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"THE YOUNG RUSSIAN": LAWRENCE, LIBIDNIKOV AND LONDON'S RUSSIANS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

CATHERINE BROWN

Soon after the character nicknamed "the Pussum" has sprinkled some drops of brandy in the face of her ex-lover Halliday, "another man", with "a very small, quick, Eton voice" (*WL* 69), springs to Halliday's defence, and proceeds to play a minor and largely forgettable role in that and the subsequent bohemian scenes of *Women in Love*.

However, a Russian should not be ignored when he exists in a novel written during, and saturated by, a war in which Russia was one of the UK's most important allies (until, from 3 March 1918, it was suddenly that no longer), and during which the country was in cultural vogue.[1] Konstantin Nabokov (uncle of the future writer Vladimir) was appointed counsellor at the Russian Embassy in London in 1914, and he noticed how "Sympathy with Russia was manifested in every direction, in all classes of society".[2] The School of Slavonic and East European Studies was founded in Bloomsbury in same year that Lawrence completed *The Rainbow* (1915), which was the year before he started *Women in Love* (as considered separately from the former). Galya Diment, biographer of Lawrence's close friend Samuil Solomonovich Koteliansky (1880–1955), argues that "Kot" fell on his feet by arriving in England in 1911. This was the year in which the Ballets Russes arrived in London, and the year before Constance Garnett first started translating Dostoevsky (and met Lawrence). It was therefore the very take-off moment for the Russian Craze, in which "Kot" and Mark Gertler were welcomed in salons, such as Lady Ottoline Morrell's on London's Bedford Square, as representatives of the newly fashionable Russia, rather than as respectively Ukrainian and

Polish Jews of the non-privileged kind, who would not have been permitted anywhere near the Imperial ballet in Russia itself.[3] Lawrence found himself being fostered and celebrated by the London literary scene at the very same time as was Russianness itself.

Readers are the more justified in paying attention to the Russianness of *Women in Love*'s minor character since the narrator refers to Libidnikov as "the Russian" fourteen times, as opposed to four and three respectively for "Maxim" and "Libidnikov" – names which evoke, rather than assert, his nationality (*WL* 69–80, 382–4). Yet this sober and urbane character, with "a very small, quick, Eton voice" (*WL* 69), is anything but typically Russian, in the way that Koteliansky was perceived to be (with his Slavicisms, bear-like aspect, and glass-smashing to punctuate his speech of love to Lawrence in Café Royal in December 1923).[4] In what is, especially in its bohemian scenes, something of a *roman à clef*, there are at first glance several people on whom Libidnikov might be based.

The editors of the Cambridge Edition of *Women in Love* adduce two of Lawrence's acquaintances as models. One is Maxim Maximovich Litvinov (1876–1951), shown in Figure 4, whom Lawrence met through the Hampstead set of the Lows and Eders at some point after June 1914; the other is the English soldier poet Robert Nichols (1893–1944), whom Lawrence visited during the latter's convalescence from shell shock in November 1915. The character has in common with Nichols his close friendship with a composer (Libidnikov repeatedly defends and assists Halliday, a character closely based on Philip Heseltine, whom Nichols had first introduced to Lawrence's work [*WL* 536 n. 60:30]),[5] his English public school background, slimness, suave aspect, and youth.[6] The Cambridge University Press editors also note that there may be a pun on "Nik" in Libid*nik*ov (*WL* 538). Meir Henoch Wallach-Finkelstein, revolutionary alias Maxim Litvinov (meaning "of Lithuania"), gave an approximation of his pseudonym and nationality to the character, but had turned an aged-looking forty when the first *Women in Love* was started as a separate novel in

1916, was portly rather than resembling "a water-plant" when naked (*WL* 79), and would have had the accent of a Russo-Polish Jew, having arrived to live in England when he was already thirty-two.[7] Much the same was true of Koteliansky; a Jew from what is now Ukraine, and four years younger than Litvinov, he arrived in London when he was thirty. Moreover, Litvinov had a "deep-seated disdain for cosmopolitan intellectuals", which would have made the Café Royal (original of the Pompadour in *Women in Love*) unlikely as one of his haunts.[8]

The kind of Russian who attended Eton before the war, and was "young" during it, would have been an aristocrat such as Prince Felix Felixovich Yusupov (1887–1967), who founded Oxford University's Russian Society around 1912. One upper-class Russian male whom Lawrence might have met by the time of creating Libidnikov was the artist Boris Anrep (1883–1969), who like Lawrence attended Ottoline Morrell's Bedford Square salon and visited her at Garsington.[9] However, he was recalled home to fight in 1914 (Lawrence first visited Bedford Square on around 13 August, by which time Russia had already been at war for a fortnight), and there is no record of Lawrence having met him after his return to London in 1917, by which time the character of Libidnikov had taken the form that he would retain through to publication.

The main model for Libidnikov is almost certainly Boris de Croustchoff (1892–1969).[10] He told Harry T. Moore that he believed he was the model for Libidnikov, and, from what little is known of him, this seems likely.[11] "Khrushchev" is the name of an aristocratic Russian family dating from the fifteenth century. The "de" participle, not used in Russian aristocratic names in any period (the "ov" ending serving a similar function), suggests an attempt on Croustchoff's part to emphasise his aristocracy to Europeans, as well (perhaps) as an attempt to make himself sound less Russian and more European. The facts that he studied Classics and algebra at Lincoln College, Oxford in 1912–13; that he did not feel the need to complete his degree; and that his father lived in Lausanne, also

suggest aristocracy.[12] He probably attended Harrow School,[13] where he might have acquired an approximation to Libidnikov's Eton accent. At the time that *Women in Love* was being written he was 24–27 years old, therefore deserving of the repeated epithet "young" (*WL* 69–76). According to the editors of Volume 7 of the Cambridge Edition of Lawrence's letters he was a "London Bohemian" (*7L* 78). He was an archaeologist and anthropologist (who donated to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford), and a bibliophile and book dealer (who assisted Lawrence on book-related matters). According to Cecil Gray, he was the "greatest living authority on edible fungi" (a detail suggestive of a childhood in Russia).[14] Lawrence met him through the latter's friend Heseltine in 1915, and encountered him in both Heseltine's flat and in Cornwall.[15] Lawrence corresponded with him until at least 1928; in 1915 he considered him a possible candidate for Rananim.[16]

The fact that de Croustchoff has barely achieved footnote status in works concerning his English circle fits with the fact that Libidnikov is a minor, elusive presence in *Women in Love*. The facts that de Croustchoff was multiply hybrid (an Anglo-Russian scholar-bohemian), and that Libidnikov owes his name to Maxim Litvinov, fit with Libidnikov's contradictory function in the novel. Libidnikov refracts several conflicting discourses relating to Russia in First-World-War London, which this essay will attempt to explore. In doing so it will consider the range of Lawrence's Russian acquaintances, and in its last section will trace developments in Lawrence's relations to Russia – and in his acquaintances' lives – in the post-War period.

Libidnikov is the only member of the Pompadour set who is clearly not English, and it is therefore a Russian who carries the sole burden of making this fictional bohemia – which meets in a hotel located close to the highly international, arty districts of Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury – ethnically cosmopolitan. It is, in fact, likely that Lawrence knew in London more Russians than people of any other non-British nationality.[17] It is possible that he shared a widespread sense of Russians as more foreign, and the circles in

which they moved as therefore more cosmopolitan, than any other European nationality, coming as they did from what was perceived to be Europe's most inaccessible, mysterious and exotic country.

The most overwhelmingly cosmopolitan of Lawrence's pre-War experiences was of a dinner hosted at Levanto by the Russian novelist Aleksandr Valentinovich Amfiteatrov (1862–1923). Lawrence wrote on 14 March 1914: "It *was* a rum show: twenty six people at lunch, a babble of German English Russian French Italian … an adopted son of Maxim Gorky … no, it was too much – You have no idea how one feels English and stable and solid in comparison" (*2L* 155). In *Mr Noon*, which also describes Lawrence's pre-War experiences on the Continent, it is Russia that comes first to the protagonist's mind during his "unEnglishing" in the valley of the Isar: "He felt he could walk without stopping on to the far north-eastern magic of Russia … There seemed to run gleams and shadows from the vast spaces of Russia … He saw the white road, which seemed to him to lead to Russia. And he became unEnglished" (*MN* 107).

Yet the particular Russian who guarantees the ethnic diversity of the Pompadour crowd is himself highly Englished. If, as Virginia Nicholson argues, the kind of pre-War English person who believed that England "was fast becoming an intolerable place to live" turned "for their artistic and personal salvation to Russia", then the suavely-Anglicised Etonian Libidnikov is not the kind of Russian they had in mind.[18] One function of Libidnikov might therefore be a cutting of Russians down to size, ridiculing the fetishisation of all Russians as "the purveyors of sincerity to the over-institutionalised European", in the context of a Russian Craze which irritated him.[19] Libidnikov is, on the novel's own terms, and along with the other denizens of the Pompadour, "of no account".[20] He is the civilised face of bohemia in his sober management of drunk friends and taxis, but his bohemian nakedness is "somehow humiliating" (*WL* 77), and his attractiveness slips when he abruptly describes Hasan, Halliday's elegant Hindu servant, as "very dirty" (*WL* 73), and later incites Halliday to parody Birkin's letter (*WL* 382–3).[21] He is left

behind by the narrative, as though in punishment, when Gudrun carries Birkin's letter out of the Pompadour.

Lawrence has in addition given this Russian an absurd name, by conflating Litvinov with *der Libido*, which entered English in translation of Freud in 1909. Lawrence, having moved beyond his early excitement at Freud, vigorously disputed him with the Eders and Lows, and was ready to pastiche the term.[22] One of the best-known Russians at the time that Lawrence started writing *Women in Love* in April 1916 was notorious for his libido: Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin, whom Yusupov and associates murdered in December 1916. As far as Litvinov himself was concerned, the swelling of his surname was a joke at his expense. On 22 February 1916 (two months before Lawrence started *Women in Love*), he married Lawrence's friend and sometime admirer Ivy Low (through whose hands the typescript of this novel was to pass before reaching Ottoline Morrell later that year).[23] Bloomsbury and Hampstead were amused at the marriage of the placid, portly, impoverished exile with the fifteen-years-younger extrovert Ivy (1889–1977). At last, the confirmed bachelor was giving an indication that he *had* a libido. The name Libidnikov is equally inappropriate to the character, who merely acts as a graceful pander between Gerald and the Pussum. Lawrence himself was amused at the marriage. In February 1916 he wrote to Catherine Carswell of Ivy: "I must write to her. At any rate, it is well for her to be married, then she can be unmarried when she likes again" (*2L* 532). Five months later he wrote "For my part, I can only tell you that our dear Ivy has married a poor Russian revolutionary of forty – quite nice-looking, I believe, but of no account. She – Ivy – is already not *too* contented with her new lot. Heaven knows how it will end" (*2L* 629). The joke is the more pointed since, the differences between Litvinov and the character notwithstanding, there were similarities. Litvinov had an ability to understand and assimilate to the West, and to speak persuasively to it, that Kot did not. When dressed, like Gerald and Libidnikov, Litvinov looked "comme il faut" (*WL* 80).

Neither Russian culture nor the Russian Craze itself are satirised in the novel – or the latter only mildly, through the pedantic discussion of a Turgenev translation (*WL* 86–7). Even the representation of the Ballets Russes (whose veneration at Ottoline's house Gertler once parodied, to Kot's delight) is positive, Lawrence having organised similar events himself at Garsington in late 1915.[24] Nobody in the bohemian scenes of *Women in Love* celebrates Libidnikov by virtue of his nationality; such attention as is paid to his nationality is, as has been noted, that of the narrator himself. Nonetheless, the Russia Craze is subtly and negatively undermined; the fact that the novel's sole Russian is not indicated to be any kind of artist (as de Croustchoff was not) subverts the connection that existed in the Russophile mind between Russia and the idea of culture. Given that Libidnikov is upper-class, and has professional manners, it is as likely that he is employed at the Russian Embassy as that he is a poet or painter such as Boris Anrep; his sense of taste is exhibited only in his explanation of the Fetish as a representation of childbirth (*WL* 74),[25] and his amusement at Birkin's epistolary style (*WL* 382–4).

Of course, Lawrence had met numerous artistic Russians: Amfitheatrov, Zinovii Alekseevich Peshkov (who showed his short stories to Lawrence in 1914), and Vera Volkovsky (who wrote short stories and visited the Lawrences in 1914).[26] Koteliansky translated literature after a fashion, occasionally in collaboration with Lawrence himself.

However, he also knew several Russians who were *not* artistic, and were in London as political or ethnic exiles rather than as purveyors of culture. It is estimated that by 1917 there were 300–400 Russian revolutionaries living in London. According to the biographer of literary translator and critic Dmitry Petrovich Svyatopolk-Mirsky (1890–1939), "There had been relatively few Russians in England before 1914 whose sojourn was neither politically nor socially motivated".[27] Faina Markovna Stepniak (1855–1945), the widow of the terrorist Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky (1851–95), was introduced to Lawrence by Kot (a

fellow Jew from the Pale of Settlement) in April 1917 (*3L* 116). Litvinov, although described on his marriage certificate as a "literary translator", had few artistic inclinations, and worked principally as a Bolshevik organiser.[28] Through the Lows and Eders Lawrence probably knew several of Litvinov's fellow revolutionaries: Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky (born Jan Lyakhovetsky, 1884–1975), who lived in London 1912–17; the more aristocratic Georgy Vasilievich Chicherin (1872–1936), who lived in London 1914–18; the upper-class feminist Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai (née Domontovicha, 1872–1952), who visited London on and off until 1914; and the anarchist Prince Piotr Alexeevich Kropotkin (1842–1921), who lived in England 1886–1917, and was friends with Ford Madox Hueffer and Constance Garnett.[29] Several of these adopted pseudonyms, partly in order to hide Jewishness and partly in order to escape official detection; the modulation of Litvinov to Libidnikov gives the former a further pseudonym.

Lawrence's first interest in Russia was in its literature, as he attested as early as 1907.[30] His interest in and admiration for it waned precisely at the time that the Russian Craze took off; by June 1914 he was distinguishing his artistry from that of the Russians (*2L* 182–3). However, his interest in Russia as a political entity in the present rose to replace his admiration for its most famous writers; his interests in Russia's future, and its literary past, follow similar bell curves, but the latter preceded the former by about eight years (the former peaking around 1909).[31] In part because Lawrence was socially attuned to the country's political present, his feelings about Russia were not shaken by the revolutions of 1917 as were those of the followers of the Russian Craze who had revered the "Russian soul" as infinitely long-suffering.[32] The potential conflict between the political life and the artistic life became apparent to Ivy Litvinova, who found that marriage to a revolutionary required her to relinquish her literary aspirations.[33]

This is not, however, to suggest that Russian culture and politics were unconnected. The very stringency of Tsarist censorship led to

political debate being conducted in a veiled form through the production and discussion of literature. Kropotkin was also a literary critic; Stepniak had collaborated with Constance Garnett on the introductions to the literary translations which he had encouraged her to undertake; Gorky, of whom Lawrence claimed to have read much by March 1913, and Kot's translations of whose *Reminiscences of Leonid Andreyev* he was in 1923 to correct, was a political writer. Zinaida Afanasievna Vengerova (1867–1941), a feminist literary critic who lived in London 1914-17, met Lawrence through Constance Garnett and Kot.[34] Hueffer's literary periodical *The English Review* (1908–37) revealed the editor's left-wing bias, as did his friendship with exiles including Kropotkin and Stepniak. The Eder salon brought non-artistic revolutionaries together with socialist-inclined artists such as H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw; Maisky, though not literary himself, was particularly drawn to the company of writers.[35]

Nonetheless, Lawrence was developing a sense that Russia's future would entail it breaking connection with European culture. In his September 1919 Foreword to Shestov's *All Things Are Possible* he described Russia's nineteenth-century literature as resembling "the inflammation and irritation" produced by innoculation by "European culture … Russia will certainly inherit the future … Meanwhile she goes through the last stages of reaction against us, kicking away from the old womb of Europe" (*IR* 5–6). Lawrence's acquaintance with non-artistic Russians such as Litvinov may, then, have assisted with the creation of his "young Russian"; it also determines the nature of the present article as more historical-political than literary-critical.

However, it was mentioned above that Libidnikov more resembles an employee of the Russian Embassy than he does the revolutionary "of no account" (as Lawrence thought of Litvinov [*2L* 629]). It is therefore possible that part of the motivation for Lawrence's representation of Libidnikov was his desire to critique Russia's ruling class. This would not be inconsistent with his critique of the excesses of the Russian Craze, and wholly consistent

with the sympathies of nearly all the Russians whom Lawrence knew best. Their social centre was the Herzen Club (named after the Russian populist philosopher Alexander Ivanovich Herzen, 1812–70, who had lived in London 1852–64), which was on Charlotte Street; it happened that this was only a few doors away from David Eder's consulting rooms. It may therefore have been on Charlotte Street that Litvinov got to know Eder.[36] Its members covered a range of political views, from Kropotkin's anarchism to Litvinov's Bolshevism, but they assisted one another. When Litvinov was deported from France to England in 1908, he carried a letter of introduction from Maxim Gorky to the librarian of the London Library, through whom he obtained a post at the publishers Williams and Norgate.[37] When Kot was sent by his mother to England in 1911 in order to avoid an anticipated spike in pogroms, he soon made friends with Fanny Stepniak. Litvinov, Maisky and Chicherin moved to be close to each other first in Golders Green and then in Hampstead.

Lawrence had long taken an interest in socialism, initially from Willie and Sallie Hopkin (friends from Eastwood), and he was a founder member of the Society for the Study of Social Reform at University College Nottingham.[38] He was also opposed to the class (i. e. the upper) that was, on all sides, promulgating the War. It is fitting that he should have been in company with Kot when, having just met on a walking holiday in the Lake District, they heard on 5 August 1914 that war had been declared (*2L* 205). Like Lawrence, Russian exiles in England had their own concerns about conscription; in 1914 Litvinov was exempted from military service, but Yusupov was recalled. Kot was in the meantime prevented from leaving England, just as was Lawrence himself. In October 1915, Gertler split from his patron Eddie Marsh, Winston Churchill's private secretary, over the latter's support for the War.[39] The Russians' fear of the draft increased when, in May 1916, an amendment to the Draft Act permitted friendly aliens to volunteer, with an increasing implied threat of consequences if they did not. Lawrence wrote to Kot in July: "How queer, if they send you to

Russia!" (*2L* 622). Clearly, Lawrence's character Libidnikov had neither volunteered nor been conscripted; de Croustchoff himself worked as a postal censor in the War Office and would have been exempted. It is, therefore, likely that Lawrence's opposition to the War gained an extra dimension, and still further internationalism (in addition to his conjugal sympathy to Germany), through his friendship with Russian exiles. Lawrence was not the only one harassed by the police during the period: "Spurred on by the Russian Ambassador, the Home Office began to harass Russian revolutionary organizations … Chicherin was jailed briefly while the police unsuccessfully sought to build a case against him; this was his first, but not last, opportunity to sample the British government's 'hospitality'".[40] Litvinov was imprisoned in the same prison as Bertrand Russell in 1918.[41]

It is to the credit of Lawrence's perceptiveness that through his contact with Russian exiles, he sensed that profound change might be possible in Russia. This suggests a further speculation - somewhat contrary to the preceding speculation that Libidnikov is a negative representation of Russia's ruling class – that he is so strongly associated with youth (he is six times called "the young Russian"; other men in the Pompadour are described as young, but not more than twice at most) because of Lawrence's association of that country with youth and therefore the future (*WL* 69–76; *FWL* 67). This idea had in fact been a commonplace in Russia from the time of Chaadaev onwards and was widely accepted in the West. Between 1826 and 1831 Pyotr Yakovlevich Chaadaev (1794–1856) had argued that Russia was young and had a long way to go before it could catch up with Western countries. In 1886 Melchior de Vogüé called Russia "still in the savage nudity of its youth".[42] In 1914 Chas Byford asserted that "No race has had a more tragic past, and no race seems destined to a more brilliant future".[43] In 1915 Jane Harrison described Russia as "young among nations".[44] In 1916 Marjorie Colt Lethbridge and Alan Bourchier argued that "for long enough Russia has been the pupil of Western Europe. She

has outgrown that phase".[45] But in Lawrence's case there was a particular reason for this perception.

This was the hope that *Women in Love* might flourish in translation in Russia, after *The Rainbow* had been suppressed and he had failed to find a publisher for its sequel (although he had entrusted the proofs of *The Rainbow* to Vengerova in the hope that she might arrange a Russian translation).[46] He wrote repeatedly to Kot about his suggestion of doing this between August 1915 and February 1917.[47] He then stopped doing this, and started praising Russia more directly – both for the same reason: the February Revolution (8 March on the Western calendar).[48] Insofar as *Women in Love* is set in the indeterminate Wartime present, and was written in its two major forms between February 1916 and September 1919, it carries an aristocratic Libidnikov through to the point when he can no longer return to Russia (after the War, de Croustchoff became a farmer in Suffolk).[49]

Meanwhile, in the real London, Litvinov, Chicherin, Maisky, Kot and Lawrence rejoiced. Litvinov rushed down to Charlotte Street to help the large numbers of Russian exiles who were descending on London from the Continent in order to take the quickest route home via Scandinavia (he and Chicherin sought and obtained, from Konstantin Nabokov, funds for this, and incidentally demanded that the Tsar's portrait be taken off the Embassy wall; this was not done).[50]

When Kot subsequently became anxious about the developments, it was Lawrence who sought to reassure him. On 1 April 1917 he wrote: "Your elation over Russia, has it come back, or do you feel still despondent? … Don't hurry about Russia. I always believe in giving things time." (*3L* 108–9) Lawrence's enthusiasm for Russia grew further after, on 6 April 1917, the entry of the United States into the War shook his belief in the latter country (although he continued working on *Studies in Classic American Literature* through to completion in 1919). Lawrence was willing to contribute to *Новая жизнь* [*Novaia Zhizn*, *New Life*], which Litvinov had edited in 1905 during its briefly legal

incarnation, and on which Koteliansky was now assisting Gorky by asking English writers for statements of support.[51] Although Kot received a cautious response from George Bernard Shaw, he got positive responses from, amongst others, the father of his Russian language pupil, who was shortly to meet and praise Lenin – H. G. Wells.[52] In May Lawrence told Kot: "I shall be only too glad to contribute anything I can". In the same letter, he wrote:

> I feel that our chiefest hope for the future is Russia. When I think of the young new country there, I love it inordinately. It is the place of hope. We must go, sooner or a little later. … We will go to Russia. Send me a Berlitz grammar book, I will begin to learn the language – religiously … Nuova speranza – la Russia. – *Please send me a grammar book.* (*3L* 121)[53]

Lawrence took steps to get a visa for Russia, but was persuaded to postpone because of the turbulent conditions; he was also unlikely to have been granted a visa, as was hinted to him by an employee of the foreign office.[54] Kot was in the meantime perturbed, and Lawrence tried to console him:

> Russia is bound to run wrong at the first, but she will pull out all right. – As for me, I sincerely hope she will conclude a separate peace. Anything to end the war. – But tell me what news there *really* is from Petrograd. – In the meantime, I keep my belief in Russia intact, until such time as I am forced to relinquish it: for it is the only country where I can plant my hopes. America is a stink-pot in my nostrils, after having been the land of the future for me. (*3L* 124)

By July 1917 Russia was for Lawrence "the positive pole of the world's spiritual energy, and America the negative pole". In his introduction, that summer, to his and Kot's translation of Shestov, he wrote: "Russia will certainly inherit the future", even though Lenin was "a bullying saint leading a revolution which does not

cleanse" (*RDP* 200). He again wrote to comfort Kot on 18 September 1917:

> As for Russia, it must go through as it is going. Nothing but a real smelting down is any good for her: no matter how horrible it seems. You, who are an ultra-conscious Jew, can't bear the chaos. But chaos is necessary for Russia. Russia will be all right – righter, in the end, than these old stiff senile nations of the West. (*3L* 284)

These effusions were however cut off by the 25 October (or 7 November) Revolution, which occurred three weeks after Lawrence's expulsion from Cornwall, meaning that he was back in London and in contact with Kot by the time that it happened. Kot was still more concerned at this event; there was now civil war in his home territory involving a nationalist army which was anti-Semitic, meaning that Jews were in more danger than before.[55] What seems to have made Lawrence more hopeful again was the armistice concluded on 5 December 1917 between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers. Less than a month later, on 3 January 1918, Lenin made Maxim Litvinov the first Soviet Ambassador to the Court of Saint James. He was not of course recognised as Ambassador, despite his asking Nabokov to vacate the Russian Embassy. But nor could he be ignored or altogether suppressed; he was the sole channel for the British to the new government, and was used as such. He established his embassy in his own house, with Ivy as his secretary.[56] Lawrence almost offered to help, writing on 16 February 1918 to Catherine Carswell:

> If you see Ivy, tell her from me I'm so glad Litvinov has got this office: I hope she'll become a full-blooded ambassadress, I do. It pleases me immensely. I sit here and say bravo. I almost feel like asking Litvinov if I can't help – but I don't suppose I'm of much use at this point. (*3L* 210)

He also had cause to congratulate one of Litvinov's colleagues; in the same month, Chicherin replaced Trotsky as Soviet foreign minister (People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs), and he held this post until the year Lawrence died.[57]

After Chicherin had negotiated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 2 March 1918, life got considerably harder for Russian expatriates, who were now conscripted to the British army under the Anglo-Russian Convention of Military Service; Kot was again at risk (having on 28 August 1917 been granted temporary exemption), and the fictional Libidnikov, being "young", might have been at higher risk still. However, Kot avoided conscription, and was able to take Lawrence to an Armistice party on 12 November 1918.[58] It was appropriate that Lawrence ended the War as he had begun it, in the company of a Russian who opposed it as strongly as he did himself. Yet it took another two years before the character containing Maxim Libidnikov was finally published by a Ukrainian Jew who translated literature from the Russian – not in fact Kot, but Thomas Seltzer in the United States.[59]

On 25 October 1918 Lenin recalled Litvinov to Russia; in the year Lawrence died, he took over from his former London colleague Chicherin as the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.[60] Between 1941 and 1943 he was Soviet Ambassador to the United States, thus uniting in his job those two countries which Lawrence had felt to be on a "verge" (*SCAL* 389–90). During this sojourn, in November 1943, Ivy looked up the Lawrence archive at Stanford University, and was amused to see the references to herself in his letters. She published a reminiscence in *Harper's Bazaar*, entitled 'A Visit to D. H. Lawrence'. Litvinov died in 1951, whilst Ivy continued to teach English in Russia until she retired to England in 1972, when Lawrence's popularity (in the wake of the 1960 unbanning of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and his construction as a Priest of Love) ran as high in England as did that of Russia when she first got to know him.

In the meantime, Maisky had been Soviet Ambassador to London between 1932 and 1943, when he was appointed deputy

Commissar of Foreign Affairs to Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, and was involved in the conferences at Yalta and Potsdam. For his part, Lawrence, although he wrote many strongly negative things about Bolshevism after 1918, never lost interest in either socialism (as evidenced by the character of Struthers in *Kangaroo*, Rhys in *The Plumed Serpent* and Parkin in the first draft of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) or Russia. He could no longer discuss such matters with a wide revolutionary circle however; "the old diplomatic corps, which was left high and dry when the Bolsheviks took power in October 1917 … formed the backbone of the Russian presence in London during the interwar years".[61] Lawrence thought of going to Russia in 1922 and 1925 (when *The Rainbow* became *Радуга* [*Raduga*] in translation), and tried again to learn Russian in 1926. His ideal of Russia lasted as long as that of Rananim, which had also started partly because of Kot.[62] Both ended around 1926, by which point Soviet cultural policy was already moving towards the imposition of socialist realism; *Women in Love* would have to wait until 2007 to become *Влюбленные женщины*.

Yet in the following year, 1927, Lawrence hoped that Svyatopolk-Mirsky (who had moved to London in 1921) might write a preface for his and Kot's 1920 translation of Shestov's *All Things are Possible*, and thereby increase its sales (*6L* 177). The reissue was never made, and two years after Lawrence's death Svyatopolk-Mirsky returned to the Soviet Union and wrote a Marxist critique of the *Intelligentsia of Great Britain* (published in Moscow in 1934, but better known in Alec Brown's English translation published in London in 1935).[63] He devoted one chapter to Lawrence, in which he asserted that: "'The hyper-trophied 'civilisedness' of a Roger Fry or a Virginia Woolf is balanced by the flight to savagery of D. H. Lawrence … It is no better than the reverse of the medal, a decadent bourgeois attraction to animal coarseness".[64] However, he acknowledges that "his poems about animals and plants are one of the high points of modern English poetry"[65], and his 1937 *Anthology of Modern English Poetry* contains six poems by him: 'Piano', 'Brooding Grief',

'Embankment at Night, Before the War (Outcasts)', 'Snake', 'Kangaroo', and 'Bibbles'.[66]

The translators of all the other poets in this volume are named; the fact that the fine translator of Lawrence is not suggests that it was Svyatopolk-Mirsky himself. In 1937 he was sent to the Gulag for suspected spying for Britain, and the anthology appeared under the name of one of the other translators, M. Gutner. It is "still the best anthology in Russian of English poetry from the mid-Victorian period to the 1930s", and as such it has had a huge influence on twentieth-century Russian poetry.[67]

It is notable that through all of Lawrence's rewriting of *Women in Love* (he made his final revisions on 15 September 1919), he altered none of the references to Russia. Perhaps the complex feelings which he felt towards different aspects of the country, and its worship, were present when he first created Libidnikov. As a result, the latter was such a contradictory creation that he was able to remain static – like the strange world of *Women in Love* itself – whilst his home country was turned upside down. The ambivalence of the character, with the name (almost) of Litvinov, but the appearance and manner of a diplomat (or censor of revolutionaries' post), accommodated Litvinov's transmogrification from penniless revolutionary to one of the most important diplomats in the United Kingdom. During the period of the novel's development, Russia had changed its official face in Britain from that of the aristocrat Konstantin Nabokov to that of the Lithuanian Jew Maxim Litvinov. Libidnokov is as ignorable in the novel as was Litvinov as a denizen of literary London – but, as was the case with Litvinov, it is worth paying him attention. By contrast, the character's direct model, Boris de Croustchoff, turned out to play as peripheral a role in his country's history as in the novel's plot. Friendly with both men during the War, for the rest of his life Lawrence's political sympathies trembled in the balance between the two visions of Russia which they respectively represented.

[1] On 3 March 1918 the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, establishing peace between Russia and the Central Powers, was signed.

[2] Galya Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury: The Life and Times of Samuel Koteliansky* (Montreal & London: McGill-Queen's UP, 2011), 4.

[3] Ibid., 6.

[4] David Ellis, *D. H. Lawrence: Dying Game 1922–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 149.

[5] Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 288.

[6] Nichols attended Winchester; Heseltine and Libidnikov attended Eton.

[7] Just as the narrator of *Women in Love* calls Libidnikov "the Russian", Ivy Low called Litvinov (with scant reference to his ethnicity) "the Slav": John Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), 78.

[8] Gabriel Gorodetsky, ed., *The Maisky Diaries*, trans. Tatiana Sorokina and Oliver Ready (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2015), xxxv.

[9] Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury*, 57; Miranda Seymour, *Ottoline Morrell: Life on the Grand Scale* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992).

[10] Although the present author has not been able to trace his name in Russian, it is likely that its transliteration today would be, as for the Soviet leader, Khrushchev.

[11] Harry T. Moore, *The Priest of Love* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 286.

[12] In 1913, his first year, he passed in algebra, Horace and Xenophon, but did not complete his B.A. He also studied for the Pitt Rivers Museum Diploma, but failed to take his examination: email from archivist of the University of Oxford (Anna Petre) to the present author, 6 June 2019.

[13] According to his Oxford University matriculation form, although not according to the archivist of Harrow School; the archivist of Eton College denies knowledge of him: emails to the present author, 5 June 2019.

[14] 'England: the Other Within – Analysing the English Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum', <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/noajaxindividuals b1ff.html?i_l=D&i_id=248> . Cecil Gray, *Musical Chairs or Between Two Stools* (London: Home & Van Thal, 1948), 291.

[15] Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922*, 816.

[16] Ibid., 289.

[17] Here and throughout this article "Russian" is taken in the broad sense of *российский* (*rossiiskii*, of Russian nationality, including Pale of Settlement Jews from what are now independent countries), rather than *русский* (*russkii*, ethnically Russian).

[18] Virginia Nicholson, *Among the Bohemians: Experiments in Living 1900–1939* (New York: William Morrow, 2002), 227.

[19] Philip Head,'The Transfiguration of "Russian" Lewis', *Journal of Wyndham Lewis Studies* 3: 93–122, 97. Lawrence was irritated particularly by the fashionable veneration of Dostoevsky; see Catherine Brown, 'Lawrence, Dostoevsky, and the Last Temptation by Christ', *Journal of D. H. Lawrence Studies*, Vol. 5.1 (2018), 143–62.

[20] Lawrence's description of Litvinov in a letter to Thomas Dunlop of July 1916 (*2L* 629).

[21] De Croustchoff was not present at the incident in Café Royal on 1 September 1916, when Katherine Mansfield confiscated the copy of *Amores* which was being read from parodically: Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922*, 824.

[22] Ibid., 133.

[23] Ibid., 349.

[24] Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury*, 57; *2L* 465.

[25] This detail, however, fits with Boris de Croustchoff's interest in archeological artefacts (he donated eight British stone tools to the Pitt Rivers Museum): 'England: the Other Within'.

[26] Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 73; *2L* 155, 168.

[27] G. S. Smith, *D. S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890–1939* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 84.

[28] Litvinov broke from jail in Russia in 1902, after which Lenin made him distribution manager of the revolutionary paper *Искра* (*Iskra*). He attended numerous Russian Socialist Congresses, at the fifth of which, in London in May 1907, he met Stalin, and became a gun-runner to revolutionaries in Russia: Hugh D. Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West: A Political Biography of Maxim Litvinov* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), 14. Ivy tried to guide him in his reading of English literature, but he apparently rejected the works of Lawrence with horror: Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 82. Maisky's editor describes him as of "no intellectual pretensions": Gorodetsky, *The Maisky Diaries*, xxxiv.

[29] Head, 'The Transfiguration of "Russian" Lewis', 93.

[30] See George J. Zytaruk, *D. H. Lawrence's Response to Russian Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), passim.

[31] Lawrence retained an interest in contemporary Russian philosophers, Lev Isaakovich Shestov (1866–1938) and Vasily Vasilievich Rozanov (1856–1919). He helped Kot to translate the former in 1919, and reviewed the latter in 1927. He also helped Kot to translate a story by the contemporary writer Ivan Alekseyevich Bunin (1870–1953) in 1921.

[32] Catherine Brown, 'The Russian Soul Englished', *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 36. 1 (Fall 2012), 132–49, 138.

[33] Ivy was, however, able to resume her writing career when she visited England 1960–1 (and called on Martin Secker), and then when she retired permanently from Russia to Hove in 1972: Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 175, 194.

[34] Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922*, 288; G. S. Smith, *D. S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890–1939*, 85.

[35] Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 75.

[36] Ibid., 57, 59.

[37] Ibid., 55.

[38] John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider* (London: Counterpoint, 2005), 48.

[39] Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury*, 82.

[40] Richard K. Debo, 'The Making of a Bolshevik: Georgii Chicherin in England 1914–1918', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 25.4 (December 1966), 651–62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2492826. Accessed 27 July 2018>.

[41] Russell records that they were not permitted to speak to each other. Bertrand Russell, *An Autobiography* (London: Routledge, 1993), 257–8.

[42] Melchior de Vogüé, *The Russian Novel*, trans. H. A. Sawyer (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), 331.

[43] Chas Byford, *The Soul of Russia* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1914), 14.

[44] Jane Harrison, *Russia and the Russian Verb: A Contribution to the Psychology of the Russian People* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1915).

[45] Marjorie Colt Lethbridge and Alan Bourchier, *The Soul of the Russian* (London: Bodley Head, 1916), 79.

[46] Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922*, 288.

[47] See 23 August 1915 (*2L* 382), 18 December 1916 (*3L* 54), 19 January 1917 (*3L* 78), and 9 February 1917 (*3L* 90). However, he also

complained to Kot on 3 July 1917: "How can I write for any Russian audience! – the contact is not established" (*3L* 136).

[48] The February date is that according to the Julian calendar, which was abandoned by Russia in favour of the Gregorian calendar in early 1918.

[49] 'England: The Other Within'.

[50] Zinovy Sheinis, *Maxim Litvinov*, trans. Vic Schneierson (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990) 89–90; John Holroyd-Doveton, *Maxim Litvinov: A Biography* (n.d.: New Generation Publishing, 2015), 15.

[51] Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury*, 94.

[52] Thereafter Wells praised Lenin in the articles collected in *Russia in the Shadows* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921).

[53] The words rendered in italics are in Lawrence's manuscript underlined, each word separately: *Koteliansky Papers 1916-1946*, British Library, MS 48966-48975, 9 vols. Over 300 letters of Lawrence to Kot – more than those extant to any other person – are to be found in the first three of these volumes.

[54] Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury*, 96.

[55] Ibid., 99.

[56] There is some dispute about the location. John Holroyd-Doveton locates it at 11 Bigwood Avenue (*Maxim Litvinov: A Biography*, 31). Carswell locates it at 50 Hillfield Road, between West Hampstead and Cricklewood (*The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 87).

[57] Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 62.

[58] Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922*, 481.

[59] Ibid., 846.

[60] Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, 152.

[61] G. S. Smith, *D. S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890–1939*, 86.

[62] Lawrence first mentioned the idea in a letter to Kot of 3 January 1915, having apparently learned the Hebrew word "Ranani" in the context of a musical arrangement of Psalm 33 that was in Kot's possession. Lawrence dropped the idea in a letter of 4 January 1926 (*5L* 366).

[63] G. S. Smith, *D. S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890–1939*, 237.

[64] D. S. Mirsky, *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain*, trans. by Alec Brown (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935), 120–1.

[65] Ibid., 291.

[66] *Антология новой английской поезии* (*Anthology of Modern English Poetry*) (Leningrad: State Publisher 'Artistic Literature', 1937), 289–304.

[67] G. S. Smith, *D. S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890–1939*, 253.