Midwives of the Revolution:

how representing women can convey a more complex narrative of the Russian Revolution to Year 9

Barbara Trapani was troubled by the oversimplified judgements her students were making about the Russian Revolution. Could the women of the revolution help her students overcome their tendency to focus on success and failure? Trapani revised her enquiry, selecting stories of women who could 'illuminate' a longer, more complex history of protest in Russia up to 1917. As part of this process, Trapani considered how her decisions about the design of the enquiry were shaped by her objectives in representing women in her curriculum, and the specific stories she was telling when teaching this topic. Trapani concludes that the 'midwives of the revolution' did help her students develop more complex ideas about this period. She ends by reflecting on the role these stories played in achieving this result and considers the costs and benefits of redesigning her enquiry to explicitly focus on women's history.

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Introduction

Over the past three years, I have invariably heard the same two comments from Year 9 pupils towards the second week of October. The first thing they say is, 'Oh it is just like Animal Farm' and the second includes variations on the theme of 'Oh but it did not work'. The focus of these comments is the events that the pupils are exploring in our scheme of learning on the Russian Revolution. At first, I welcomed the way that these students were bringing in knowledge of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* from their English lessons, and the connections they were making across subjects. When I reflected on this further, however, I started to worry that they were developing an oversimplified picture of Russian history in this period. Of course, the Russian Revolution is not 'just like *Animal Farm*' and the effects of sixty years of diverse forms of activism and organisation should not be summed up with 'it did not work'. Why, therefore, was this happening?

The tendency to oversimplify historical accounts and narratives is a very topical issue, and it has been the focus of debates within and outside the classroom. The latest manifestation of this discussion relates to the appropriateness of applying a balance-sheet approach to the investigation of the British Empire.[1] Much has already been written and spoken about the problems with approaching nearly four centuries of history with a summary of the pros and cons and of the 'goodies and the baddies'.[2] Of course, the current debate about the British Empire relates to a completely different historical context than the one my students were grappling with, but I noticed similar problems: an overwhelming focus on what was perceived to be the final outcome at the expense of the process of events, and the temptation to reduce everything to binary judgments of success or failure. Observing these discussions among teachers made me think about my Year 9 pupils. Why were they only focusing on what they perceived to be the final outcome of failure of the Russian Revolution? Was this due to a lack of detailed knowledge? But if that was the case, what kind of details were missing from my lessons? This led me to consider whether the problem was not just the limitations of my pupils' knowledge in general, but their lack of knowledge about specific people. After watching a documentary by Lucy Worsley, I began to wonder whether I was perhaps leaving out important protagonists of the story, protagonists who were marginalised both in the historical narratives around us, and in this particular enquiry in my classroom. Specifically, I had the idea that it might be the absence of women from our enquiry that was supporting an oversimplified account of events.[3] I therefore decided to try and test this hypothesis.

Including more complex accounts and narratives in the curriculum

I will begin by putting my hands up and acknowledging that I am not going to say anything completely new in this article. The absence of women as agents of history from the curriculum, or at best their sporadic appearance as 'great women', has already

Figure 1: Structure of the enquiry

Enquiry question: How did Russia change between 1861 and 1917?		
Lesson	**Content**	**Specific story or resource**
1. Who were the Russians and what were their hopes and fears?	Setting the scene of the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century.	Pre-revolutionary, 1877 postcard depicting peasant women in a typical rural scene in Russia published by the St Eugenia Society. www.bl.uk/collection-items/women-peasants-in-pre-revolutionary-russia
2. What change did Russians want?	Introduction to the concept of the need for social and political change, and of people organising to achieve such changes.	Story of Sophia Perovskaya and of the People's Will organisation. Postcard and article from the *New York Times* www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/obituaries/overlooked-sophia-perovskaya.html
3. Why was 1905 a turning point?	Role of women in the 1905 revolution. Escalation of demand for suffrage after 1905. Division between radical revolutionaries and suffrage reform supporters.	The story of Vera Karelina and her support in organising the 1905 strike. https://spartacus-educational.com/Vera_Karelina.htm www.bl.uk/russian-revolution/articles/women-and-the-russian-revolution
4. What changed in February 1917?	February Revolution and controversy about staying or leaving WWI.	Story of Emmeline Pankhurst and Maria Bokharieva (Women's Death Battalion).
5. What changed in October 1917?	The October Revolution and the priorities of the Bolsheviks after the revolution.	Stories of Nadezhda Krupskaya and Alexandra Kollontai.

been written about extensively in recent *Teaching History* articles. Boyd has written about the importance of ensuring that women have a place in an inclusive history curriculum and Carr has demonstrated how the teaching of medieval history can be deepened by the understanding of the role played by powerful women.[4] What I intend to do here is to build on Boyd's and Carr's work – to explore these ideas further and to provide an example of what happens when we try to correct the absence of women and build their presence in the curriculum.

Within my department, our awareness of the lack of representation of women in our schemes of work led us to pay attention to Boyd's lament for the overarching scarcity of women's presence and agency across all stages of the secondary history curriculum.

Boyd's response has been to create a taxonomy of ways in which we can recognise the presence of women in the past. These span from taking corrective measures in our application of exam specifications, and the crafting of truly integrated and inclusive curricula for students in Years 7 to 9.[5] Other history teachers have responded to the absence of women in the curriculum by engaging with the historical concept of significance. This can be illustrated by Pearson's article, in which she noted the significance of several women absent from her curriculum. Pearson discussed how these women should be included because of their significance and in order to illuminate the very concept of historical significance.[6] Boyd shares the desire to redesign the curriculum, but she has also noted the difficulty of 'slotting women into conventional narratives'.[7] The difficulty of 'slotting in' the experiences and perspectives of women into the history curriculum is sometimes grounded in the relative scarcity of evidence about their lives. Suzannah Lipscomb discusses the difficulty of recovering the 'lost lives of women' from the dominant narrative in her chapter of *What Is History, Now?*. In response, she argues that we need to investigate history 'against the grain' in order to find women's perspectives.[8]

Reading these articles made me reflect on some key questions about my specific enquiry: what if the evidence of women's lives was in plain sight (and had even been popularised by a documentary on the BBC) and we were still ignoring it? What

about when our curriculum includes a period of history that is conventionally recognised as significant, such as the Russian Revolution, during which the agency and the presence of women can be noticed without it being necessary to read against the grain? In their book *Midwives of the Revolution,* McDermid and Hillyar explain this in their introduction:

> *We did not set out to discover new sources which prove that women played a major role in the 1917 Revolution. Instead, we are convinced that there already exists evidence in published works which, if read from a perspective that puts women in the foreground, would show both that they were not passive spectators, and that we should think in terms not only of what impact the revolution had on them, but of what they contributed to it.*[9]

So, what was my excuse in this case?

Before I started redesigning my enquiry, it was important to think about what I wanted to achieve by including women's stories. I did not consider inclusion, as an end in itself, a sufficiently compelling argument for addressing the patriarchal bias in our curriculum. My key concern was that by providing limited accounts and perspectives, we potentially jeopardised pupils' understanding of historical events and their broader disciplinary knowledge. Holliss makes a compelling case to demonstrate how increased representation in the A-level curriculum can change the way students engage with the discipline of history.[10] Of especial relevance to my enquiry was Holliss's demonstration of how the inclusion of more representative stories contributes to the prevention of oversimplified ideas about the history of the British Empire.[11] Boyd made a similar observation when she wrote, 'As Hammond, Ford and Kennett have demonstrated, students require several 'layers' of substantive knowledge to form meaningful historical understanding and explanation. Without this knowledge, students are liable to make sweeping and anachronistic judgements about the past.'[12] These ideas were relevant to my context, as it seemed to me that the Russian Revolution was a particularly revealing case-study of the risks associated with a narrative that leaves out the voices of all the major protagonists and therefore provides an incomplete account of events. I wanted to make sure that my students' investigation of the Russian Revolution was fuller; not so that they could see themselves represented in it, but so that they could better understand the course of events.

Avoiding the 'Monument Valley' approach to women's history

Once I had identified what I wanted to achieve, I then had to consider how best to do so. I was fortunate that I could draw upon the work we had already done in my department to make our curriculum more inclusive and representative. Taking inspiration from a talk by Ed Durbin at a previous year's Historical Association Conference, we had developed the representation of women in our GCSE course: shaping enquiries within the Germany 1890–1945 course around key individuals such as Leni Riefenstahl, to illuminate Nazi propaganda, and Melita Maschmann, to explore Nazi youth organisations. We had also started introducing the idea of the Norman Conquest in Year 7 by using the link provided by Emma of Normandy.[13] We then took inspiration from Carr's *Teaching History* article and started to explore the concepts of authority, power and medieval kingship in Year 7, using the stories of Empress Matilda and Eleanor of Aquitaine.[14] And of course, in Year 8 we had routinely taught the story of women's suffrage.

As I began to work on our enquiry on the Russian Revolution, I began to wonder whether our existing approaches were sufficient. Were we exposing students to those different layers of meaning that form historical substantive knowledge, or were we risking the 'Monument Valley' approach to women's history, and still teaching the rest of our curriculum as largely 'a-gendered'?[15] Did our students know that women inhabited the past and shaped it, or were we reinforcing the idea that history is mainly concerned with the stories of men, apart from a few exceptional women who prove the rule? These are not rhetorical questions; these are real riddles for which we still do not have an answer, as it is genuinely difficult to establish the impact of any curricular activities on students' views about the past. However, I wanted to attempt to find some answers to these questions, and so I decided to try to take our efforts one step further. This would involve adding a more complex narrative to an existing aspect of the curriculum and seeing if the students noticed a different presence, and if this could give them a different, more nuanced understanding of the events of the Russian Revolution.

Planning the Enquiry

The Russian Revolution seemed the perfect topic to act as a focus for my research. It had been easy for us to tell this story as a very patriarchal narrative: the Tsar, Lenin, the war, Stalin, strong (and totalitarian) leadership as the embodiment of men's power. Interestingly the story that my pupils kept on associating with the Russian Revolution, *Animal Farm*, also presents a world and a movement entirely driven by male characters.

Stumbling upon a documentary presented by Lucy Worsley (under the very fitting title of *Royal History's Greatest Fibs*) was a key moment in my planning. It led me to start looking at existing historical scholarship on women in the revolution. In the process, I found the perfect book: *Midwives of the Revolution: female Bolsheviks and women workers in 1917*, by Jane McDermid and Anna Hilliarby.[16] The book is a comprehensive account of the role played by women in Russian history during the run-up to the events of 1917. The authors aim to demonstrate that all women across Russian society played a critical role in bringing down the rule of the Romanovs.

Finding a structure

Having identified the work of professional historians that could guide me, I then had to decide on the timeframe that the enquiry was going to cover. I needed to ensure that it would be feasible to teach it in a six-lesson enquiry (four weeks in our context). I was also hoping that by choosing the timeframe carefully, I could help pupils situate what we were going to discover about Russian history in a wider picture of this period of European history. This would involve them building on layers of knowledge we had already established, such as the struggle for men and women's suffrage in Britain

Figure 2: Postcard of peasants collecting hay, 1913

in the nineteenth century.[17] This could potentially contribute to building additional layers of conceptual understanding, by helping students to link events in Britain and Russia together into a wider framework of political activism and movements for rights. These considerations helped me to select the date at which our enquiry would start. In Year 8 we had begun our investigation of the women's suffrage movement in Britain around 1866 with the first mass petition. Therefore, it seemed that a particularly good event with which to commence this new enquiry would be the emancipation of the serfs in the Russian Empire in 1861. Finally, I wanted the timeframe to be long enough to cover the diverse strands of activism that emerged in Tsarist Russia. I therefore decided to end the enquiry in 1917, covering the period from the Emancipation Reform to the Bolshevik Revolution.

The next choice I had to make was how to frame the enquiry around a question. In order to do this I needed to decide how explicitly I wanted my enquiry to focus on the experiences of women. Should I focus on how significant the role of women had been in the Russian Revolution? Or did I want to ask my pupils to reflect on changes that took place in Russia more broadly? I decided that I did not want them to experience this enquiry as one openly focused on 'women's history', instead I wanted them to discover that women had played a significant role in the social and political changes that unfolded in Russia between the the nineteenth and the twentieth century. I wanted them to approach the enquiry as a 'normal', 'non-gendered' enquiry into an aspect of history that is traditionally dominated by men, and then to be surprised that the story was more complex. After all, we never warn pupils that we are going to focus on the role of men in other enquiries that we teach, so why should I specify from the beginning that this was going to be 'more inclusive', or a fuller story? I decided to see if they were going to notice the presence of women by themselves.

Once this decision was made, I knew I wanted the primary second-order concept to be change and continuity, and that I wanted them to reflect on the similarities and differences of the experiences of people living under the Tsarist regime, and their reactions to it. I therefore settled for the enquiry question: 'How did Russia change between 1861 and 1917?' (See Figure 1 for the whole enquiry structure.) This would allow pupils to focus their attention on the process of change and key contributions to it, as opposed to making judgements about the final outcome, and would, therefore, avoid the usual 'it did not work' comments. This led me to shape the series of lessons around the growing and diverse nature of activism, the process of organising it, and the agents of change.

Teaching the enquiry using individual stories to build pupils' understanding of the period

At this point I realised that I was asking my pupils to do (too) many different things at once: I wanted them to understand the wider context of the protests that took place in Russia in the run up to 1917; I wanted them to appreciate the significance of the role played by women; I wanted them to notice the similarities and differences among the forms of activism that converged at the end of the nineteenth century; and, as usual, I wanted them to engage directly with the work of a professional historian. I decided, therefore, that the most efficient way to scaffold their thinking would be by using individual stories of women that could illuminate key moments of the historical narrative.[18]

Figure 3: Extracts of students' accounts in response to the enquiry question: 'How did Russia change between 1861 and 1917?'

Extract 1

In January 1905 Father Gapon led a demonstration to the Tzar's palace, however the Tzar saw this as a threat and 200 people were murdered. After this Russian were frustrated as society was extremely hierarchical and poverty rates were high. A year later people were still desperate for change and prepared to go to extreme lengths. Maria Spiridonova, a socialist revolutionary killed a crown governor and she was arrested. Despite such extreme acts, the Tzar turned a blind eye. […] Vera Karelina played an influential role as she organised 8000 women to protest for their rights. […]. Russians fought in numerous ways: peaceful and violent, having large impacts in several revolutions.

Extract 2

At first people protested peacefully, with petitions and strikes. Trade unions organised strikes in cotton and textile factories. After this had no effect on the Tzar, they decided to become more radical.

Extract 3

In 1905 200,000 people led by Father Gapon marched to the Tzar's palace peacefully, with a petition saying that they wanted change. The Tzar saw the peasants coming towards his palace and instructed his army to shoot the crowd. 200 peasants were shot dead, and this day was known as Bloody Sunday. Vera Karelina had organised 8000 women workers to join the march. After this catastrophic event, the Tzar had no option, but to open the Duma. However the Duma was virtually powerless. […] In February 1917 thousands of women marched in the capital to protest against the Tzar. People made speeches against the Tzar and police found the work 'Hippopotamus' engraved on his statue. After this the Tzar became hopeless and was forced to abdicate.

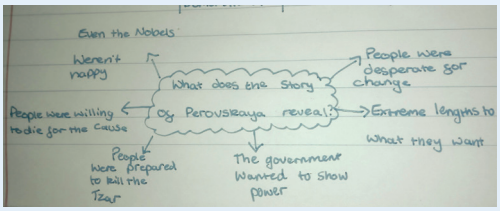
The next step in my planning was to choose the events and individuals that would be especially useful in revealing the set of ideas on which I wanted my students to focus their attention. I wanted to choose individual women who were going to reveal a longer, more complex story than that covered by the last part of the revolutionary process and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. Therefore, I began setting up the context of the Russian Empire at the end of the nineteenth century by focusing on the peasants, who represented the majority of the population. At least half of this group were women, so we started with a visual source, a postcard depicting women peasants. Despite being published in 1913, this photograph helped us to notice, very early on in the enquiry, the rural setting, the manual nature of the agricultural work performed there and the fact that the workers in the postcard were women.[19] (The photo is included in Figure 2.)

Once we had used this photograph to gain an insight into the lives of the population of such a vast empire, I decided to introduce the first key individual. Sophia Perovskaya was a noblewoman, and a member of the radical organisation *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will). She participated in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II.[20] Through the story of Sophia Perovskaya, students were able to appreciate the extent to which even members of the nobility wanted change and that, by the end of the nineteenth century, radical groups were prepared to use extreme methods.[21] Students were also shocked by the story of what Sophia Perovskaya experienced after her arrest and what it revealed about the brutality of repression by the Tsar and his police. (Figures 3 and 4 include some examples of pupils' reflections on this story.)

In order to move the enquiry on, I decided that Sophia Perovskaya's story would be followed by that of the trade unionist Vera Karelina. This narrative would focus on her work organising women workers, and on the roles the women she worked with played in the movement that led to the 1905 revolution. I chose to focus on the work of Vera Karelina in order to illuminate the escalation of protest, the organisation and mobilisation among the women of the textile sector, and the contribution of the trade unions. In addition to this, the story of Vera Karelina spoke of a very different form of activism from that engaged in by Sophia Perovskaya and the People's Will. I hoped that, by investigating this activism and the role played by Vera Karelina, my pupils would gain

Figure 4: Students' work on the individual stories

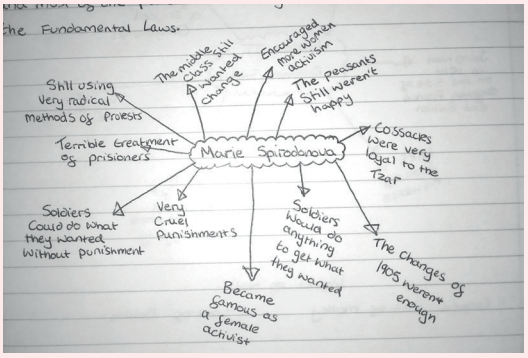
Extract to introduce the story of Sophia Perovskaya



It was Sophia L. Perovskaya, 27, an aristocrat herself and a descendant of Peter the Great, who had plotted and orchestrated the assault on March 13, 1881, signalling the tzar's route with a white handkerchief. She and her co-conspirators from the radical organisation the People's Will were soon arrested, and Perovskaya and four male accomplices were condemned to death by hanging. Perovskaya, the first woman to be executed for a political crime in Russia, is credited with helping to push the empire down the road to revolution and was later given the mantle of martyrdom. Tolstoy called her an 'ideological Joan of Arc'.

(Adapted from www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/obituaries/overlooked-sophia-perovskaya.html)

Extract to introduce the escalation of 1917 and the different views about whether to continue fighting in WWI



By midday of that day in 1917 there were tens of thousands of mainly women congregating on the Nevsky Prospekt, the principal avenue in the centre of the Russian capital, Petrograd, and banners started to appear.

The slogans on the banners were patriotic but also made forceful demands for change: 'Feed the children of the defenders of the motherland,' read one; another said: 'Supplement the ration of soldiers' families, defenders of freedom and the people's peace.'

The crowds of demonstrators were varied. The city's governor, A.P. Balk, said they consisted of 'ladies from society, lots more peasant women, student girls and, compared with earlier demonstrations, not many workers'. The revolution was begun by women, not male workers.

(Adapted from Guardian article www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/08/womens-protest-sparked-russian-revolution-international-womens-day)

a better understanding of Father Gapon's Assembly, and the petition and mobilisation which had made this possible. By this point in the enquiry, pupils could appreciate the different ideas and strands of activism that merged together in the first revolutionary outbreak in 1905, including the important role played by women's organisations. They were also able to explain the diversity of these groups' starting points and their desired outcomes. (Extracts 1 and 3 in Figure 3 contain an example of a pupil's account of the different strands of organisation and the role of Vera Karelina).

As we proceeded towards 1917, I was excited to find an opportunity to connect this enquiry to the historical topics that we had covered in Year 8.[22] The next story I included in the sequence of lessons was that of Emmeline Pankhurst, who was sent by the British government on a visit to Russia, in order to foster pro-war sentiments among women and to thereby prevent Russia from exiting the First World War. This gave my pupils the opportunity to observe the interconnected nature of events, and it countered the temptation for them to compartmentalise the historical topics that they learn about in different years. Additionally, the story of Emmeline Pankhurst demonstrated the importance of the role played by women during the First World War, in contributing to decisions over whether to remain in the war or to surrender. During her stay in Russia, Emmeline Pankhurst met Maria Bochkareva and the Women's Battalion of Death, who were a group of around 2,000 volunteer fighters. As part of the pro-war campaign, Pankhurst and Bochareva were photographed together. We used this photograph in a lesson in order to further explore the roles played by women and the complex web of political positions that they were developing at this time. (See figure 5 for the photograph of Emmeline Pankhurst and Maria Bochkareva used in the lesson.)

Towards the end of the enquiry, the story of Nadezhda Krupskaya served as a bridge between the February and October Revolutions of 1917. I decided that this sequence of

lessons would end in the aftermath of the October Revolution, which allowed me to draw the enquiry to a close by examining the role played by well-known feminist Bolsheviks such as Alexandra Kollontai, in introducing social change.

Did it work?

And now for the pivotal question: Did it work? Did pupils write a more complex and nuanced account of how Russia changed? They certainly did not make the usual comments on the resemblance of events to those of Orwell's novel. However, as we all know, correlation does not mean causation, and it must be noted that there were other factors at play. One influence may have been that this new enquiry covered a different time frame to the one that I had taught in previous years. Previously, I had begun the sequence of lessons in 1917, and we had referred to the events of 1905 only in relation to how they had led to this later revolution. The scheme of learning had then continued, covering the period of Stalin's rule. This time, I began the enquiry at an earlier date, summarised the period between 1917 and 1924 quickly in a couple of bridging lessons, and ended the sequence of lessons in 1924, with the death of Lenin and the change in leadership.

During the teaching of the enquiry, the stories of Sophia Perovskaya and Vera Karelina gave the pupils a strong sense of the extent of unhappiness with the Romanovs. The life of Perovskya revealed how this discontent extended to the nobility, and the range of all classes involved in activism was covered in the spectrum between the activities of Perovskaya and Karelina. Pupils were able to engage with the idea, as explained by McDermid and Hillyar, that the revolutionary events took place in a 'rich and contradictory social context [which] must include women as an integral component and not simply as incidental interlopers or passive bystanders'.[23]

Throughout the enquiry, as we investigated the different women and the motivations and methods of the groups of people they represented, none of the students pointed to the fact that we had paid so much attention to stories of women. As we approached the outcome task (a narrative response to the enquiry question), I therefore became nervous that perhaps they had not appreciated the fundamental role played by women. This made me wonder whether I should intervene at this point and introduce McDermid and Hillyar's concept of 'midwives of the revolution'. I refrained from doing this, however, and held my nerve. I did not want this to be an enquiry explicitly focusing on interpretation or on women's history, so I decided to wait and see what students would include in their accounts.

In the last lesson, students wrote a response to the enquiry question: 'How did Russia change between 1861 and 1917?' In the examples of this work in Figure 3, we can see that their responses drew upon a lot of knowledge of how people in Russia had sought to bring about change. Around half of the students specifically included the role played by the women we had investigated. The rest did not, and spoke instead in general terms about the ways in which people had organised for change. However, all students were able to discuss the similarities and differences between the individuals and groups engaged in activism. They were also able to explain the complexities of the context in which this campaigning had operated, as in the first two responses in Figure 3, where we can see explanations of the different forms of activism engaged in, and how the lack of political response fuelled more radical movements.

Recommendations

When I reflected on this enquiry, I realised that I could have used the same content and resources to shape a sequence of lessons focused on the concept of historical interpretation. This focus could then have allowed me to put the title of the book by McDermid and Hillyar at the forefront of the enquiry question, which could have been something along the lines of: 'To what extent were women midwives of the revolution?'. Taking this alternative approach would have involved me putting my cards on the table from the beginning, and pupils could then have engaged with the role played by women directly. Though this would have explicitly challenged the more traditional narrative of the Russian Revolution, it might have run the risk of failing to facilitate students' independent discovery of how different people participated and took action.

The question of whether this enquiry 'worked' remains open. In the same way, however, that I encouraged my pupils to focus on the *process* of organisation and activism, rather than just the outcome of the October Revolution, I do not want to lose sight of the steps I took when designing this enquiry. This represented another small step towards improving the representation of women in our whole curriculum. It also helped to teach our pupils that history is complex and the more voices we include in our narrative, the closer we can get to a fuller understanding of the past. Of course, one enquiry is not sufficient to do this, so the charge I will be taking forward is to continue building more representation of women into our curriculum, joining Boyd in her call to action to transform the narrative of history we present as well as our approach to historical concepts. In order to do this, I am already thinking about how we can further shape our pupils' understanding of change and continuity by putting the experiences of women at the centre of the history of health and medicine, using Elinor Cleghorn's *Unwell Women: a journey through medicine and myth in a man-made world.* I am also exploring how we can strengthen our Year 7 pupils' understanding that evidence is not neutral, through using the story of the Red Lady of Paviland, which is beautifully told in *Ancestors* by Alice Roberts.[24] But these stories will have to wait for the next chapter.

REFERENCES

1 The existing debate about teaching the British Empire is summarised in Liburn, L. (2021) 'What Have Historians Been Arguing About... the impact of the British Empire on Britain?' In *Teaching History, 183, Race Edition,* pp. 27–31.

2 An example of how this has been discussed by history teachers can be seen in Benger, A. (2022) 'Beyond the balance sheet: navigating the "imperial history wars" when planning and teaching about the British Empire' in *Teaching History, 187, Widening the World Lens Edition*, pp. 8–19.

3 *Royal History's Biggest Fibs* with Lucy Worsley, Series 2, Episode 3.

4 Boyd, S. (2019) 'From "Great Women" to an inclusive curriculum: how should women's history be included at Key Stage 3?' in *Teaching History, 175, Listening to Diverse Voices Edition*, pp. 16–23; Carr, E. (2021) 'Power, authority and geography: medieval political history through the stories of powerful women' in *Teaching History, 184, Different Lenses Edition,* pp. 70–80.

5 Boyd, S., *op.cit,* pp. 17–20.

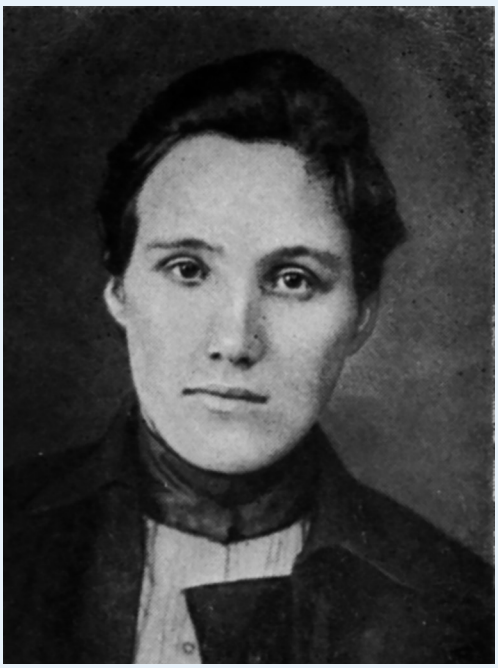
6 Pearson, J. (2012) 'Where are we? The place of women in history curricula' in *Teaching History, 147, Curriculum Architecture Edition*, pp. 47–52.

7 Boyd, S., *op.cit,* pp. 17–18.

8 Lipscomb, S. and Carr, H. (2021) *What Is History, Now?* London, Hachette.

Figure 5: Photographs used in lessons

Sophia Perovskaya



Vera Karelina

Maria Bokarieva with Emmeline Pankhurst

[9] McDermid, J. and Hillyar, A. (1999) *Midwives of the Revolution: female Bolsheviks and women workers in 1917*, London: UCL, p. 7.

[10] Holliss, C. (2021) 'Illuminating the possibilities of the past: the role of representation in A-level curriculum planning' in *Teaching History, 185, Missing Stories Edition*, pp. 22–29.

[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 24–25.

[12] Ford, A. and Kennett, R. (2018) 'Conducting the orchestra to allow our students to hear the symphony' in *Teaching History, 171, Knowledge Edition*, pp. 8–16; Hammond, K. (2021) 'Does it matter who Vesalius's favourite lecturer was? Using individuals' stories to help GCSE students to explain change and causation' in *Teaching History, 182, Sense of Period Edition*, pp. 20–30.

[13] We were inspired to do so by a series of webinars delivered by Abdul Mohamud and Robin Whitburn (Justice to History) through the Historical Association in 2020 aimed at improving the teaching of more diverse histories.

[14] Carr, E. (2021), *op.cit.*

[15] I owe the expression of 'Monument Valley' to Robin Whitburn, from whom I heard it for the first time during my PGCE, in reference to a curricular approach that focuses only on events deemed important for a particular narrative of history.

[16] McDermid, J. and Hillyar, A. (1999), *op.cit.*

[17] Hammond, K. (2014) 'The knowledge that "flavours" a claim: towards building and assessing historical knowledge on three scales' *in Teaching History, 157, Assessment Edition,* pp.18–24.

[18] The power of individual stories is widely documented, including in Worth, P. (2023) 'Three strategies to support pupils' study of historical significance' in *Teaching History, 190*, *Significance Edition*, pp. 8–19.

[19] The photograph can be found in the article 'Women and the Russian Revolution' by Katie McElvanney, available on the British Library website https://www.bl.uk/russian-revolution/articles/women-and-the-russian-revolution

[20] To learn more about Sophia Perovskaya we read an article published in a series of obituaries of overlooked historical figures in the *New York Times* in 2008, 'Overlooked no more: the Russian icon who was hanged for killing a Czar', www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/obituaries/overlooked-sophia-perovskaya.html

[21] Sophia Perovskaya is briefly mentioned in the textbook 'Russia and the USSR 1905–1941: a depth study' by Fiehn, T., Hodder Education. There is also a 1967 Soviet film about her with a soundtrack by Shostakovich.

[22] We introduced the escalation of events in 1917 by reading a *Guardian* article written by Orlando Figes in 2017, 'The women's protest that sparked the Russian Revolution', https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/08/womens-protest-sparked-russian-revolution-international-womens-day.

[23] McDermid, J. and Hillyar, A., *op.cit*., p.16.

[24] Cleghorn, E. (2021) *Unwell Women: a journey through medicine and myth in a man-made world*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson; Roberts, A. (2021) *Ancestors*, London: Simon and Schuster.