

Ultimately, the goal of transforming the space of the kitchen remained tied to professionalization. Tsentrozilsoiuz began actively to encourage individual ZhAKT homes to hire women to work professionally within the communalized kitchens (as well as in other areas of traditionally gendered labor, like laundry). Hiring women to take on these tasks would essentially transform the communal kitchens within each individual ZhAKT into a dual kitchen and cafeteria; residents who lived in the building would be free to use the space of the kitchen, but there would also be designated food preparation workers.

In 1932, this was formalized into a concrete plan to hire women for professional jobs in food preparation within individual ZhAKT homes. The plan called for hiring thousands of women already living in these homes and having them provide domestic labor for other

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272 Like earlier efforts from the late Imperial period reformers or from the volunteer movement in the Soviet Union, Tsentrozilsoiuz also saw its measures as helpful from a sanitation point of view. In a report by N.I. Ostrovskaja called “The Cultural and Education Work of Housing Cooperation,” she claimed there existed a direct correlation between sanitary and cultural levels. The focus on sanitary and health concerns, however, was unsurprisingly not nearly as pronounced as the focus on labor. See: GARF, F. A-7790, op. 1, d. 374, ll. 12-13.
273 GARF, F. A-7790, op. 1, d. 374, l. 14.
274 GARF, F. A-7790, op. 1, d. 374, ll. 45-45ob.
residents. Such a plan, wrote the organizers, would transform “mothers and housewives” into “productive labor for housing cooperation.” Although the initial plan was overly ambitious—the goal was originally to hire 200,000 women within Moscow (and 13,500 in the surrounding region), 61,000 in Leningrad, and a few thousand in each of the smaller cities (for example, the industrial city of Ivanovo was supposed to hire 11,500 women)—many ZhAKT homes did hire women for this express purpose at smaller numbers.²⁷⁵

This plan to professionalize women within the housing cooperative system also shows how the gender dynamics of the debate over the kitchen had changed. In the 1920s, Bolshevik activists had used the space of the kitchen as a means of critiquing and redefining the ‘women question’. Many calls for volunteers in the kitchen had expressly asked for both men and women, perhaps as a way of questioning the gendered labor assumptions (or perhaps because they assumed only women would end up applying anyway). Regardless, for most women and men, the assumption that women would do the work in the kitchen never changed. The language of the call for professional workers, however, shifted in both approach and goal, assuming an intractable genderization. The purpose of the jobs was to provide labor opportunities for ‘mothers and housewives.’ Gone were any debates over the gendering of labor, and gone were any assumptions that these “mothers and housewives” would be able to find work elsewhere.

By the time Tsentrozhilsoiuz had unveiled its 1932 plan, much had changed about the space of the kitchen. Although it had long been a communal space in practice, Soviet officials had moved to delineate the space of the kitchen and had largely removed its former multipurpose associations. Such a transformation becomes apparent when looking at contemporary plans for

²⁷⁵ GARF, F. A-7790, op. 1, d. 285, l. 14. For a comparison, the population of Moscow was around 3 million at the time, meaning such a plan would have involved over 10% of the women in the city. Ivanovo’s population was around 200,000, putting it at roughly the same percentage of women who would have been involved there.
constructing future homes. Given the massive shortages in construction materials that plagued the early Soviet Union, there were very few early plans to build new housing stock. As a result, a majority of the work within the first years of the Soviet Union was focused on how best to utilize the housing that already existed. Still, while it was extremely difficult to find the means to build, this did not stop architects and theorists from speculating about what a new form of Soviet housing would look like. In one of these early attempts, the architect E.V. Vilents-Gorovits created a book called *Workers’ Housing: Example Projects* (*Rabochee zhilishche: Primernye proekty*), in which he and a team of architects proposed a series of model homes. In each of the homes, the kitchen exists as a distinct space; it is never used as a multi-purpose room.

The designs in Vilents-Gorovits’ works also offer insight into planners’ views of the concept of kitchen communalization. In the introduction to the work, Vilents-Gorovits lays out where he and the other planners stand: critical of barracks and other communal housing (presumably mostly factory housing) that had been created to fit as many people as possible into a small living area. “In reality, from a sanitary point of view, as well as with the goal of creating a peaceful way of life, the accumulation of a large number of people into a single space is both harmful and undesirable,” Vilents-Gorovits wrote. “If, given the current economic realities, we are unable to create an ideal situation in which every worker has a separate living space, then in any case we can avoid placing 20 people into the same room.”

Yet despite these worries over the health risks of general communalization, most of the plans in Vilents-Gorovits’ work called for communal kitchens, a cafeteria, or both. Even as the author cautioned about the overuse of communal spaces, Vilents-Gorovits and others still saw value in opening up the kitchens. Such a

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276 These examples should be taken as largely theoretical, given the authors themselves acknowledged that it would likely be many years before large scale construction of any housing projects could begin.  
design remained constant regardless of the assumed type of future resident: it was used in barracks for single men, as well as in family-style apartment buildings.\textsuperscript{278}

Of course, missing in these debates is any indication of what residents would have thought about the larger vision to communalize their kitchens. While measuring residents’ reaction is a difficult task, Soviet officials tried to keep track of popular opinion towards the communalization of the kitchen. As the transcript from a meeting of the All-Union Central Council of Professional Unions in 1931 shows, what they found was not positive:

I think that it is necessary to say a few words about the so-called collective type of housing. We have increased this type of apartment from 1928 to 1929… As we well know, this type of apartment has a very large number of rooms with one kitchen. I want to establish what kind of relationship workers have with this type of apartment. From the words presented at workers’ organisations, we can see that workers are absolutely dissatisfied with apartments of this type, because living with a couple of families in a single apartment breeds disputes and uncleanness… We should not lose heart in our type of socialist housing, in which the kitchen should painlessly wither away and the residents transition to collective dining.\textsuperscript{279}

Although officials noted that they tried to guarantee that residents had a certain amount of space within the kitchen per person—two square meters per family was seen as a minimum\textsuperscript{280}—many residents intensely disliked having to share the kitchen with their neighbors. Indeed, in some cases where residents of sub-standard housing petitioned officials to build new housing for

\textsuperscript{278} See, for example, Vilents-Gorovits, et al., \textit{Rabochee zhilishche}, 8 and 13-14 for plans for workers’ barracks and family-style apartments, respectively.

\textsuperscript{279} Comments from Comrade Murav’ev. See: GARF, F. R-5451, op. 15, d. 418, l. 1.

\textsuperscript{280} GARF, F. R-5451, op. 15, d. 418, ll. 1-2.
them, they particularly specified that they wanted private kitchens. Far from ‘painlessly withering away,’ residents often called for the creation of private kitchens.

Conclusion: Planning the ‘Everyday’

In the poster that opened this chapter, the artist casts the Soviet conception of the kitchen as a drastic change. The old style of the kitchen, like the “old everyday,” would “wither away” and be replaced seamlessly with the gleaming city laid out in the poster. Yet it is clear that Bolshevik thinkers were not the first to have this vision. When liberal elites and reformers from the Imperial period looked to design kitchens, they too promoted the idea of a communal kitchen that had been centrally planned. Although this plan sometimes emerged out of practical concerns, liberals promoted communal kitchens even when they were not necessary. That being said, Bolshevik plans did eclipse those from the late Imperial period in scale and implementation; the communal kitchen became a regular feature of homes. Bolshevik planners were also in some ways more radical, attempting not only to communalize the kitchen, but to replace it with cafeterias in which food would be professionally prepared.

281 For example, the workers of the Paraskii Repair Works Factory in Kazan’ asked for additional housing in 1918, noting their current buildings housed about 1800 people in 164 apartments. In their petition, the workers specifically ask that families be provided apartments with a private kitchen. See: GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 78, ll. 14-140b.

282 In a call for a new type of housing, the editor of Housing Partnership N. Popov-Sibiriak repeatedly stated that it needed to be a break from the “old everyday.” See: N. Popov-Sibiriak, “Rabochie doma: Na vystavke proektov rabochego doma.” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo: Zhilishche i stroitel’stvo 5, No. 1 (January 1926): 58-59. See Comrade Murav’ev’s comments (GARF, F. R-5451, op. 15, d. 418, l. 1) for the quote on the kitchen “painlessly withering away,” a statement that echoed the tenant of Leninism that the state would eventually wither away.
When examining the space of the kitchen, it is clear that 1917 does not serve as a stark divide. Rather, a more clear delineation would be along very different lines: between elites (here, liberal reformers and Soviet officials) and residents. Although far from a perfect dichotomy (it ignores, for example, that elites too were residents in their own buildings and very much affected by housing policy), such a conceptual divide highlights the gaps between these two groups, both in terms of the kitchen itself, and in larger debates about attempts to implement reforms in domestic space. In both instances, plans to create a new vision emerged out of uneasiness about residents’ abilities to manage their own kitchens. While reformers largely did not seek the approval or input of residents, they were not entirely unfeeling or unaware of residents’ frustrations. Instead, one might argue that both liberal and Bolshevik planners truly believed that they had the residents’ best interests at heart, and their vision of the communal kitchen would produce a more functional and equitably gendered ‘new everyday life.’

Both liberal elites and Bolsheviks saw the transformation of the kitchen as part of a larger goal of transforming residents' everyday life through the manipulation of space and labor. In both cases, elites saw the urban kitchen as a complex and perhaps even dangerous space that needed to be reformed. Although many kitchens were de facto communalized due to restrictions on space within a quickly urbanizing Russia, planners worried intensely about the haphazard and unguided nature of such communalization and sought to replace it with a vision of the communal kitchen tied to ideological and political goals.
CHAPTER 4: THE LANDLORDS: PROPERTY, LIMINALITY, AND POWER

In the middle of a discussion about the role of landlords in Russian cities in 1913, a member of the Russian State Duma (a parliamentary body) grew frustrated with the debate and began to spout polemics. “The core group of landlords are not the best element of the city, but rather often the worst,” said Representative Velikhov of St. Petersburg, as part of a complaint about the disproportionate power that landlords often wielded as representatives of their communities. Landlords, particularly those in the provincial cities, he went on to say, “are often not intelligent people.” 283 In the parliamentary record, there was no indication that Velikhov’s comments were at all surprising or drew any condemnation; rather, it seemed almost expected that a rather dry session on property control would turn towards an ad hominem attack on a group of people.

On the other side of the revolution, in 1928, a woman in the city of Rybinsk wrote a letter suggesting a very different narrative. The author, Elizaveta Printseva, had been evicted by Soviet officials for engaging in illegal landlord practices. In a letter to Mikhail Kalinin, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of the Soviets, she laid out her life story, hoping it would give her a reprieve from the eviction order. Despite being a member of a trade union, she and her other family members faced frequent unemployment, and in order to guarantee their financial stability and housing for the family, they agreed to work with a local landlord manage one of the properties.284 But she insisted that her actions had been taken only

283 Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Chetvertyi sozyv. Stenograficheskie otchety, 1913 g., sessiia pervaya, chast’ II. Zasedaniia 31-54 (s 22 marta po 24 maia 1913 (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1913), 815.
284 GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, II. 4-4ob.
out of a desire to keep her family afloat, and that the eviction order placed against her should be waived. "Comrade Kalinin, we have never been vermin, nor will we ever be!" wrote Printseva.\footnote{GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, l. 4.}

When we trace the history of groups—especially relatively discrete groups, like landlords—it can be tempting to pick a side. Was the Duma representative Velikhov correct in his attitude (if not his ad hominem attack) that suggested that the influence landlords had on urban Russian society was pesky at best, parasitic at worst? Or should we give greater credence to Printseva’s insistence that she was doing what she needed to be done to guarantee her family’s stability? That the majority of landlords were like Printseva—small-scale enterprises designed to provide support in tenuous times?

This chapter argues that both were true, and because of that, landlords offer a particularly salient means to glimpse the power dynamics of the revolutionary era. As a group, landlords wielded a disproportionate amount of influence over the development of urban Russia, while as individuals, they struggled to negotiate their position among institutions that were constantly shifting. They existed, as the title of this chapter suggests, in a liminal position, both inside and out of the power structures of revolutionary Russia.

As Velikhov’s comment illustrates, the reason why landlords had to negotiate their position in Russian society was largely because of how landlords were viewed. In the late Imperial period, both municipal officials and liberal reformers laid blame for the issues of overcrowding and hygiene at the feet of landlords. (This blame was not entirely unjustified; many landlords kept the dwellings that they rented out in an unhygienic or overcrowded state, and valued profit over the health and well being of their tenants.) They used a variety of methods—shaming, moral pleas, proposing taxes, and praising landlords who did try to create affordable, hygienic housing—to push landlords to improve their housing stock. They also
campaigned to add taxes and levies on landlords, a method that had limited efficacy until the wartime measures that went into effect after 1914. This is not to say there were not moments when these parties were able to work together; perhaps the most prominent reoccurring example of this cooperation is liberal reformers’ plans to solicit estate donations from wealthy landlords, which municipal governments would then use to build low-income housing. On the whole, though, the relationship between landlords and reformers/municipal officials was a fraught one, and the tensions inherent in the relationship provide insight into the relationship between power, money, property, and the “housing question.”

These debates over the societal role of landlords did not go away after 1917. In the months immediately following the Bolshevik take-over, Soviet agencies passed laws strictly limiting the legal possession of property, including houses and other domestic spaces, within urban areas. Despite these new restrictions on ownership, many landlords continued to be closely involved in the management of the buildings they had formerly owned. Indeed, many rose quickly through the ranks of Soviet institutions such as housing committees (domkomy). The continued involvement of many landlords in their formerly owned properties came at the cost of increased tensions. By the mid-1920s, restrictions on landlordism and property ownership had eased, but the relationship between landlords and officials remained uneasy; throughout the 1920s and 1930s, landlords were often targeted for eviction as punishment for their class position.

This tension arose because of the role that landlords could play in the management of the everyday in an urban environment. As a group, landlords were labeled as domovladel’tsy rather than the older and more common variant applied to rural landowners, khoziain or domokhoziain. This variant of the term landlord, applied widely and almost exclusively in urban environments,
shows the extent to which urban landlords were tied to (and blamed for) the rise of city-specific problem. Of course, it is impossible to know, exactly, to what extent landlords could be held responsible for the larger problems of Russian urban life. While personal choices in property management certainly have a strong effect on the quality of a living space, a lot of the issues—were not limited to urban Russia. This broader systematic perspective also does not mean that landlords in urban Russia, both as individuals and as a systematic group, did not make decisions that exacerbated the core issues associated with the “housing question” (overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, and overpricing, to name a few); the presence of more systematic housing issues does not necessarily absolve them of the role they played in keeping that system running. What it does point to, though, is that whatever their actual actions did, landlords were seen as a powerful force in shaping the urban everyday. This chapter traces the implications of that role that they played.

Societal Fractures: Landlords and Frustrations over the “Housing Question” in Late Imperial Russia

On the front page of the 2 September 1908 issue of The Penny Press (Gazeta Kopeika, one of St. Petersburg’s best selling and most prominent papers), the newspaper’s publisher

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Vladimir Anzimirov authored a front-page editorial under his commonly used pseudonym Mirskoi.\textsuperscript{287} The editorial, titled “The Need for Apartments,” jumped between tones of anger, dismay, resignation, and hope. Every year, wrote Anzimirov, the price of apartments in urban Russia climbed higher. The problem was particularly acute in the two capitals, where rent prices per square meter were higher than in London, Vienna or Paris. Private initiatives to create mutual aid societies among residents were weak and failing. And in the midst of this mounting catastrophe, nothing was being done yet to remedy the situation. “Municipal governments, with memberships comprised of merchants and landlords, are doing nothing to satisfy the need for housing,” he wrote. The best hope for a solution, he argued, lay in the creation of charities, which would raise money both for repair work and for the creation of new housing. In the United States and Europe, he added, “these organizations, having tempered the appetites of landlords, create the possibility to build clean, healthy, and affordable housing.”\textsuperscript{288}

Anzimirov was not alone in directing his anger at the “housing question” toward landlords. Indeed, as this section will show, both liberal reformers and municipal officials wrote extensively about the deleterious effects of overcrowding and overpricing, and placed much of the blame for those problems on landlords and landlord societies. (Although many scholars have rightly highlighted the lack of cooperation between state institutions and liberal reformers, on this issue they had much to agree on.\textsuperscript{289}) Municipal governments passed increased regulations

\textsuperscript{287} For more on Vladimir Anzimirov and his role within Gazeta-Kopeika, see: Felix Cowan, “Popular Liberalism: Vladimir Anzimirov and the Influence of Imperial Russia's Penny Press.” \textit{Past Tense: Graduate Review of History} 5, no. 1 (2017): 8-28.

\textsuperscript{288} Mirskoi (Vladimir Anzimirov), “Kvartirnaia nuzhda.” \textit{Gazeta Kopeika} 1, No. 65 (September 2, 1908): 1.

\textsuperscript{289} For more on the issue of the relationship between reformers and government officials in this period, see: Edith Q. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West, eds. \textit{Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
and taxes on to landlords, particularly after the effects of the inflation surrounding WWI, often at the behest of liberal reformers.

To back up these claims, newspapers and journals overflowed with descriptions of just how bad the crisis had become. In two articles, both published in the fall of 1910 in the journal *City Affairs (Gorodskoe Delo)*, the economist Konstantin Pazhitnov used statistics to try to trace exactly how dire the situation was. Whereas the population of St. Petersburg had almost doubled between 1869 and 1900, the number of buildings only increased by about 20 percent. This lack of new construction meant that the average apartment in both Moscow and St. Petersburg held more than 8 people. Many scholars have already written about liberal reformers’ frustrations with urban problems such as overcrowding, and the role of the “housing question” within this larger conversation is not a new intervention. What this section seeks to explore, though, is the role that landlords played in these frustrations, and how landlords responded to them.

In the spring of 1908, around the same time that Anzimirov wrote his editorial, a group of landlords signed the charter of the newly formed Union of Landlords of the City of Moscow (*Soiuz domovladel’tev g. Moskvy*), having received official permission from the Mayor (gradablenik) of Moscow. The Moscow-based group of landlords were not the first to create such an organization in Russia. A year earlier in 1907, in one of the first examples in the Russian Empire, landlords in Saratov founded the Society of Landlords (*Obshchestvo domovladel’tev g.*

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290 K. Pazhitnov, “Kvartirnyi vopros v Peterburge.” *Gorodskoe Delo* 2, No. 20 (October 15, 1910): 1373-1383. The population changed from 667,963 to 1,248,122, and the number of buildings changed from 19,943 to 23,988.

Saratova). Nor would they be the last; by 1917, in addition to organizations based in cities throughout the Russian Empire, landlord groups appeared at even the neighborhood level.292 These landlord societies gave their members a structure to build on in the midst of an often-chaotic rapid urbanization. As has been well-documented by other historians, Russia’s cities grew more crowded within a very short amount of time, and while this situation offered landlords a chance to make growing profits (sometimes through means that harmed their tenants), it also presented additional challenges that landlords had to navigate. Landlord societies were designed to offer their members a roadmap through advice, financial resources, published materials and other means. Some organizations attempted to expand beyond this role, offering cultural experiences in addition to business services, and providing landlords a place within Russia’s growing civil society.

Initially, it seemed like the growth of landlord societies might be symbiotic with planners and other manifestations of Russian civil society. In particular, the issue of safety and security offered a way for landlords and the people they employed to influence the development of the city at the level of the street. In 1881, the Moscow General-Governor issued a decree, declaring landlords to be responsible for the management of the street in front of their property, through “surveillance for the sake of overall order and societal security.”293 Landlord societies seemed more than willing to play into this narrative, casting themselves and the people they employed—

292 Landlord organizations were in Kiev (1903), Revelia (1907), Mitava (1908), Dvinsk (1909), Odessa (1916), and Tiumen’ (1917), among others. Several of the bigger cities quickly gained organizations at the neighborhood level, such as the Podolskii Region in Kiev (1910), and the II Sretenskii neighborhood in Moscow (1917).

293 Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tev. Izdanie Obshchestva “Soiuz domovladel’tev g. Moskva” (Moscow: T–vo “Pechatnia S.P. Iakovleva”, 1910), 98.
including caretakers (*dvorniki*), watchmen (*storozhi*), and attendants (*dezhurnye*)—as monitors and guardians of the urban environment.\(^{294}\)

However, more often, the rising visibility and economic power of urban landlords brought them into conflict with planners. As Anzimirov’s editorial shows, he and many others held landlords directly responsible for the housing need. They had, he writes, stymied attempts to reform the housing question at the municipal level. As landlord unions did often try to place their members in municipal government posts—in the city of Perm’, for example, the Landlord Union put up 76 of its members as candidates for the Perm’ City Duma (*Permskaia gorodskaiia duma*)\(^{295}\)—it is clear the Landlord Societies and Unions were using their growing influence and swelling membership ranks for the purpose of affecting municipal governance.

In other words, both the Landlord Societies and the liberal reformist movement were on the rise at the same time, but their visions of a new Russian society were often at odds with each other. Neither of these groups was monolithic, but both groups employed overarching strategies: landlords advocated for a guild-like approach (in which they would create societies that would regulate their own members), while reformers and municipal officials challenged the profit-seeking motives of landlords and supported increased regulations. By tracing the rise of the landlord societies, as well as the response to them among reformers and municipal officials, it is possible to trace out how these differences emerged, and what the clashes tell us about late Imperial urban society.

The primary service of these landlord unions and societies was economic: through “mutual aid” (*vzaimopomoshch’*), members would be better equipped to manage their affairs.\(^{296}\)

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\(^{294}\) Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tsev [1910], 98-101.

\(^{295}\) GAPK, F. 35, op. 1, d. 355, ll. 1-6.

\(^{296}\) The full quote comes from section I of the Charter of the Union of Landlords of the City of Moscow: “The Society has the goal to unify, owing to mutual aid, the landlords of Moscow, as well as people who
These services included guidance on how to best use (eksplotatsiia) real estate and land, the organization of credit for land development, and access to insurance. In addition to these services, these groups offered an apparatus through which members could receive information that would “raise the legal consciousness,” so members know not only their rights but also their responsibilities and may even be able to promote the society to governmental and societal organizations. This information came in many forms. Larger groups printed guidebooks (spravochnaia kniga) for their members, which could be quite thorough: the 1910 edition produced by the Moscow Landlords Union was over 600 pages long. Each element of these guidebooks was designed to provide advantageous information to members of the society. In the opening pages of these books, the editors solicited and printed dozens of pages of advertisements, Although a majority of them were connected to construction, housing upkeep, and other related processes, this was not exclusively the case; in the 1912 Moscow guidebook, for example, on a two page spread the page on the left was for a shopping center for construction materials, while the page on the right was for the “world’s greatest billiards producer” (velichaishaia fabrika v mire billiardov). These advertisements were certainly a way for the guidebook editors to generate revenue, but they also provided a connection between landlords and a growing consumer society.

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297 Ustav Soiuza domovladel’tev g. Moskvy (Moscow: Tipografiia L.N. Kholcheva, 1910), 1.
298 Ustav Soiuza domovladel’tev g. Moskvy, 2.
299 Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tev [1910].
300 Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tev. Izdanie Obshchestva “Soiuz domovladel’tev g. Moskva” (Moscow, Pechatnia S.P. Iakovleva, 1912), ix-x.
301 For more, see: Sally West, I Shop in Moscow: Advertising and the Creation of Consumer Culture in Late Tsarist Russia (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), as well as Marjorie L. Hilton, Selling to the Masses: Retailing in Russia, 1880-1930 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).
The bulk of the pages, though, were comprised of information on how to navigate the day-to-day tasks of being a landlord. In the Moscow City Guide, the editors printed copies of all the city and empire-wide decrees that might affect the society’s members. They included information on emergency services, such as the phone numbers for the neighborhood police stations, and the codes for the different city fire stations. In a more invasive example of the information provided, the 1912 Moscow guidebook included not only the names of all court employees, but also the home addresses of each of the 16 bailiffs (sudebnyi pristav) working at the Moscow Regional Court (Moskovskii okruzhnoi sud). In addition to this collated information, the guide also included sample contracts, produced by the Union and meant to be used as a guide by all members, as a way to standardize the process of renting apartments and homes throughout the city.

Standardization was indeed one of the primary goals of these landlord organizations. In an editorial titled “The Apartment Question,” an unnamed author writing for the Moscow Union of Landlords argued that many of the problems blamed on landlords came back to the issue of a lack of unification. “The apartment question is one of the most pressing problems, both for landlords and for tenants,” the author wrote. “This question is difficult to fix for many reasons, the most crucial of which is that landlords are poorly organized. If the landlords were really in unison, in one plan, perhaps it would be possible to bring about a sizeable improvement in the solution of this question.” This assertion was, of course, challenged by the many voices that argued that increasing the power of landlords would create more, not fewer, problems; this chapter will examine those voices in the following section. At the moment, this chapter will focus on a different question: how did landlord societies expect to create this sense of unity?

302 Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tev [1912], 23-25.
303 “Kvartirnyi vopros,” in Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tev [1910], 483.
Indeed, the growth and popularity of these societies is not self-evident; in a competitive business like property and apartment rental, cooperative societies or unions can seem antithetical to the business goals of individual landlords, as they would mutual support other landlords with whom they may have been in competition. Yet these organizations consistently attracted members by offering both a business service and a social environment for landlords and their families. These twin services were aimed at bringing in both landlords who owned many properties, as well as those who owned just one or two. In order to more closely explore the issues of landlord societies, this section will focus particularly on Union of Landlords of the City of Moscow.

One of the answers came in the form of having landlord societies operate as more than just business groups, but also as a social unifier for all landlords in a city. In its charter, the founding members of the Moscow Union of Landlords deliberately framed their work as not only economic, but also as a social and cultural. The goal of the organization, they wrote, was to provide not only for the “material needs and uses of landlords and landlordism, but for their satisfaction—the spiritual exigencies of the Society’s members—and to therefore provide them freedom from these busy times through comforts and enjoyments.” In the service of this goal, the Moscow Union planned to hold a number of social events: “vocal-instrumental concerts, literary soirees, dramatic plays and operas, bazaars and various sporting events.”

These activities were designed to draw in new members, and the growing membership rolls were then expected to increase the standing of landlord societies. And indeed, should any

304 Although the issues faced by the landlord society of a larger city such as Moscow would differ from those of smaller towns, most of the issues connected to landlordism—overcrowding, rising prices, and, from the landlords’ perspective, rent dodging—were issues across the Russian Empire. In addition, far more published documents from the Moscow Union have survived than from smaller groups.
305 Ustav Soiuza domovladel’tsev g. Moskvy, 2.
306 Ustav Soiuza domovladel’tsev g. Moskvy, 3. Unfortunately, due to the lack of archival records about the activities of the Moscow Union of Landlords, it is impossible to tell how many of such events were actually held.
landlords have found themselves interested in joining, they would have found few barriers in their way. Most landlord societies made a point of opening up their membership ranks to as many people as possible. The Moscow Union specified that members could be adults of either gender; the only constraints were that members could have no criminal convictions in Moscow courts, and they had to both live and possess property within the city limits.307

This high degree of openness is significant because landlords were far from a homogenous group. As was (and is) the case in many cities, in Moscow, while there were several large-scale landlords who owned large amounts of property throughout the city, there were also many more smaller scale landlords, who rented out rooms within their own residence. Even relatively recent newcomers to the city could fill the role, as the informal role of being one of the first migrants (otkhodniki) from a particular village or region parlayed into a more formal role as landlord for successive groups of migrants from that same area.308 Based on Soviet eviction statistics from 1926-1930, the average Muscovite landlord and his or her family possessed about 13.5 square meters (145 square feet) of personal living space.309 Although higher than the average resident, these statistics show that many landlords lived in spaces not much larger than their tenants, an idea that many would evoke in eviction proceedings in the

307 Ustav Soiuza domovladel’tsev g. Moskvy, 4-5. The clause specified that the real estate can be jointly or sole owned; landlords could live within their own properties (i.e., no barring smaller landlords who rented out rooms within the house where they too lived, a not uncommon arrangement; and having possession of a property could mean lifetime ownership, a long-term lease, or a new construction built on rented land.

308 For example, in Semen Kanatchikov’s memoirs, one of the people he stays with in St. Petersburg (Bykov) began as an otkhodnik from Kanatchikov’s father’s village, and had since become a landlord in the area past the Nevskii Gate. See: Semen Kanatchikov and Reginald E. Zelnik, trans., A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia: The Autobiography of Semën Ivanovich Kanatchikov (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 83-86.

309 TsGAMO F. 956, op. 1, d. 8, l. 5. In a report to the Presidium of the Moscow Soviet, the Moscow Oblast’ Management of Real Estate (Moskovskoe oblastnoe upravlenie nedvizhimykh imushchestv) reported that it had used administrative eviction to remove 884 landlords and their families from 12130 squared meters of space, which would average out to 13.7 meters per family. Although not a perfect measure—knowing the mean gives us no sense of the variation (either the range or the median)—but it does give a sense of the material conditions of many landlords.
Soviet period (which this chapter will address in a later section). On the other side of the scale were the landlords who controlled massive amounts of property, often scattered across the city. Interestingly, several of these landlords donated large portions of their estates for the purpose of building low-income housing after their deaths.\footnote{More information will be given on these donations later in this section.}

Yet despite the vast differences in the material and social positions of landlords who were members of these societies, the societies themselves continued to promote an environment into which every landlord could join and participate equally in events like soirees and other gatherings. There existed a huge difference between the landlord Gavrila Gavrilovich Solodovnikov, whose estate was worth over 15 million rubles, and landlords who would have leased out a room within a house where they also lived.\footnote{Solodovnikov donated approximately 6 million rubles of his estate to create low-income housing. This was one-third of his estate: another third was donated to rural women’s schools, and a final third was donated to create co-ed professionalization schools in the provinces. See: TsIAM F. 179, op. 21, d. 1982a, ll. 243-243ob.} But societies like the Moscow Union not only sought the membership of both types of landlords, but it placed them into social situations where they would interact. Landlord societies and unions operated on the principle that although there may have been social differences and even economic competition between their individual members, that those dividing lines were not nearly as stark as the factors that drew them together.

As the influence of landlord societies grew, it remained an open question how they would be received by other elements of Russia’s burgeoning civil society, such as reform-minded elites or increasingly influential municipal officials. Some reformers and officials tried to work with individual landlords or landlord societies, with the goal of being able to create housing projects with the capital. This offered planners the economic backing to create projects (such as the municipal-run nighttime shelters discussed in chapter 2) that they might otherwise been unable to
fund, while providing landlords with the ability to justify and contextualize their large estates as ultimately contributing to Christian charity. Perhaps the most famous example was with the estate of Gavrila Gavrilovich Solodovnikov, who after his death in 1901, donated about 6,000,000 rubles to the Moscow City Management for the construction of low-income housing.\textsuperscript{312} He was not the only landlord to leave such a donation upon his death; Goriunov left the city enough money to build a large, multi-corpus apartment building for low-income residents, and Savva Morozov included a donation in his will following his suicide.\textsuperscript{313}

These posthumous donations by individual estates did little to ease the overarching tensions between living landlords and liberals/municipal officials. And when it became clear that donations and the creation of individual housing projects was not going to solve the larger “housing question,” many liberals began to push for more punitive measure against landlords. Making full use of a burgeoning print culture, they wrote editorials, articles and lectures calling for ways to force landlords to produce and maintain housing that was sanitary and affordable.

The most common change proposed was in the form of increased taxes and other fees. These plans to tax landlords date to before the creation of the landlord societies. In a pamphlet published in 1903 called “Special Levies from Landlords in Russia,” the author V.H. Tverdokhlebov proposed that the state, and then municipal governments, across the Russian Empire should impose taxes (\textit{sbory}) on landlords, in order to use the proceeds to build up city infrastructure.\textsuperscript{314} While noting that there were cases in which landlords had been able to improve to the city on their own accord—such as the Betterment Law in England, which provided

\textsuperscript{312} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 801, ll. 27-27ob; L. Littauer and N. Sopikov, \textit{Rabochii zhilishchnyi vopros} (Astrakhan: Parovaia Novaia Russkaia Tipografiia, 1909), 130-131.
\textsuperscript{313} For Goriunov, see: TsIAM, F. 179, op. 23, d. 1053, l. 1. For Morozov, see: T. P. Morozova and I. V. Potkina, \textit{Savva Morozov} (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1998), esp. chapters 5 and 7.
\textsuperscript{314} V.H. Tverdokhlebov, \textit{Spetsial'nye sbory s domovladel'tsev v Rossii}. (Odessa: “Ekonomichaskaia” tipografiia, 1903), 1-2. Tverdokhlebov was also a frequent contributor to \textit{Gorodskoe delo} (\textit{City Affairs}), a prominent reformist publication.
incentives for landlords to provide non-essential improvements to their properties—he doubted that Russian landlords were up to the task. “In Russia, the question over a Betterment program is not yet practical,” he wrote, arguing that due to a lack of organization, landlords would be unable to agree on what path to take, and how to achieve it. Instead, he proposed, having such a tax would allow the state and capable municipal governments to make the changes themselves. There had already been limited successes: as early as 1900, a cluster of cities in the Arkhangel’sk region had used a levy on real estate to raise funds for needed bridge repairs, and Irbit, a city of about 20,000 people to the northeast of Ekaterinburg, had thus far raised over 3000 rubles for citywide improvements.

Such taxes remained relatively rare, and the inability to levy comprehensive taxes on apartments was further compounded by reformers’ frustrations about the rising cost of apartments. “Life in cities gets more and more expensive everyday,” wrote the staff of City Affairs in the journal’s first editorial. The issues of rising prices and overcrowding were seen as important because, in addition to the impact on individual tenants, reformers also saw them as the root of larger societal problems. The inability of landlords to prove affordable housing, therefore, was seen as not only an economic problem, but also a moral one. In the tract “Crime and the Housing Question in Moscow,” the author Petr Vsesviatskii sought to explore the impact that “the housing factor has on the moral position of the population.” Vsesviatskii saw his role as a criminologist similar to that of an epidemiologist studying disease: to trace to roots of crime,

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315 For more on the Betterment program, see: Tverdokhlebov, *Spetsial’ nye sbory*, 3-6; quote on pp. 6.
which he saw as directly connected to substandard living standards.\textsuperscript{319} Both property crime (e.g., theft) and violent crime (e.g., assault), he insisted, occurred at higher rates in neighborhoods with high population densities.\textsuperscript{320}

Landlord societies did not deny that rent was rising, but they contended that the blame with their members, but rather with tenants who did not pay their rent. In the 1910 Union of Landlords of the City of Moscow guidebook, the unsigned editorial “The Apartment Question” argued that anti-eviction laws made it difficult for landlords to address non-payment, and they were, as a result, left with no choice but to raise rents on their remaining tenants. “Time and time again, an apartment is rented out for a high sum on a long-term contract, and after a short time, the payment stops. If the matter is subject to review by the District Court, lodgers can squeeze through a loophole to escape eviction; it falls to landlords to assume the costs of a trial, and suffer large losses. What is he to do?” the editorial asked. “To cover costs, he raises rents. On account of a few, who have made it routine to not live within their means or who willfully avoid paying, landlords are hard-pressed and other tenants foot the bill,” the editorial read.\textsuperscript{321}

The issue of rising prices was already pronounced in the early 1910s, but the advent of war pushed the issue even further into the public eye. In an article published in \textit{City Affairs} in 1915 on the “fight against excessive prices” (\textit{bor’ba s dorogoviznoi}), the editors of the journals noted how the question of being able to afford necessities such as housing in the city was becoming “one of the most central of Russian life.”\textsuperscript{322} Additional articles in \textit{City Affairs} noted how the rising costs of other items, such as food or increased taxes in wartime, put a greater

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\textsuperscript{319} Vsesviatskii, “Prestupnost’ i zhilishchnyi vopros v Moskve,” 15.
\textsuperscript{320} Vsesviatskii, “Prestupnost’ i zhilishchnyi vopros v Moskve,” 10.
\textsuperscript{321} “Kvartirnyi vopros,” in Spravochnaia kniga dlia domovladel’tsev [1910], 483-484.
\textsuperscript{322} “Bor’ba s dorogoviznoi.” \textit{Gorodskoe delo} 7, No. 11-12 (1915): 609.
\end{flushright}
burden on apartment dwellers in the city proper, and therefore needed to be considered as
connected to the housing issue.\textsuperscript{323}

Wartime exerted a public pressure on municipal governments to institute the rent caps
and increased taxes that liberal reformers had long pushed for. On August 25, 1915, the City of
Moscow instituted its first rent freeze, prohibiting landlords anywhere in the city from raising the
cost of housing. In response to the new legislation, the Moscow Landlord Union organized in
opposition. In a long letter to the Moscow City Duma on March 24, 1916, the organization
argued that due to the freeze, its members could no longer afford to perform maintenance on
their rental properties, and that many would soon slide into disrepair. The issue of rising costs,
they argued, affected them as well, as the prices of items increased rapidly. The price to heat a
building that brought in 21,000 rubles in rent had increased from 2105 rubles in 1913 to 5747 in
1915.\textsuperscript{324} They also appealed to the Duma more directly. “[T]he municipal budget is directly
dependent on the amount of net income that owners can derive from their property,” wrote the
authors of the letter, by adding “in view of the fact that property taxes are one of the most
important sources of income for the City of Moscow,” they tried to reframe the issue of higher
rents as being positive for the city.\textsuperscript{325}

Yet in both this attempt to unfreeze rents, as well as in a later attempt in April 1916, the
City Duma refused to allow the landlords to increase their rents. Their reasoning was linked to
the conception of suffering: the war had caused the poor populations of the city to suffer the

\textsuperscript{323} For example, see: Konstantin Pazhitnov, “Zhilishchnaia kooperaviia i kredit.” \textit{Gorodskoe delo} 7, No. 10 (1915): 535, or A. S. Vinogradskii, “O srestvakh i nuzhdakh gorodov i o novych ob”ektakh oblozhennia.” \textit{Gorodskoe delo} 8, No. 17 (1916): 772.
\textsuperscript{324} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 3448, l. 2-7ob.
\textsuperscript{325} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 3448, l. 1.
most, and higher rent would “shift the burden on to the their shoulders.”\textsuperscript{326} The moral argument, long championed by liberal reformers, had finally begun to gain traction.

This decision, although firmly rooted within the historical circumstances of the First World War and its larger effects on Russian society, also serves as an encapsulation of the relationship between landlords and liberal reformers/municipal officials. The tensions that were built up through the late Imperial period, and came to a head during wartime, were a result of a fundamentally different view of what society should be. Both landlords and reformers/officials built on the growth of Russian civil society in the early twentieth centuries. Both claimed to be operating for the public good. Yet their views of the role of governmental power were fundamentally at odds, as were their expectations about financial issues. It is important to note, though, that the somewhat hostile relationship that developed was not inevitable; rather, the tensions that existing between these different groups was steadily developed throughout the early twentieth century. The fact that such differences did develop speaks to the richness of opinions in Russian civil society.

\textbf{Both Inside and Out: Landlords and Their Liminal Position in the Early Soviet Period}

We now arrive at 1917—the historical moment that often seems to encapsulate the concept of revolutionary shift. Looking at the role of landlords would seem to reinforce this divide, as the early Soviet state passed a series of laws passed shortly following the 1917 October Revolution that froze the private ownership of housing stock in urban areas, leaving the landlords who had controlled the properties in an uncertain position. Although overall, the Soviet

\textsuperscript{326} TsIAM, F. 179, op. 21, d. 3448, l. 30ob.
state and its officials were outwardly antagonistic towards landlords, the Soviet state was also not equipped with the power or organization to completely overhaul the landlord system. The Soviet system’s reliance on landlords, however, did not mean that Soviet officials did not try to use state structures to constrain the powers that landlords had (or that officials believed they had). Scholars such as Mark Meerovich have looked at this interference into landlordism as an example of a totalitarian state exerting greater and greater control on the everyday lives of its residents. In this section, though, I propose a framework closer to the one deployed by Kate Brown in *A History of No Place*: one in which all the players—Soviet officials, former representatives of power (in this case, the landlords) and even residents all remain in a state of limbo precisely because they are checked by each others’ power. While this does not mean there were not uneven displays of power—the increasing role the state played in eviction certainly shows they had such power and were often unafraid to wield it—it does illustrate that the social and political relations between Soviet officials, landlords and residents were complex and influenced by more than the unrestrained impulses of an ideological state.

The idea of the Soviet state as an unrestrained antagonistic force against landlords (and private property more generally) derives largely from a series of laws passed shortly following the 1917 October Revolution. The first of these was passed on December 14, 1917, when the Council of People’s Commissars issued the “Decree on the Prohibition of Real Estate Transaction,” which forbid the sale or purchase of urban property or land, pending the so-to-be

327 Mark Meerovich, *Nakazanie zhilishchem: Zhilishchnaia politika v SSSR kak sredstvo upravleniia lid’mi, 1917-1937* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2008). Meerovich argues that the Soviet state used the deficiencies and lack of suitable housing in urban spaces as a means of control.

328 Although Brown’s work focuses on a very different subject—national construction in the area known as the *kresy*—her work proposes that many of the actions of the Soviet state can be understood because of its lack of power, rather than abundance of it. “Instead of a story of a strong state crushing, co-opting, or coercing its people into submission, we have one of a weak state threatened by people they were nominally ruling,” she writes on page 13. See: Kate Brown, *A History of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).
“collectivization” (obobshchestvlenie) of all urban spaces.\textsuperscript{329} This decree was reinforced less than one year later, when the All-Russian Central Executive Committee passed “On the Abolition of Private Ownership of Real Estate in Urban Areas” in August 1918, which municipalized the ownership of all buildings and real estate in any city or urban settlement with a population of more than 10,000 people.\textsuperscript{330}

Even though these laws were building off of tensions and mistrust towards landlords that had existed long before 1917, they were unprecedented, at least on paper. However, on the ground, the situation was more like transference of the status quo into new categories. The response in many cities to the vacuum of power left by these changes was the creation of housing committees, or domkom, which were managerial units comprised of residents. Soviet officials quickly stated that these housing committees were the new housing administrators: “It is now rare to hear complaints about the inability to cope with the management work, and the affairs are now streamlined and running normally,” and that the former landlords (also called the “oppositional elements”) had, for the most part, accepted that the domkom were in charge, at least as a “temporary state of affairs.”\textsuperscript{331}

However, organization notes from the Moscow City Archive strongly suggest that the transition to social ownership of housing property was much more messy, even in the new capital. Residents were unwilling to pay rent to the new Soviet institutions, citing an inability of either the domkom or Soviet officials to perform even basic repairs and maintenance. “The

\textsuperscript{329} “Dekret o zapreshchenii sdelok s nedvizhimost’iu [1917.12.14]” in Sobranie ukazhenii i raspriazhenii pravitel’stva za 1917-1918gg. Upravlenie delami Sovnarkoma SSSP (Moscow, 1942), 152.

\textsuperscript{330} “Ob otmene prava chastnoi sobstvennosti na nedvizhimosti v gorodakh. Dekret Vserossiiskogo Tsentral’nogo Ispolnitel’nogo Komiteta Sovetov Rabochikh, Soldatskikh, Krest’ianskikh i Kazach’ikh Deputatov” in Sobranie ukazhenii i raspriazhenii pravitel’stva za 1917-1918gg. Upravlenie delami Sovnarkoma SSSP (Moscow, 1942), 833-836.

\textsuperscript{331} TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 1, l. 1-2 (quotes from 1ob).
picture is bleak and serious: many residents refuse to pay rent, arguing that there is no help from our side,” read the report, also cited in chapter one of this dissertation. “I deem it necessary to send an advance of funds from the center to cover rent payments to avoid an epidemic and as a precaution against a complete catastrophe in terms of plumbing and fire protection,” the author wrote, presumably referring to the fact that without rent payments, local institutions would be unable to perform even basic sanitary and emergency work. Indeed, many landlords began to work within the new Soviet framework to try to shape or even push back against Soviet decrees. They often did so successfully. One of the most common tactics was appeal. When the El’sin family, who had been landlords, were served with an eviction notice in 1919 because the building’s new domkom planned to turn their living space into a community cafeteria (stolovaia), they appealed to the raisovet. After only five days, the Housing and Land Department sided with the El’sins, refusing to uphold the domkom’s eviction notice.

In addition, although landlords in urban spaces had been ordered to relinquish legal control over their properties, many still played a significant role in their management. We know this because residents filed complaints with local neighborhood soviets (councils), that their landlords and their families had established themselves as domkom representatives, and had used their new positions to shut down residents’ complaints (usually over repairs). Local Soviet officials were unsure of how to proceed, given the liminal status of these landlords; on the one hand, they were clearly continuing to act as landlords, but on the other hand, they were representatives of a Soviet institution (the domkom). Soviet officials were left with a riddle of identity. To what should they ascribe more weight: the social status of these people before 1917, or the role that they currently played in the Soviet system?

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332 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 75, l. 4.
333 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 53, ll. 2-3ob.
334 TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1., d. 80, l. 1ob.
It is clear that, far from being the straightforward establishment of state dominance, these policies were, in practice, negotiations of power. These Civil War-era policies gave legal control of the urban housing stock to the state, but what that legal control meant is a murky question. They were also short-lived. In August 1921, shortly after the beginning of the New Economic Policy, the questions of the role of landlords and property ownership arose again. In back-to-back resolutions passed on the same day, Sovnarkom reversed much of what had been established in the 1917 and 1918 decrees. Through “On the Granting to Owners of Non-Municipalized Buildings the Rights of Non-Gratuitous Disposition of Real Estate Property,” citizens were now allowed to legally own one building and rent out the space within it, provided that the owners lived on the property as well.335 Although landlord activities were severely restricted based on the condition that one could not rent out more than one building, this act re-opened the possibility for a Soviet citizen to make profit from being a landlord. Then, in May 1922, the Central Executive Committee’s (TsIK) Decree “On Basic Private Property Rights” withdrew the legal restrictions on sale from the December 1917 decree, making it once again legal for anyone with citizenship rights to buy, sell, own, and lease private property (including housing stock) within urban environments.336

Once landlords were legally able to exist again, the question about their role in the Soviet system became even thornier. At a meeting about the Housing Rental Cooperative Partnership movement in 1931, residents aired their grievances. In the meeting, they noted that landlords had used Soviet institutions and titles, such as the domkom, to continue to manage their properties in

335 “O predostavlenii sobstvennikami nemunitsipalizirovannykh stroenii prava vozmezdnogo otchuzhdeniia nedvizhimogo imushchestva. Dekret SNK [08.08.1921]” in Sobranie ukazhenii i rasporiazhenii pravitel' stva za 1921g. Upravlenie delami Sovnarkoma SSSP (Moscow, 1944), 706-707.
336 “Ob osnovnykh chastnykh imushchestvennykh pravakh, priznavaemykh RSFSR, okhraniaemykh ee zakonami i zashchishchaemykh sudami RSFSR [22.05.1922].” For more on the legal debates over property rights, see: Armstrong, The Soviet Law of Property, chapter 2 (especially pp. 25-27).
the same way that they had before 1917. Even among the Housing Rental Cooperative Partnership \((Zhilishchno-arendnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo\), or ZhAKT) movement, which was supposed to be an experimental attempt to allow residents to take complete control over their housing circumstances, pre-1917 landlords still managed to play a major role in the management of housing. ³³⁷ In one case, residents of a ZhAKT home noted that the head of the \textit{domkom}, who had been the landlord of the building before 1917, refused to raise the heat in the building. The residents complained to officials at the neighborhood soviet (council), but the officials sided with the \textit{domkom} head. He was, after all, supposed to be the local representative of Soviet power. The \textit{domkom} head/landlord continued to refuse to heat the house, leading to one of the children who lived in the building to fall ill and die. ³³⁸ Outside of the tragedy of the case, there was a clear message in the case: landlords had become a part of the Soviet apparatus.

Yet, even as individual landlords learned to negotiate the Soviet system and use the state’s institutional changes to their own advantage, it was clear they still existed in a precarious position. Local agencies began to track the “social and material position” of landlords. ³³⁹ Soviet publications made it clear that there should be a stance of distrust in any relations with landlords; in an article published in \textit{Housing Partnership (Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo)} published in 1922, the author suggested that landlords were using their newfound power to evict tenants and secure more living space for themselves. ³⁴⁰ The duties of landlords did become to be more clearly delineated—for example, in a Q&A column published in the newspaper \textit{Za Novyi Byt} (Towards a New Everyday), it was noted that the landlords were completely responsible for all cleaning.

³³⁷ For more on the ZhAKT movement, see: Lynn Atwood, \textit{Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), esp. chapter 3.
³³⁸ TsAGM, F. 1495, op. 1, d. 9, l. 121.
³³⁹ TsGAMO, F. 2266, op. 1, d. 1, l. 25.
and repairs of common areas within a home\textsuperscript{341}—but even as landlords were more closely integrated into the Soviet system, there remained a sense that they were outside of it.

The most obvious example of this removal from the Soviet system was also the most literal: eviction. Although eviction could be used against various populations—even Soviet officials could be evicted to make room for workers\textsuperscript{342}—it was used with particular frequency against landlords. Individual regions kept track of the number of landlords evicted (as well as the number of merchants), including tables with the number of rooms and amount of space that such evictions opened up.\textsuperscript{343}

When served with eviction orders, many residents fought against the process, writing letters to high-ranking officials urging them to reconsider. These letters, which acted as negotiations between the evictees and the state, can be examined to explore the ways in which potential evictees in the mid-1920s positioned themselves in what they believed would be the most advantageous manner. In particular, I will examine the gender implications of these cases. Although it is impossible to know the exact composition of people who protested their evictions for landlord activities, of the letters remaining at the State Archive of the Russian Federation from the 1920s, a majority were written by women.\textsuperscript{344} But what the gender imbalance of the letter writers means is a question of interpretation.

\textsuperscript{341} “Voprosy i otvetы.” \textit{Za Novyy Bit}, No. 16 (August 1926): 20.
\textsuperscript{342} For a case in which a pregnant Soviet official protested the methods used to evict her from property that was being turned into a workers’ commune, see: GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, ll. 162-165.
\textsuperscript{343} For example, within Moscow Oblast, the Moscow Council (\textit{Moskovskii sovet}) communicated frequently with the Moscow Regional Management of Real Estate (\textit{Moskovskoe oblastnoe upravlenie nedvizhimykh imushchestv}) about such evictions. For an example of such reports, see: TsGAMO, F. 956, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 5-7ob.
\textsuperscript{344} Letters protesting evictions can be found in the following \textit{fondy} at GARF: F. R-130 (Soviet of People’s Commissars of the RSFSR [SNK RSFSR]), F. R1235 (All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies [VTsIK]), and F. R4085 (People’s Commissariat of Workers and Peasants Inspection of the RSFSR [NK RKI RSFSR]). Most of the examples used in this paper were sent to Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, although a large number are also addressed to Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich.
There are two overarching potential readings of the situation. The first interpretation is one of strategy: the letters were tools deployed by women, who used tropes about family life as an attempt to elicit greater leniency from Soviet officials and institutions. This interpretation implies that women believed that they could recast an issue of class in terms of gender, and in the process, reverse the evictions with which they had been targeted. The second interpretation is a bleaker one: it suggests that the reason more women wrote letter to protest evictions is because they were simply targeted more often. In comparing the language of women’s letters to that of men’s, this interpretation suggests that the men’s letters reveal more of a shock at eviction, and uses that idea to explore gendered expectations of eviction.

We begin with the first theory: the idea of a strategic deployment of gender. The idea of women using their gender as a tool of negotiating with the state is not a new one. Other scholars, most notably Lynne Viola, have argued convincingly that women in the early Soviet period used their gender as a sort of shield, as they were less likely to be arrested or otherwise punished for protesting.345 Although these letters also show gender being deployed by women as a strategy in negotiating with the Soviet state, these cases present a different phenomenon. Unlike the women Viola describes, these women did not believe that their actions were a protest against the Soviet state. Whereas the women of the bab’i bunty used their gender as a tool to stand opposed to state policy, these women invoked their gender to show that their actions were merely steps meant to secure their own families, and in the process, strengthen Soviet society. They decry the social isolation wrought by their evictions, and plead with Soviet officials to take steps to allow them and their families to reenter society. “The court considered me a pariah,” wrote one woman,

Anna Aleksandrovna Kozulieva. Overturning the eviction offered a means for Kozulieva and her family to re-enter Soviet society. To understand how these letters worked, we turn now to a close reading of some examples.

The task of these letters is straightforward. Those who wrote them had recently been evicted for owning property and earning income as a landlord; the letters were designed to convince high-level officials that the act of owning the property did not make them class enemies. In the letters written by women, one tactic was used with particular frequency: the letter writers attempted to show how the circumstances that led to owning residential property came out of the concern of well-being for their families.

Many contrast how owning a building gave them a security that they had never had before, meaning that they no longer had to worry about things such as feeding their children. In her letter, Kozulieva presents a bleak backstory: her husband was drafted, first into the Imperial Army in 1914 and then into the Red Army, and she was left with several young children and little means of support. To manage, she writes, he was able to find odd jobs like making valenki and occasionally engaged in private trade "in order to ensure my children were fed." When her husband returned, together they sold all their property in the village and moved to Nizhnii Novgorod, where they bought a house measuring 95 m², of which they rented four rooms. Even in cases when the letter writer did not experience poverty, the idea of owning property is still linked to a desire to guarantee stability for the family. In the case of Maria Ivanova Maksimova, she insists that she rented out the property she inherited from her brother because there was no other way to guarantee their family’s income.

\[\text{GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, l. 75.}\]
\[\text{GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, ll. 75-75ob.}\]
\[\text{GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, ll.198-199.}\]
By presenting the idea of owning property not as exploitative landlordism, but rather as an act taken to guarantee of basic levels of security – a mother's ability to feed her children, for example – these letters are able to transition into their central premise. The primary injustice, these letter writers insist, is not the act of owning property, but evictions from their homes. In the words of a letter written by O. Dadydova, to overturn her eviction and return her property would be "an act of proletarian justice." Their connection to their properties presents no risk to Soviet society, they insist.

The pivot of this argument – that owning small amounts of property for the sake of one's family is not exploitative, but perhaps even a proletarian quality – is made possible because of the gender of the letter writers. As women, these letter writers were able to draw upon the growing rhetoric that the Soviet Union's gender policy allowed women to support and strengthen their own families. Throughout the 1920s, periodicals directed specifically at women such as Rabotnitsa, as well as general readership newspapers, emphasized the importance of the family. In article after article, authors evoke a bleak image of pre-revolutionary family life, in order to contrast it with the possibilities available in the Soviet Union. “In the prerevolutionary period, men were confined to the factory for 10-12 hour shifts, while their wives (if they themselves did not work) knew no life outside of the kitchen and childcare,” read one article written by a member of the People’s Commissariat of Communal Management (Narkomkommunkhoz RSFSR) that was to be published in Pravda and Izvestiia. “After such grueling work, they do not have the time nor the material resources to allow for any cultural entertainment, as even a trip on the tram is unaffordable.” The goal outlined in this article – ensuring citizens have enough means for then to provide a better life for their family – aligns perfectly with the reasons the

349 GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, l. 32.
350 GARF, F. A130, op. 1, d. 162, ll. 1-10 [quote on l. 4].
authors provided for their actions. Owning and managing small pieces of property, these women insist, gave them such security. As women, the desire to provide for their children also aligned well with established gender norms.

While the authors may have hoped that their appeal to the growing rhetoric of the Soviet family would cause officials to reconsider their eviction cases, the attempts, by and large, were unsuccessful. In almost every appeal letter in the archival record, the only reply sent is a brief note, informing the letter writer to send their appeal elsewhere. In the case of Elizaveta Printseva—whose narrative was quoted in the introduction of this chapter—the text of the brief reply to her appeal read as follows: “In response to your statement about eviction from your home, we recommend you address these questions to the judicial organs, to whom you should apply directly.”  

Whether or not Printseva or any of the other letter writers continued to try to reverse their evictions is unknown.

Why, then, study the gendered implications of these letters, if the gender of the letter writer seems to have had little to no effect on the outcome? In short, these letters show that women who came under state suspicion because of their class background believed that they could recast their actions as steps to protect their family, making their property ownership not a bourgeois act, but a proletarian one. Their desire to protect their family—an act that fit well into the gender norms of the early twentieth century—was intended to outweigh the class factors that led to their evictions. It is telling that the strategy did not immediately work. The women's attempts to make their actions seem innocuous and family supportive were not enough to outweigh the class suspicions against them. While the rhetoric of the Soviet state as an entity that supported family’s attempts to find stability was strong enough for women to use it as a trope in their letters, it was not strong enough to have the intended effect.

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351 GARF, F. R1235, op. 64, d. 172, l. 1.
Here, it is useful to consider the second interpretation: that women were perhaps targeted more often for eviction. Such a process would not be unprecedented; as historians have pointed out in numerous works, the perception of women as backwards made them easier target for both individual and systematic harassment. Unfortunately, while the Soviet statistics on landlord eviction are quite thorough in terms of the square meters of housing stock that such campaigns opened up, they have very little information on the landlords’ identities. As was the case in the previous interpretative framework, the text of the letters themselves proves to be the most useful method of inquiry.

Take, for example, a series of letters written by Aleksei Federovich Pakudin, who was evicted from his home on the outskirts of Nizhnii Novgorod in 1920. Pakudin and his family were accused of renting out one of the rooms in their three-room house to a local worker; as the eviction occurred in 1920, this was before the restrictions on private property were lifted. Like the letters written by women, Pakudin also makes extensive references to the impact the eviction had on his family. In his first letter, written on September 10, he references his “defenseless (bezzashchitnye) wife and children.” But in his second letter, written on September 24, he turns to accusatory tone. Calling his case an “abuse of local power,” he accuses a local official of...
evicting his family from the premises so that he can occupy the house instead.\footnote{GARF, F. 1235, op. 95, d. 120, l. 66-660b.} Finally, he links his individual claim to a much broader issue of abuse. “Do those of you sitting in the center know what is happening in the periphery? Do you know how parasitic elements—who mock the working classes—somehow got into the local councils under the guise of being communists? ... Do you know that irresponsible local Soviet organs are undermining Soviet power through illegal actions? I am but one of many suffering under this brunt of illegal violence,” he writes in a third letter from October 20.\footnote{GARF, F. 1235, op. 95, d. 120, l. 64.}

Compare the language of Pakudin’s letters to those of the women from the late 1920s. Pakudin’s language is strident and uncompromising. Even as he casts himself as a victim of corrupted local officials, he still feels comfortable launching systematic complaints against the Soviet system. The assumption running throughout each of his three letters, in other words, is that the system is not functioning as it should, and his suffering is a direct result of that mistake. This is different from language in the later letters by women; in those letters, the women know their evictions are not mistakes. They have no expectations of security. What their letters are trying to do is to recast their actions, and in doing so, re-write their position within Soviet society. Some of the different between the letters may be explained by the difference in time—when Pakudin wrote his letters in 1920, the role of landlords in Soviet society may have been less clear—but it is still worth emphasizing the extent of the gendered difference.

In summary, what emerges in this narrative of landlords in the early Soviet period is strongly ambiguous. In the period in which the role of being a landlord was legally banned, people who had been landlords in the late Imperial period still managed to assert themselves into the situation. Using loopholes, local networks of power, and sometimes the simple act of refusal,
they continued to play much of the same role that they had played in the years before 1917. After it became legally possible to become a landlord once more in the early 1920s, their position became more legally tenable but no less complicated. Landlords co-opted Soviet institutions and structures, essentially making themselves representatives of Soviet power, forcing Soviet officials to legitimize their power and control over property. Yet, they were far from safe: beginning in the mid 1920s, Soviet officials targeted landlords for eviction. Although landlords had managed to, as a group, insert themselves into the framework of Soviet management and make themselves indispensible, as individuals, they could be easily shunted outside of that same framework. Despite massive legal changes in the period after 1917, in many ways, landlords remained in the same position throughout the early Soviet period: simultaneously essential and marginalized, both a driving force of the system and at risk of being pushed outside of it.

**Conclusion: Landlords and Residents**

At the close of this chapter, one crucial relationship remains murky: the connection that existed between landlord and tenant. During the time that this chapter (and dissertation) covers, what might be called a typical landlord-tenant relationship was constantly shifting. In the late Imperial period, although many landlords still only rented out rooms within the building that they themselves lived, a tenant living in an urban area would have been increasingly likely to rent from a landlord who owned many buildings scattered across the cityscape. These high volume landlords, who spearheaded the rise of landlord societies, began to hire large staff to
manage individual buildings.358 Whereas the landlord had typically been a figure who lived in the same buildings as the tenants, that became less common in urban environments in the late Imperial period.

In the Soviet period, although early laws were designed to completely upend the role that landlords played in the city, many residents would have noticed little difference. Because landlords often took charge of the very institutions that Soviet officials had created to replace them, the changes that took place in the early Soviet period were often in name only. In cases in which previous landlords were replaced, and other people took charge of running the domkomy and other institutions, the results were not necessarily better for the other residents. Residents complained that Soviet institutions were often unresponsive or inadequate, and threatened to withhold rent as a means of forcing change.

Although there was little difference in the landlords themselves, the institutional changes in the Soviet period did likely have one big effect for residents: they opened up a network for complaints. In the late Imperial period, although there was no shortage of people in power interested in the “housing question” and the role of landlords, the networks that could have passed complaints up the line were fractured. In contrast, the Soviet Union created an institutional structure that, while certainly not streamlined, meant that different institutions could communicate much more readily. This chapter has been devoted to the ways that landlords could manipulate this system to help themselves, but residents were also capable of doing so. Many kept pushing, airing their grievances to official after official, institution after institution. It is this subject that we turn to in the final chapter.

358 In the 1910 Moscow landlord guide, for example, there was an essay on the duties of various staff members for large-scale landlords, such as dvorniki (caretaker or yard-keeper, depending on the context) or storozhi (wardens). See: Spravochnaiia kniga dlia domovladel’tev. Izdanie Obshchestva “Soiuz domovladel’tsev g. Moskva” (Moscow: T–vo “Pechatnia S.P. Iakovleva”, 1910), 98-99.
CHAPTER 5: THE RESIDENTS: VIGNETTES FROM A HISTORY OF HOME

In 1918, a group of workers at the Rolling Mill Incorporated Society (*Aktsionernoe obshchestvo Val’tsovykh mel’nits*) decided to form a workers commune. Their goal in founding the commune was to create a living space explicitly for the workers of the mill and their families. There was, however, an obstacle in their way: namely, that the building they wanted to turn into their commune (where many of the mill workers already lived) was also the residence of several lower level Soviet employees (*sluzhashchie*). And while the would-be members of the workers commune interpreted Soviet law to mean that they had the right to evict the other residents there, the Soviet employees who were to be evicted and moved obviously disagreed.359

In a letter from October 14, 1918 titled “PLEA” (“*PROSHENIE*”), one of the Soviet employees laid out an appeal against the eviction process that the workers had started. The author, File Clerk (*deloproizvoditel’*) Elizaveta Nikolaevna Charykova, explained her side of the case to the head of the Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom) Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, whom she hoped could intercede on her behalf. “In early September, our house was requisitioned by the Rolling Mill Incorporated Society for the mill worker; as a result of this, some of the residents (the ‘non-laboring element’) were evicted and their rooms were given to workers,” she wrote. “Currently, the superintendent of the house (who is himself a worker) declared that the remaining apartments, including those occupied by the laboring intelligentsia, of whom the majority are employed by Soviet institution, must be vacated, since the house is to become a working commune and must be inhabited exclusively by workers.” Using her position at the

359 The All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) had passed a measure in 1918 on eviction, in which it laid out how the rules of eviction would be applied to different class-based groups. *Rabochie*, or members of the working class, were protected from eviction, but all other groups were vulnerable to it. See: GARF, F. R130, op. 2, d. 77, ll. 237-237ob.
Council of People’s Commissars to her advantage, Charykova wrote that she approached the superintendent (komendant), informing him that she believed the eviction was illegal. In response, she wrote, the superintendent offered her a personal exemption: she would be able to stay if she stopped protesting the eviction. However, Charykova lived in her apartment with other family members and fellow Soviet employees (including one sluzhashchii and his pregnant wife). If they were to be evicted and moved, Charykova insisted, she would be unable to rest in her home, because the workers in the surrounding rooms were “always singing, making noise, and playing the accordion”. She declined the offer in favor of trying to overturn the entire eviction.360

A few days later on October 25, a second letter was sent, this one from Magrena P. Fedotovaia, the pregnant wife of one of the Soviet employees living in the building in question. Whereas Charykova’s letter outlined a situation that was tense but professional, Fedotovaia’s letter described a situation that was spiraling out of control. Fedotovaia wrote that, despite Charykova’s attempted intercession, the mill workers proceeded with the eviction. When Fedotovaia told the superintendent that they had no place to move to and that “Soviet employees are not just thrown out on the street.” The superintendent replied (“with a sneer,” Fedotovaia added) that although Soviet employees (sluzhashchie) may think they were Soviets, that they—the mill workers and others of the rabochii category—knew they were the real Soviets. The situation deteriorated from there: another worker called Fedotovaia’s husband and the other sluzhashchie a “non-laboring element” and when Fedotovaia protested, the superintendent yelled, “Get out and shut up, I’ll kick you out today!”361

360 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, ll. 162-162ob.
361 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 165.
Throughout this dissertation, I have written about home—rather than housing or the more clinical terms like “housing stock” or “living space” (*zhilishchnyi fond* or *zhilaia ploshchad’*, respectively)—because the term home requires us to consider the layers of meanings that need to be parsed to understand the history of a space. Home is, in short, the infusion of space with meaning, and as the Rolling Mill case illustrates, there is never only one uncontested meaning. This chapter, by looking at sources produced by residents themselves, traces those meanings and where they fracture, diverge or are in contestation with each other.

Take, for example, the various ways to examine this opening example. One could easily read this particular story as fear of loss of stability. In this reading, low-level Soviet employees called upon institutional support in an attempt to stay within the housing where they had been living. Their sense of entitlement to a continuation of the *status quo*—and their shock and even anger over their inability to change the situation in their favor—comes through in these letters. Both Charykova and Fedotovaia are motivated by a fear of loss, and see the attempt by the mill workers to form a commune as a disruptive force that will drag them out of their home (perhaps even on to the street). This theoretical reading is given further credence by the eventual result of the case: the mill workers’ ability to form a commune and evict the other residents of the building in question was upheld under review by the People’s Commissar of Justice (NKIu), and all of the Soviet employees were evicted and housed elsewhere in the city. The *sluzhashchie* may have had institutional connections and a sense that they could maintain their stability if they properly negotiated the situation, but that did not end up being the case.

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362 Perhaps adding to this entitlement to the *status quo* is the background of many *sluzhashchie* workers like Charykova (and their family members like Fedotovaia). In the years immediately following the revolution, many of the white color workers in Soviet institution had held similar jobs in the Late Imperial period. Although there is no way to trace the personal histories of either Chrykova or Fedotovaia, it is not much of a stretch to imagine the ease at which many *sluzhashchie* crossed the revolutionary boundary (at least in the early Soviet years) lead to a sense of entitlement to future stability.  
363 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 78, ll. 39-39ob.
But if this vignette illustrates loss for Charykova, Fedotovaia and the other Soviet employees, then it illustrates the opposite for the workers of the Rolling Mill Incorporated Society. In evicting the Soviet employees, they were able to secure an entire building to be used for a commune. This meant that not only would their housing be protected (as workers were not allowed to be evicted or moved without their consent) based on Soviet law, but that they could now provide housing for fellow co-workers close to their place of employment. They gained stability, and in doing so, created a precedent for other people in a similar situation.

They were also able to better dictate how to use that stability. As Andy Willimott has argued, communes were a space in which Soviet citizens could attempt to bring their vision of a new Soviet everyday to life.\textsuperscript{364} Even in the narrative that I have pulled from Charykova’s and Fedotovaia’s unsympathetic accounts of the Rolling Mill commune, it is clear that the commune founders were interested in the ideological implications of space. In their denunciation of Soviet employees and white-collar workers as false claimants of the Soviet label, as well as their assertion that workers were the true Soviets, they were making a statement about what form of home they were creating. The presence of the \textit{sluzhashchie} was an impediment, in their view, to the creation of a Soviet home.

The Rolling Mill workers also demonstrated deftness at deploying class categories to their advantage. Although we can never know with certainty what those employees knew about Soviet eviction law, it seems clear from the letters that they knew they had the upper hand. They seemed to know that even though the white-collar \textit{sluzhashchie} had connections to Soviet institutions, that those affiliations would not stand in their way. They knew the importance of class as a category. In this chapter more broadly, class serves as a major line of analysis precisely

because it was deployed with such frequency. But it was not used in a singular way. In cases like the Rolling Mill workers where residents could use their ascribed class identity to their advantage, they often did so. In cases where residents’ class ascriptions did not provide the protection or advantages that residents wanted, it was not unusual for those same residents to try to push against the boundaries that constrained them. In short, class is an important factor in these negotiations, but it was far from a static concept.

However, ideological and class considerations were not the only factor at play—here or in terms of Soviet housing in general. Friendship and camaraderie played their part, as is clearly evident by the desire to secure additional housing for their co-workers. Evident too, are personal considerations of enmity that belie strictly ideological opposition: they were clearly aware that the *sluzhashchie* regularly complained over their “singing, making noise, and playing the accordion.” Acutely aware and capable of utilizing ideological and institutional identities, these workers used legal precedent to manipulate their environment and secure the means that would allow them to create their particular form of a working class, Soviet home.

These two interpretations of a single situation point to two distinct ways of reading residents’ histories of their own homes: loss and stability. The gulf between these two interpretations (and their resultant themes) points to a third: that of competition. During the tumultuous years of the early Soviet state, access and control of housing were far from static, and residents had to constantly re-negotiate their position within Soviet society. In the stakes of this particular story, the possible outcomes put the mill workers and Soviet employees directly at odds with each other. Not every contention over Soviet housing, of course, can be reduced to a zero-sum with clear winners and losers; the case of the Rolling Mill Incorporated Society is one of the starkest vignettes. Yet the role of competition remained central within many Soviet

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365 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 78, l. 39ob.
everyday housing debates, as residents attempted to position themselves as securely as possible, against the potential loss of their housing, using whatever means they had at their disposal.

This chapter will move between these three themes—loss, stability, and competition—to explore how each can provide insight to how residents understood and utilized the concept of home. Loss reveals what type of belonging residents were willing to fight to preserve; stability reveals what they were willing to fight to build; competition reveals the extent to which residents were willing to challenge state structures, institutions and each others, and what means they were willing to use to do so. These categories are not hermetic, but moving lens by lens enables a deeper analysis of how each individual theme provides insight into the category of home.

Methodologically, this chapter uses vignettes, such as the one that opened this chapter, which have been pieced together from a variety of archival and printed records. There are, of course, a number of methodological complications that emerge from such a method. The first is the issue of truth. As these vignettes often highlight moments of conflict and tension, the actors involved might disagree on the veracity of basic details. Working decades after the fact, it is, of course, impossible to fact check small details—to tell, for example, if the mill workers might have cried foul against their unsympathetic depiction in Fedotovaia’s narrative. But we are less interested here in the individual stories themselves than in the tensions they illuminate. There remains, in other words, an underlying veracity in the type of conflict being described.\(^{366}\) The narratives are always true in the sense that they were created to serve a purpose—to tell a specific story—and can be read as an attempt to explore what that purpose tells us about the

\(^{366}\) I am drawing this approach from Luise White’s foundational work *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, in which she paid particular attention to the moments of disjunction and anger in her oral interviews, as a means of differentiating the experiences of various groups of women who were involved in prostitution. See: Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
everyday in the early Soviet Union. I use the term vignette to draw attention to the narrative aspect of this approach.

There is also the issue of representiveness; namely, to what extent do the vignettes presented in this chapter provide enough of a representative sample of the early Soviet everyday? Is it enough to create a history that is both “suggestive and imprecise,” to quote a foundational scholar of Alltagsgeschichte? Further complicating this question is that many of these traces of the lived experience remain unrecoverable, forever missing from the historical narrative simply by virtue of their ephemerality. Much of the evidence of changes, contestations and conflicts that remain come through institutional records. In other words, although this chapter is attempting to move away from the centrality of institutional histories in Soviet historiography—instead looking at the way in which residents up-ended and instrumentalized the very institutions that were attempted to dictate the terms—it also partially relies on those institutional records and publications. It is therefore doubly necessary that we read these sources critically and with a skeptical eye. Despite these limitations, however, constructing and deconstructing these vignettes is valuable in that it illuminates a window in to the history of the Soviet everyday.

Loss

Perhaps the most noticeable theme that comes to the surface of residents’ letters, petitions and other ephemera is that of loss. In some ways, this dominance is a trick of archival bias: people do not generally write letters to government agencies, officials, or institutions when their

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housing is satisfactory. And although there were many letters written by residents attempting to improve their housing situation (a category that will be examined in the following section), the majority still came from residents who were dealing with some form of loss. Many faced eviction—the ultimate embodiment of the loss of housing—and either wanted to fight that process or find another place to live. Others describe losing something less tangible: of being unable to live the type of life they had been living; of, perhaps, losing their conception of home.

Although eviction and other forms of loss are overrepresented in the historical record, loss was nevertheless a central aspect of the Soviet housing system. The processes of eviction (vyselenie), moving (vselenie) and filling up (zapolnenie) were used to move residents around an urban environment. Some of this movement was done because that there was simply not enough housing stock in urban environments. Urban housing in Russia before the war in 1914 was already strained, and the war only exacerbated those deficiencies, as housing material became increasingly difficult to procure. Although there was a slight relief on the strained housing stocks in the years immediately following the Russian Revolution (as the urban population declined significantly during the Civil War years, especially in the two capitals of Moscow and Petrograd), by the mid-1920s, Russia’s urban population surpassed the level of 1914.

There are a few examples that run counter to this trend. One man, for example, wrote in to the newspaper Housing Partnership (Zhilishchnoe Tovarishchestvo) to laud his housing coordinator. See: “Nam pishut: Primernomu khoziaistvenniku—blagodarnost,” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo VI (June 1926).

There are also more universal considerations; namely, that no system has a monopoly on evictions, making the Soviet system but one of many that used evictions in a structural way. Take, for example, housing laws in the United States that were used to control the racial composition of various urban neighborhoods. See: Thomas Lee Philpott, The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Black and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). The role of eviction (as well as other forms of loss in relation to home) transcends ideological boundaries.

TsIAM, F. 179, op. 3, d. 1831, ll. 1-2.

The eviction process emerged as a partial solution to the limited amount of housing stock, which was unable to accommodate a growing urban population. Decrees and regulations from Sovnarkom and the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) quickly laid out how the eviction process would take place. Those who could claim the label of rabochii (working class) were forbidden from being evicted or moved without their consent. Employees of government or small private organizations (sluzhashchii) could be evicted, but they needed to be provided with equivalent housing elsewhere in the city. Protections declined further for other social groups, ending in those living off of “unearned income,” who could (and often would) be evicted with ease.

In the period following the revolution, many residents who faced eviction wrote letters and petitions to try to reverse the eviction process. For the first few years following the October Revolution, most of those letters come not from those at the bottom of the protection scale, but from those one level from the top: sluzhashchie, or employees who performed non-manual labor. When these Soviet employees found themselves being forced to move, they frequently pushed back against the process. As we saw earlier, many likely thought that their ties to Soviet institutions would provide protection (as Charykova implied by mentioning her job at Sovnarkom), at least to the point that they would not be “thrown out on the street.” Yet, given the number of letters written by sluzhashchie protesting their evictions, that assumption proved not to be the case.

The authors of these letters relied a variety of tactics. Some utilized moral language: in one letter passed between Sovnarkom and the NVKD, the author called his case a “truly tragic situation.” Another letter, written by a representative of the Narodniy bank on behalf of its

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372 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 165.
373 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 36.
employees, argued that it would be cruel to evict residents from their company-provided housing in December. Others drew on a legal framework, such as the housing committee (domkom) member who wrote that he had told the other sluzhashchie in the building that the attempt to remove them was an illegal eviction, and that he had urged them to refuse to leave. Other letters cited (or, according the official reply from Sovnarkom, mis-cited) municipal legal codes. Some even tried to appeal to economic logic; when two floors of a building were to be cleared and all of the sluzhashchie and their families were to be evicted, one of the residents argued that because sluzhashchie paid a higher rent rate than rabochie that the building management would no longer be able to afford needed repairs if they were evicted.

Although many the evictions of sluzhashchie were scheduled for the benefit of rabochie–such as in the opening example–that was not always the case. Soviet institutions could also seize housing (as long as it was not occupied by rabochie) and use it for administrative purposes. This type of eviction—and the prospect of losing one’s living space not to another person, but to an institution—became a particularly reviled form of eviction. They “could have used any one of the many vacant and available buildings nearby, without contributing to the ruin of dozens of families, who are running themselves ragged in a struggle for existence,” read one resident’s letter about such an eviction. Perhaps because it was far more difficult to justify evictions done for the benefit of institutions than those done for the benefit of workers, appeals became an increasingly successful tactic. Exceptions were granted on an increasingly common basis, particularly among those who held professional jobs such as engineers and professors. These

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374 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 181.
375 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 44.
376 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 78, l. 107.
377 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 33.
378 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 41.
379 See, for example, this case from 1924, in which a sluzhashchii working for the Moscow-Kurskaia railroad line had his eviction overturned. GARF, F. 393, op. 43a, d. 76, l. 44.
professionals were categorized as *sluzhashchii* in housing regulations, but they quickly became exempted from evictions, first as individual exemptions and then as an overall rule.\(^{380}\)

But appeals and exemptions did not work for everyone. In the event in which *sluzhashchie* ran out of options for how to legally prevent an eviction, one option remained: refusal. In the months immediately following the 1917 revolution, many residents took advantage of the lack of centralization, and were able to avoid fallout for infractions that could, according to municipal codes, be punished with eviction. The non-payment of rent, for example, was deigned to be an evictable offense in Moscow very quickly following the October Revolution, and yet in early 1918, entire neighborhood organizations were having problems collecting rent, likely exacerbated by an inability to enforce a credible threat of eviction. A report from the Sokol’nicheskii Neighborhood Council in northeastern Moscow demonstrated the extent of the institution’s inability to enforce the strictures that it had established. “The picture is bleak and serious: many residents refuse to pay rent, arguing that there is no help from our side,” read the report. Rather than take steps to increase enforcement, they instead asked for help from the center to make up the amount of money lost in unpaid need. “I deem it necessary to send an advance of funds from the center to cover rent payments to avoid an epidemic and as a precaution against a complete catastrophe in terms of plumbing and fire protection,” the report read.\(^{381}\)

Yet refusal was not just a temporary measure, born out of the vagaries of enforcement during the uncertain early months after the revolution. Indeed, refusal became such a common

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\(^{380}\) For example, a doctor was granted an individual exception in 1918 through the Sokol’nicheskii Neighborhood Council (Raisovet) of Workers and Red Army Deputies of the City of Moscow; see: TsAGM, F. 2311, op. 1, d. 20, l. 46. By 1920, Sovnarkom was advising agencies to offer exceptions to professors (GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 79, l. 36) and engineers (GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 79, l. 45).

\(^{381}\) TsAGM F. 2311, op. 1, d. 75, l. 4. Eviction as punishment for non-payment of rent was formalized through the Soviet Union in 1924, with the passage of the Sovnarkom decree “O vyselenii grazhdan iz zanimaemykh imi pomeshchenii.”

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practice that by the mid-1920s, enforcement agencies were actively struggling with how to deal with it. In two 1926 memoranda to the Commissariat of Justice, an NKVD representative wrote about the “difficulties” of administering eviction: that those who were to be evicted refused to leave by the date specified on the notice, and that local police organs were generally unwilling to assist in the process.\textsuperscript{382} The solution, a second memorandum suggested, was to push back harder against those who refused. “The central administration of the NKVD believes that, in these cases, it is necessary to use forcible eviction, a process in which the police forcibly remove the residents from the premises; their personal belongings are then removed and either stored elsewhere or, in the absence of storage, left on the yard or in the street.”\textsuperscript{383}

It was perhaps because of these difficulties—and the awareness that \textit{sluzhashchie} evictions would become increasingly violent public affairs, if they were to continue—that the tide of eviction turned to another group: landlords, and others who had made their living off of “unearned income.” Whereas the \textit{sluzhashchie} had had limited success in appealing and pushing back against evictions, former landlords and others of less protected social groups found similar efforts to be in vain. Even when former landlords attempted to cast themselves as loyal Soviet citizens for whom the minimal profits from their landlordship simply provided for their families, or when they tried to employ gendered language to negotiate themselves as people in need of protection from the state—in one letter, a female landlord wrote that to overturn her eviction would be "an act of proletarian justice"\textsuperscript{384}—the appeals went unanswered.\textsuperscript{385} Faced with the

\textsuperscript{382} Exactly why local police were so unwilling to assist in evictions is unclear. Perhaps evictions were emotionally taxing; perhaps they were unwilling to assist in a process that had such uneven enforcement. GARF, F. 393, op. 64, d. 253, l. 4.

\textsuperscript{383} GARF, F. 393, op. 64, d. 253, l. 3.

\textsuperscript{384} GARF, F. R-1235, op. 64, d. 172, l. 32.

\textsuperscript{385} Deirdre Ruscitti, “‘We have not been vermin, nor will we ever be!’: Gender and the Dynamics of Eviction in the Early Soviet Period, 1917-1930” in \textit{Konstruiruia “sovetskoe”? / Constructing the “Soviet”?} (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2015).
potential losses of their homes, some sluzhashchie had mobilized the language of the revolution and its resultant pangs of creation to secure themselves, while foisting that loss on to another group. Increasingly, landlords—those who had been previously at the front lines of exerting control over the homespace and enforcing eviction—were now the target. And whereas the sluzhashchie were legally required to be provided housing elsewhere in the same city if they were evicted, Soviet law had no such requirement for landlords, making their evictions a far more traumatic affair.

At first glance, it would be possible to interpret the changing situation of sluzhashchie as evidence of a state plan to exert control against a particular social group; by first making housing seem constantly tentative before eventually reversing the majority of evictions, state officials were testing and then solidifying the position of these white collar workers within Soviet society. However, haphazard enforcement of eviction processes, as well as the eventual turn against landlords, suggests a different process may have been at work. Sluzhashchie were probably initially targeted for eviction because, as representatives of the power structure of both the Late Imperial and early Soviet periods, they were likely to live in the most desirable type of housing. However, structurally, the sluzhashchie evictions did nothing to solve the overall problem of overcrowding, as they were required, by Soviet law to be provided housing elsewhere within the same city. As landlords and others with “unearned income” had no such stability under Soviet law, pursuing their eviction offered Soviet officials a chance to have a more tangible effect on the population of the cities themselves. In short, the history of eviction and housing loss in the early Soviet period point to a pragmatic backstory.

Yet not everything about this history can be explained by systematic analysis. When sluzhashchie, landlords, and others were faced with evicted notices, they pushed back.

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386 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, ll. 237-237ob.
Regardless of their social position within Soviet society, they sought appeals and wrote letters to prominent officials, asking for reversals. Some simply refused to leave. Why?

Stability

One disadvantage to looking at loss, stability, and competition individually is that it can imply discrete narratives of complex processes. By beginning with the theme of loss, this chapter establishes housing and home as something that was, above all else, taken away. It also portrays residents as primarily reactive agents, who remained static unless they needed to respond to a specific circumstance. And although it is necessary to understand how residents reacted to evictions in order to contextualize the housing question in the early Soviet Union, it is just as important to understand how they attempted and managed to secure housing—how they sought after and achieved stability.

It was, after all, stability that many residents desired in the letters they sent protesting their evictions. Stability—the idea that residents could have a degree of security and continuity over the built environment in which they lived—was written about as a goal, often draped in ideologically appealing language. Having stability in their daily lives, residents wrote, would make them more productive. In a letter written on behalf of several railroad employees by their local office, a representative of the People’s Commissariat of Communication drew explicitly on this link between stability and productivity. “The threat of forced eviction of railroad employees
(sluzhashchie) notably affected their ability to work, weighed heavily on their spirit, and overall hindered the exercise of their duties.” Those evictions were reversed.387

In general, procuring stability proved to be a little more complicated than justifying it. Although appeals to greater productivity did have some success in overturning eviction notices, many residents understandably wanted a place to live in which they could avoid the specter of loss altogether. But, as only rabochie were guaranteed such protection automatically, those in other ascribed groups had to strategize to achieve the same goal.

One solution to the difficulty of procuring stability came through institutions. Organizations—especially those looking to forward their goals of creating a new Soviet everyday (novyi byt)—were looking to recruit members. Recognizing this desire for stability, they immediately made attempts to capitalize on it. In the opening issue of the periodic Housing Partnership (Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo), the anonymous authors laid out the benefits of joining a housing cooperative. “Among the greatest stimuli for the housing cooperatives are the resultant privileges and guarantees given to those who become members: the inability to be evicted (nevyselenie).”388 By joining a housing rental cooperative partnership (zhilishchnoe arendnoe kooperativnoe tovarishchestvo, henceforth ZhAKT)—a specific form of housing cooperative, designed so that residents collectively rented a house for a pre-specified term, usually 6 years—residents of any social background could reap the benefits of that lease’s stability. The periodical repeatedly highlighted this positive benefit, indicating its success as a promotional idea.389

387 GARF, F. R-130, op. 2, d. 77, l. 182.
388 “Ot redaktitsii,” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 1, No. 1 (September 1922): 3.
389 In a 1923 article, for example, the author notes that although the Moscow Soviet had attempted to pass a local law allowing for non-rabochii residents of ZhAKT and other collectives to be evicted, that Sovnarkom had reinforced non-evictibility of ZhAKT leases. See: N. I. Bronshtein, “Ob administrativnykh vyseleniakh,” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 2, No. 4 (1923): 2-4.
There were, however, tensions over who could claim the stability that ZhAKT and other collective forms of housing provided. In some ZhAKT houses, individual residents (or the residents as a whole) would hire a domestic worker (*domashniaia rabotnitsa*) to perform labor around the house. These domestic workers frequently lived with the rest of the residents in the house. When their term of employment ended, though, many wanted to keep their space within the collective, while seeking employment elsewhere. The job of domestic worker, in other words, could often serve as a foothold for these workers (most of whom were women) to gain residence in a city. Such a move, however, was often contested by the other ZhAKT residents, who presumably wanted to hire another domestic worker and use the previous worker’s space to house her. True to the collective goal of the ZhAKT movement, staff writers in the *Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo* publication wrote that domestic workers who had gained membership in the collective (a somewhat common practice—one survey estimated about 40% of ZhAKT domestic workers were also collective members) needed to be treated as residents, and prohibited evicting them after their jobs ended.\(^{390}\) Domestic workers who were fired or were otherwise not members of the collective, they opined, should still be allowed to remain in their housing for a short period of time.\(^{391}\)

Yet even with these protections in place, residents in ZhAKT housing continued to contest the stability that domestic workers were supposed to have. Some domestic workers pushed back, bringing their cases to court. In one such case, a domestic worker successfully defended herself from eviction after she was fired by her employer, by noting that she had been living in the communal kitchen, and it was therefore not her former employer’s right to dictate


\(^{391}\) Z. Bondarchuk, “*O prave domashnikh rabotnikov i rabotnits na zhiluiu ploshchad,*” *Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo* 5, No. 2 (February 1926): 285.
her housing. In a second case, a ZhAKT house collectively rules to evict the domashniaia rabotnitsa who had worked at the house for ten years, arguing that she had never officially become a collective member. A people’s court (narsud) upheld the eviction, but after an appeal to a district court (gubsud), it was ruled that the domestic worker had gained de facto membership through her ten years of residence. These rulings, while establishing a legal precedent for other domestic workers to procure a sense of stability, also illustrates how tenuous that hold on stability could be, and how hard some residents had to fight to maintain it. It is not difficult to imagine that for every example of a domestic worker bringing their eviction to court that there were many others that fell to the wayside.

Although ZhAKT organizations made a particular push to recruit members who would be otherwise potentially vulnerable to eviction, stability was not only an end goal for those already in a precarious (or potentially precarious) position. Even those who were guaranteed immunity from eviction by virtue of their rabochii status took steps to stabilize their situation. Some pushed their trade unions to invest in the creation of new forms of housing. In 1922, for example, after a trade union built a successful miniature workers’ garden-city (rabochii poselok-sad) called Sokol (Eagle) in northwestern Moscow, 112 trade union groups expressed interest in creating their own garden-cities along the tramvai lines that were stretching ever further into the Moscow hinterlands. In Kazan’, the Workers’ Committee of the Paraskii Repair Works submitted a formal proposal to build 200 apartments and single-family houses.

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392 “Zhilishche i sud: Domashniaia rabotnitsa i zhilaia ploschad’,” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 5, No. 24 (August 1, 1926): 789.
393 “Zhilishche i sud: Domashniaia rabotnitsa i zhilaia ploschad’,” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 5, No. 24 (August 1, 1926): 789.
394 “Khronika: Rabochii poselok-sad pod Moskvoi,” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 1, No. 5 (November 1922), pp. 22.
395 GARF, F. R130, op. 2, d. 78, ll. 14-14ob.
If *rabochie* could not be evicted, then what reason would they have to seek additional stability? The answer was simple: overcrowding. Although workers could not be evicted, they were not exempted from the process of “filling up” (*zapolnenie*). In the case of the Paraskii Repair workers, they were allocated 164 apartments for about 1800 people. “From both a sanitary and hygienic point of view, such overcrowding is completely unacceptable,” the letter written by the Workers’ Committee reads. “With the goal of preventing epidemics, improving the hygienic situation of workers, as well as improving the everyday lives of workers in a democratic fashion, it is imperative to quickly build additional housing for workers and Soviet officials.”\(^\text{396}\) Other examples illustrate similar circumstances. In one vignette, a worker with a pregnant wife and young child who claimed at eight other workers had been settled within their previously single-family apartment, and that because none of them could be evicted, local organs were unwilling or unable to provide any help.\(^\text{397}\) In another, a female worker with a nursing child claimed that after her husband left, she was only given one square arshin (about 4.6 square meters) in a room without a stove. “Comrade Kalinin, help me!” she wrote. “We are lost (*my pogibili*), only hope remains.”\(^\text{398}\)

This desire for stability as a counterpoint to overcrowding offers a new vantage point on the vignette that opened this chapter. Although neither of the letters written by the two *sluzhashchie* provides any data on the number of people living within the soon-to-be Rolling Mill Incorporated Society commune, it is not an unfair assumption to assume that it was either already crowded or at risk of becoming so through *zapolnenie*. By transforming the building into a commune, though, the mill workers could exert control over who could become residents. They

\(^{396}\) GARF, F. R130, op. 2, d. 78, l. 14ob.
\(^{397}\) GARF, F. 1235, op. 64, d. 598, ll. 11-11ob.
\(^{398}\) GARF, F. 1235, op. 64, d. 598, l. 57.
could prevent overcrowding from becoming an issue at all. All they had to do was evict the 
sluzhashchie. Both sides, in other words, desired for stability in an unstable system.

If we can see the desire for stability across so many different situations and among 
different groups of people, then what analytical benefit does such a category hold? At first 
glance, it may appear to support the thesis that the Soviet state-level shake ups of the housing 
policy were not well received, and that residents of all social backgrounds simply wanted to 
return to what their lives had been before the revolution. And yet, the desire for stability does not 
necessarily imply an ideological stance. Many of the institutional and ideological means through 
which residents tried to find more stable housing—ZhAKTy, as well as housing through Soviet 
institutions—were the biggest promoters of a new everyday life (novyi byt).

Perhaps because the term novyi byt implies change—the “new” in new everyday life 
means something has to shift—there exists an assumption that change was revolutionary in and 
of itself. Stability, or the push against that change, can therefore easily be cast as counter-
revolutionary. And yet, in these examples, stability emerges as a complex concept. The desire to 
create stability—the desire to exert control over the built and lived environment of one’s 
residence—does not necessarily imply any political definition. Some people may have joined 
ZhAKTy and other forms of novyi byt housing as a desire to find housing that was stable 
regardless of ideological meaning, but others may have been genuinely interested in the 
organization’s overall goal.

What the articulation and proliferation of a desire for stability tells us, then, is that, in 
everyday, people were looking for home. They were looking for a space with that had meaning 
for them, and with which they could continue to build attachments. In a historical moment in 
which instability loomed through the threat of evictions, forced moves and loss, it could be very
difficult to create that sense of stability. And for those who were eager to explore new forms of housing, such as the communal ownership of a ZhAKT house, but who still wanted some stability from day to day, month to month, year to year, we can even see another way in which the Soviet home was envisioned and formed.

**Competition**

If loss and stability represented the two extremes of how home could be envisioned and experienced by residents, competition was the bridge between the two. It was through competition that residents negotiated those two categories. In the vignettes from the two previous sections, it is clear this competition could be deeply personal. The petitions and court cases from which the vignettes are drawn outline situations in which residents confronted their fellow residents directly. Even in cases where residents brought in broader ideological categories, those categories were often framed in personal terms. “You think you are Soviet employees, but we know we really are the Soviets,” said one of the Rolling Mill Incorporated Society workers to a Soviet sluzhashchii in the example that opened this chapter. In this case, the concept of being “Soviet” can be seen as lofty ideological goal, as well as a cudgel, to be used to gain the upper hand in the competition to secure a home.

The presence of competition within disputes and conflicts over housing is not, in and of itself, surprising. Any system of allocating housing is, to some extent, a zero sum game. If one resident occupies a space, another person cannot occupy that same space. When decisions are

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399 The historiography of housing in the late Imperial and early Soviet periods is full of examples in which this limit is stretched to its breaking point: examples of overcrowding, filling up (zapolnenie), or even
made about the allocation and use of housing space, those decisions are, essentially, deciding who suffers a loss and who gains stability. Although these decisions need to be made in any housing situation, the extent to which residents become involved can vary immensely. In cases where the residents are removed from the decision-making process, and the ability to make choices is given to proxies (such as landlords or state officials), the competition between residents can be obscured by bureaucratic systems. The Soviet state attempted to create such a system. Municipal, region and state organs were tasked with keeping track of where residents lived (and their ascribed social identities, such as class), as well as regulating their ability to change housing or move. Residents could request a change in their housing, but all decisions were to be made by state organs.400

However, based on the ways that residents described their competition with other residents, it does not appear that the bureaucratic regulation of housing succeeded in that obfuscation. To the contrary, it appears that the Soviet system’s attempt to regulate housing through a series of impersonal bureaucratic networks exacerbated intra-personal conflict. Limitations in the amount of housing stock, as well as a rising urban population throughout the 1920s, meant that the situation surrounding housing decisions was often fraught and tense. Adding to that, the processes of eviction (vyselenie), moving (vselenie) and filling up (zapolnenie) meant that residents could be moved around their urban environment, into situations having residents sharing the same sleeping space in different shifts, abound. See the following for some examples: Victoria Bonnell (ed.), The Russian Worker: Life and Labor Under the Tsarist Regime (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Semen Kanatchikov, Iz istorii moego byta (Moscow: Zemlia i fabrika, 1929); Aleksei Buzinov, Za Nevskoi zastavoi (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1930).

400 Much of this regulation occurred at the city level. For an example of a form from 1920 to request a new housing allotment from the city of Moscow, see: TsAGM F. 2348, op. 1, d. 16, l. 70. For an example of a state-wide organization’s attempts to take a census of its members and their housing situation, see the survey of all ZhAKT members, covered in the Housing Partnership journal: “Ot redaktsii ‘Zhilishchnogo tovarishchestva.” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 1, No. 5 (November 1922): 4-5.
where they had to re-negotiate social networks with their new neighbors. Based on the narratives that emerge in petitions and court cases, it appears that the bureaucratic nature of the Soviet system may have, ironically, led to an increase in competition between residents that had a deeply personal component.

How did this competition between residents take place? The legal system was perhaps the most obvious means to resolve housing disputes. Courts had been used in the Late Imperial period to resolve issues of housing (particularly in cases of eviction), and in the early years of the Soviet state, lower level People’s Courts (narodnyi sud, or narsud) were particularly well-suited to address conflicts between feuding residents. Journals such as Housing Partnership and Towards a New Everyday Life (Za novyi byt) published the results of particularly instructive court cases in brief synopses. Although the Soviet legal system did not rely on the common law concept of precedent, journals still wrote about these cases to provide illustrative examples of how the civil law system functioned.

Take, for example, a court case that resolved a dispute that had emerged from a divorce. In the case, a divorced couple fought for the rights over the two rooms that they had once shared. The wife and their children were given both of the rooms that they had previously occupied (because one of the children was over 16 and male, and it was considered improper for

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401 For examples of Late Imperial eviction cases, see fond 1296 of TsiAM (Moscow Sections of the Metropolitan Magisterial Districts). Decisions made by People’s Courts (which were the lowest level court) were sometimes appealed to Provincial Courts (gubsud) upon approval of a Cassation Appeal (kassatsionnaia zhaloba).
402 These regular segments were titled “Zhilishchnoe delo v sude” (“Housing Matters in Court”) or “Zhilishche i sud” (“Housing and the Court”).
404 As Lynne Atwood noted in her work on gender and Soviet housing, cases about the allocation of housing stock often revolved around family dynamics. See: Lynne Atwood, Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), especially chapter 2.
him to share a space with his mother), while the husband was re-located to a smaller, shared living space. Following this, the husband invited his elderly mother to live in the same building, providing her living space in the apartment’s communal kitchen. He then brought the case to a court, stating that his mother was now a resident in the building, and because it was unacceptable to have an elderly woman living in the communal space, they should be given back both rooms that his wife now occupied. A People’s Court agreed with the husband and gave him rights to the rooms, with the specification that he would occupy one and his mother would occupy the other. This resolution was upended when Cassation Court quickly granted the wife an appeal, and a Provincial Court (gubsud) reversed the ruling and found in favor of the wife. Their reasons: that the housing to which she had been moved forced her to live in a small room with adult members of the opposite sex (her son). She was, once more, given control of both rooms, and the husband and his mother were moved to housing in another building.405

This case was rife with personal tensions, as both parties used their personal relationships as a means to try to secure their claim to their desired living space. But, more importantly, both parties also knew how to translate these personal relationships into systematic arguments that they could use within the Soviet legal system. The husband knew that if he could make his mother a resident in the building (even just in the communal space of the kitchen) that he would be providing her legal precedent to claim access to the room. Similarly, the wife knew that if she lost access to even one of the two rooms, she could frame her claim by deploying a language of morality and gender, arguing it was indecent for her to have to share a room with an adult male (even if that adult male was her son). Both parties, in other words, knew how to transform their personal competition into categories that could be easily slotted into Soviet jurisprudence.

However, residents were not always able to neatly overlay their personal conflicts on to categories recognized by the Soviet judicial system. Indeed, in many instances, residents used these moments of conflict to try to re-ascribe their own identities, and argue that they should have been given greater stability because they actually belong to another category.

Unsurprisingly, the category most commonly sought after by residents was one’s relationship to labor. The Soviet legal code offered protect to those who fell under the category of rabochii, but that limited definition did not prevent others who performed manual labor outside of the rabochii category from attempting to gain its protection. To examine these negotiations closer, let us examine the role of home production.

The process of home production, performed by kustari (craftsmen or artisans), had a long tradition within the Russian economy. Within the increasingly crowded urban home, though, it frequently led to conflicts. The temporary overpacking (pereuplotnenie) of housing and the overcrowding within them, as well as the diverse activities and worldviews of the people who live within them, creates a whole host of living and housing conflicts, many of which the People’s Courts are familiar with,” outlined one article on the topic from the journal Housing Partnership. The frequently inability (or refusal) of kustari and others who performed labor at home to keep regular working hours, the article noted, created undue stress on other residents. Citing extreme examples of such cases—a singer who practiced at times ranging from 5:00 am in the morning to 1:00 am at night; a man who held parties “with Italians” every night till 4am; or a woman who had guests only past midnight while her children slept elsewhere with family—the author stressed the role of the legal system as a means of effective intervention. People’s Courts,

406 Kustari made up a substantial portion of urban residents; a survey of ZhAKT residents from 1923 (the vast majority of whom lived in urban areas) counted approximately 120,000 kustari and their families, compared to 1,080,000 workers and employees (rabochie i sluzhashchie). See: L. Gorskii, “Osnova zhilishchnoi politiki.” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 2, No. 12-13 (1923): 9.
the article said, could be used in cases in which the resident in question was behaving in an “uncooperative” manner, because the legal system had a duty “to protect the right of every laborer to relax and work in their home.”

In short, although kustari laborers expected that their relationship to labor would protect them, it was often used to limit their access to housing. These examples were not merely theoretical, either. In a court case from 1925, a leather tanner was prohibited from performing his craft within the living space he shared with rabochie, on pain of the threat of eviction. The reasoning behind the decision—that the harsh chemicals involved in tanning posed a real threat to the health and comfort of the residents—is understandable, but still illustrates that one’s identity as a laborer was not the sole consideration in questions of housing, especially when one did not have the rabochii identity to fall back on.

These cases illustrate, in short, that residents attempted to re-ascribe categories for their own benefit. They did so in court cases, such as the kustari laborers who tried to use their connection to labor to gain housing (and workplace security). They also did so in petitions; recall how the sluzhashchie in the opening example drew attention to the fact that, although they were not rabochie, they still contributed labor to the Soviet state. In these instances of competition, which often had very real undertones (or overtones) of personal conflict, the attempts to re-ascribe categories was met with varying degrees of success. But the fact that residents saw these categories were in contention, and that residents used them in their attempts to secure better housing for themselves and their families, provides us with greater insight into the concept of the Soviet home.

Conclusion: Towards a Residents’ History of Home

“Home” has often been a concept at odds with itself. It is frequently described in universalist, utopian terms, yet it is fraught with the issues and difficulties of its particular historical moment. In the case of the Soviet Union, residents were fully aware of the limitations that bounded their definitions of home. Many of these issues—the overcrowding, the sanitary concerns, the lack of basic utilities—have received lengthy and excellent treatments within the historiography. Indeed, the challenge becomes not one of listing such issues, but in remembering and recovering the fact that, in spite of these limitations, in spite of the fear of loss and eviction, in spite of the difficulties in securing stability, residents continued to assert their ability to define what a residential space meant to them. They continued to create home.

They did so also in spite of the fact that the act of creating a home was (and is) not always a simple or easy process. Residents frequently found themselves in competition with each other for both space itself, and the right to use that space in the manner they wanted. Although sometimes this competition was dictated by circumstances beyond residents’ control, it was often deliberate, often direct, and often relied on residents’ ability to recognize and deploy personal, institutional, and ideological tools and discourses. In other words, competition—a word so often linked to the values of capitalism—was also deeply engrained within the “housing question” in the early Soviet Union.

In an article for the journal Housing Cooperation (Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo) from 1922, an anonymous author outlined a vision of what the Soviet state could add to an understanding of the home. “The home is something unique: it is perceived differently by different people, and it had no general goal; templates are impossible and even undesirable,” read
the article. “Every person must strive to arrange their own home individually, in agreement with
their own understandings and desires.” Fashion and trends, the article argued, obscured most
people’s ability to uncover their own desires and understandings of the home. The Soviet state,
by moving away from fashion for fashion’s sake, would give residents the ability to better
understand what they wanted from “home,” and then (with additional manufactured goods) make
that vision real.\footnote{409 “Ubranstvo doma.” Zhilishchnoe tovarishchestvo 1, No. 7 (December 1922): 37.}

While vignettes such as those above have highlighted the limits of the Soviet state to
reduce the housing question to simple considerations of ideology, the volatile nature of the early
Soviet space did, in fact, force residents to clarify and crystalize their definitions of home, of
who belonged where and why. For some, these were questions of socialist ideology; for others,
an opportunity to better their social standing or quality of life. Despite the assumption of
fixedness that the term implies, home—as both a concept and a lived reality—was a competitive
arena, where a moment of hard-earned stability for one often came at the cost of a loss of
stability to someone else. The Soviet home, therefore, was a space created everyday by those
who lived within it, as much as it was by the state apparatuses and institutions that sought to
control it.

Coda: Methodology and the Late Imperial Period

Unlike each of the other chapters in this dissertation, this chapter has focused thus far
solely on the Soviet period. For a dissertation focused on the continuities that exist across the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such a gap is palpable. The reason for the gap is
methodological; simply put, the sources needed to create these vignettes are buried deeper in the archival records for the late Imperial period. I would like pause here to reflect on how future research might fill these gaps, and consider what conclusions can be drawn more broadly about the broader revolutionary era.

The first argument is one of continuity. In these petitions and letters that we do have, it is clear residents are able to deploy a language that allowed them to push against loss, attempt to secure stability, and engage in competition with other residents. Many of these documents were written immediately following the October Revolution. Such an ability does not emerge *ex nihilo*, suggesting that those letters and petitions have a pre-revolutionary lineage. As studies of petitions and letters have shown, citizens in the late Imperial period were very capable of voicing their grievances in both public and private forums.410

What might such a contestation have looked like in the late Imperial period? There were scattered court cases, tried at local or municipal Magistrate’s Court (*Mirovoi sud*), where residents tried to contest evictions (usually for non-payment).411 But as Tsuyoshi Hasegawa has suggested, Imperial-era courts were usually sympathetic to property owners, and rendered verdicts that upheld the power of landlords and lenders.412 Of the records that exist, eviction cases often seem like open-and-shut matters, with the documentation for the entire cases sometimes taking up just two pieces of paper.413

That the courts were not a viable place for residents to contest their grievances suggests that the negotiations were probably more informal. In her study of urban prostitution in the late

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411 See Fond 126 of TsIAM, which includes records from Magistrate’s Courts in the different Moscow districts.
413 TsIAM, F. 1296, op. 1, d. 17, ll. 10-11ob. The case involves the Popov family, who were evicted on January 14, 1908.
Imperial period, Siobhán Hearne examines the role that informal notes—often just scraps of paper—played in the relationship between prostitutes and the police. What we see now as negotiations of power and control were, for the women writing the notes, simply daily interactions with officials that they knew well. These interactions are the precursors to the Soviet petitions.

It is also worth considering what this source gap tells us about the Soviet institutions and individual officials that saved these letters. As a group, these letters do not fit into any neat ideological purpose. They frequently create a narrative of state institutions making mistakes, or of Soviet power failing to live up to its promises. When they offer suggestions, the letter writers frequently propose forms of housing that seemed antithetical to the increasingly communalized style of housing that is commonly associated with the early Soviet period; take, for example, the single family homes proposed by the factory workers in Kazan. And yet these letters and petitions were kept by the Soviet institutions. Not only that, but they survived through decades of institutional changes, archival shuffles, and simple wear-and-tear. That these records still exist tells us that officials and institutions within Soviet state were interested in alternative visions of what the home could be.

414 Siobhán Hearne, *Female Prostitution in Urban Russia, 1900-1917* (PhD Dissertation, University of Nottingham, 2017).
415 GARF, F. R130, op. 2, d. 78, ll. 14-14ob.
CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF MANAGEMENT

For planners, management of the everyday—in regards to the “housing question”—was about turning “housing” into “home.” Utilizing ideological, social, material, and cultural tools, planners hoped to turn a necessarily central spatial feature of daily lives into a means of constructing and defining political, classed, and gendered identities. Yet planners, somewhat ironically, failed to plan for the residents themselves, who often co-opted, contradicted, or upended planners’ visions of the everyday. Indeed this gulf between the idealization of housing and the realities of home not only existed, but were visible—and ridiculed.

This particular tension between housing and home is exemplified in the 1927 silent film Third Meshchanskaia Street, popularly referred to in English as Bed and Sofa. The plot of the film is relatively straightforward: a couple, Kolia and Liuda, live in a small basement apartment in Moscow. One of Kolia’s army friends, Volodia, arrives in the city to work as a printer; unable to secure other housing in a city of perpetual shortages, he moves into Kolia and Liuda’s apartment and sleeps on their spare sofa. When Kolia leaves for a short trip, Liuda and Volodia bond during an excursion to an airstrip and form a sexual relationship. When Kolia returns and is told of their relationship, he leaves to go live in his office; when he returns to pick up some clothing, Liuda offers him the couch. The two men effectively switch places, with Volodia sharing the bed with Liuda, and Kolia sleeping on the sofa. This uneasy situation continues for weeks until, in response to Volodia’s escalating abusive behavior (he refuses to let her leave the apartment), Liuda renews her relationship with Kolia. After a few more months of switching between the two flawed men (both of whom refer to themselves as her husband), Liuda becomes pregnant. Both of the men pressure her into an abortion, saying they do not want to raise a child.
that might not be their biological offspring. Instead of acquiescing to their demands, she leaves them a simple note—“I’m leaving…I’ll never return to your Meshchanskaia Street”—and boards a train out of the city.

For a viewer watching the film at the time it was released, one of the first things they would have noticed would have been the apartment, where almost every scene in the movie takes place. Although the main room is cluttered with lots of furniture—in addition to the titular bed and sofa, there is also a table, desk, samovar for tea, and several dressers and cabinets for clothing and other items—it probably measures close to the 16.5 square meters that would have been the sanitary minimum for two people in the early Soviet period.416 Considering that a survey published in the late Imperial period revealed that up to 70 percent of urban residents had less than one meter of housing space for themselves, the apartment must have looked enormous.417

The apartment stood out in ways other than size. There is a locking door at the entrance, suggesting that Liuda and Kolia likely had the relatively rare position of occupying their own individual apartment. In a time in which “filling up” (zapolnenie) was a common occurrence, the married couple is never required to subdivide their space to accommodate an assigned resident; instead, they choose to invite a third resident in through their own volition. There are also no noticeable hygienic problems. Although the apartment the three protagonists occupy is a basement room in a small wooden house, there are windows near the ceiling level (that are big enough for the characters to occasionally climb through) that provide both natural light and ventilation. There is even a person on site (presumably a dvornik, or caretaker) to provide the

416 Lynne Attwood, Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 32.
residents with help, if needed. In short, the apartment meets almost every standard that planners in both the late Imperial and early Soviet periods.

Yet despite the advantages that the apartment provides, structural problems creep into the picture. When Volodia arrives in the city, his search for a place to live results in nothing but dead ends and frustration; presumably, the “maneuverable fund” (manevrennyj fond) of housing stock to be used for newly arrived workers did not function as smoothly as it was supposed to. Kolia invites him to live with them voluntarily, but without the overarching problem of overcrowding, it never would have been an issue.

However, even if Volodia had been able to find housing elsewhere and had never come to live on Meshchanskaia Street, there still existed deep divisions between Liuda and Kolia. Their relationship is initially defined by resentment and spite, and hardly improves throughout the film. The difficult relationship between the two of them illustrates the tensions of gender politics in the early twentieth century. While Kolia enters and leaves the apartment frequently, Liuda remains almost exclusively in the domestic space. She has little to do besides basic chores like laundry and cooking, and it is clear the boredom takes a severe toll on her. She also has no social outlet (perhaps she would have benefited from the social environment that communalized kitchens were supposed to offer). Volodia’s entrance into the story changes the shape of the gender problems, but it certainly does not end them. The film gives Liuda the seemingly radical option of choice: not only is she able to chose between two men for her husband, but she is able to make the decision over and over again. This veneer of choice, though, somewhat disguises the fact that, for Liuda, both the options are bad ones.

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418 GARF, F. 1235, op. 23, d. 1251, ll. 3-6ob. See also the Sovnarkom decree “O zhilishchnoi politike” from 4 January 1928.
In the face of these large problems, daily habits begin to fail apart. The basic conceit of the film illustrates how one of the most basic biological functions—sleep—becomes a fraught choice, as Liuda has to decide who shares the bed and who takes the couch. Meals are a tense affair, filled with angry stares and furtive glances. Even tea—the most common drink in Russia—falls victim, as the film highlights Volodia’s increasing dictatorial posturing through his instance that Liuda drop everything to make him a drink.

This conflict—in addition to putting each of the three primary characters through their own individual torment—illustrates the extent to which questions of home were very much open questions. The family structures traditionally associated with home are upended. By the end of the film, both Kolia and Volodia refer to themselves as Liuda’s husband. There is a child—the physical manifestation of the home’s reproductive role—but neither of the men wants it. Moreover, the woman has to physically leave the housing unit to be able to safely raise the child.

The film, essentially, is an argument for the impossibility of managing the everyday. Even when they are provided with an apartment that should have been able to provide a secure, healthy home, the actions of the people who live within it constantly throw that goal into jeopardy. They defy easy control or categorization. They shatter any idea of a home that a planner may have formulated “from above.”

Third Meshchanskaia Street in Historical Context

How might we contextualize this film within broader historical narratives? Let us begin where the film ends: in Third Meshchanskaia Street, the future is one of rejection: Liuda can
only have the life she wants by leaving the city behind, and, presumably, returning to her hometown or village. But Liuda’s decision was an increasingly rare one. After a dip in population in the period following the revolution (due in no small part to the massive shortages of the Civil War period), the urban population of the Soviet Union grew exponentially, and those who moved the cities were increasingly likely to stay there. There were also more and more people who had been born in the cities, and had only the most tenuous of connections to areas outside of them. Liuda had the option of not staying in the city, but for an increasing number of people, that type of mobility was fading.

This climate of increasing urbanization—and increasingly permanent urbanization—inspired a new wave of visions of urban life. In chapter one, I introduced a film that was never made by a member of the Moscow City Soviet named Dediukhin. The goal of the film was to combine documentary and artistic methods to show how the “old Moscow” was being washed away, and that the city being created in its place was fundamentally unrecognizable. This transformation, Dediukhin outlined, needed to be traced even at the level of the home. He conceived of his film not only as a way to show the contemporary situation of the late 1930s, but also the future. The film, he wrote, would end in 1945, to show the cumulative effect of ten years of the Moscow General Plan (which had begun in 1935).419

Dediukin’s future-oriented vision was far from the only one. Architects and urban designers entered the conversation as well, by providing models of domestic space that they argued could transform everyday life. Chafing against a Western narrative of urbanization that prioritized building upwards, the Commissar of Finance and architect Nikolai Aleksandrovich Miliutin proposed cities built along horizontal axes, where the different zones of a city—residential, industrial, leisure—would run parallel to each other. In his conceptualization—which

419 RGASPI, F. 81, op. 3, d. 192, ll. 172-186.
he called the socialist city (sotsgorod)—the as outlined in a 1930 publication, the domestic space would be subdivided into individual living cells (zhilaia iacheika). Each of these cells would be stocked with a bed, a desk, and a few pieces of furniture for storing individual possessions. The point of these cells, Miliutin wrote, was to provide people with a space for “sleeping,” “individual relaxation,” “storing items,” and “complying with basic personal hygiene.” All other activities were to take place in communal, social settings. 420

Some visions even became realized through the creation of what one might call prototype buildings, or individual examples of new visions of everyday life. Perhaps the most prominent was the Narkomfim building, created under the direction of the architect Moisei Iakovlevich Ginzburg. Ginzburg, a prominent member of the Constructivist school, designed the building to operate as a social condenser, slowly moving residents towards a more communal form of life. Different apartments had different levels of communal features, and the goal was to have residents slowly progress from apartment to apartment as they became increasingly incorporated into the collective environment. Another prominent architect inspired by the Constructivist school, Konstantin Stepanovich Mel’nikov, designed a round building without interior walls, to disrupt the boundaries that normally dictated everyday life. 421

These plans and prototype visions were created as a vision of the future, and of what urban everyday life could look like in that future. They were designed to fight against the atomization of urban spaces, and promote a communalized everyday life. They were designed to contribute to Dediukin’s vision of a city that, by the ten-year anniversary of the Moscow General Plan in 1945, would be fundamentally reshaped. But, of course, 1945 is known for another

420 N.A. Miliutin, Sotsgorod: Problema stroitel’stva sotsialisticheskikh gorodov (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1930), 38-39.
reason: the close of a devastating conflict, which fundamentally shaped the “housing question” for the rest of the Soviet period and beyond.

The Great Patriotic War (World War II) was particularly devastating to the European parts of the Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the destruction of the conflict. However, the ripple affects of the war on the “housing question” were even broader. Cities heavily involved in wartime production in the Urals and further east saw their populations rise dramatically as factories in the conflict zone were dismantled and reassembled in uncontested areas. Refugee migration also played a role. In Central Asia, the influx of population from the western Soviet Union had a drastic influence on cities like Tashkent, speeding up what Paul Stronski has called 
*ab imperio* city building. Although Tashkent was already largely planned using models derived from a European context, the influx of refugees intensified this process. This process created a form of the city that often made it difficult for Central Asian residents to fit their conceptions of home into the westernized housing stock. In one inadvertent example, many Uzbeks complained that it was impossible to fit their traditional-style furniture through the small stairwells in the new apartment buildings.

In general, though, the biggest change to postwar housing stock in the Soviet Union came with the rise of separate (*otdel’naia*) apartments, which proliferated in the 1950s and beyond. Much of the housing stock in the early Soviet period was usually predicated on communalization; either it was made from pre-revolutionary housing stock that had been subdivided in a manner that made sharing spaces necessary, or, like the *kommunalka*, was designed to promote a communal form of living. The separate apartment, as its name suggests,

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was designed to provide each nuclear family with its own apartment. Separate apartments did represent a material shift from the typical early Soviet housing, a shift so drastic Steven Harris described them as the antithesis of revolutionary housing. However, in her work on Khrushchev-era housing, Christine Varga-Harris argues that, far from being a defeat for the socialist state, separate apartments were designed to appeal to Soviet citizens and bring them into the broader community. Even as daily activities like cooking were taken out of their communalized settings, the goal was still to produce a citizenry that was connected to “the collectivist spirit and the revival of socialist activism.”

These houses, in other words, were still very much part the desire to manage the everyday. But as was the case in the late Imperial and early Soviet period (and in Third Meshchanskaia Street), residents imposed their own meanings over the space. An increased demand for consumer goods opened up comfort as a politically salient category, particularly in terms of housing furnishings. In petitions, they used the significance of citizenship to demand that the state uphold its side of the “tacit social construct.”

Home is, essentially, a paradox. It means too much to the modern project (and the modern state) to be left to its own devices, but its own idiosyncrasies often make management impossible. The shifting façade of urban housing in Russian and the Soviet Union—from the pre-revolutionary houses, to the kommunalka apartment buildings, to the otdel’naia apartments—show how that desire to manage the everyday shifted in terms of material conditions, but remained fundamentally the same at its core. And throughout the process, the

426 Steven E. Harris, Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 11.
427 Varga-Harris, Stories of House and Home, 104.
impossibility of fully managing that space—as shown for dramatic effect in *Third Meshchanskaia Street*—remained draped against the background. Home and the management of the everyday will always exist in dramatic tension, regardless of the material conditions of the housing stock, or the ideological conditions of the larger political, social, or cultural climate. It is this tension that make the everyday such a rich site for historical inquiry, as it lies at the intersection of human desire to seek both order and disorder, to both impose overarching planning structures and then to tear those very structures to the ground.
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