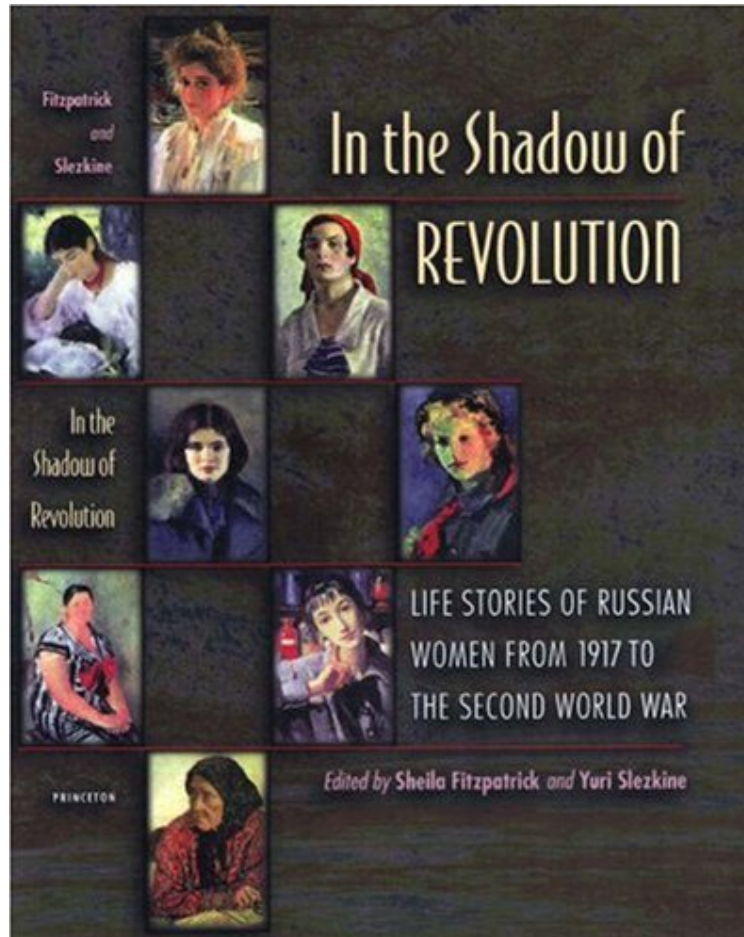


## In the Shadow of Revolution

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**From Brand: Princeton University Press : In the Shadow of Revolution** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Shadow of Revolution:

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Asked shortly after the revolution about how she viewed the new government, Tatiana Varsher replied, "With the wide-open eyes of a historian." Her countrywoman, Zinaida Zhemchuzhnaia, expressed a similar need to take note: "I want to write about the way those events were perceived and reflected in the humble and distant corner of Russia that was the Cossack town of Korenovskaia." What these women witnessed and experienced, and what they were moved to describe, is part of the extraordinary portrait of life in revolutionary Russia presented in this book. A collection of life

stories of Russian women in the first half of the twentieth century, *In the Shadow of Revolution* brings together the testimony of Soviet citizens and émigrés, intellectuals of aristocratic birth and Soviet milkmaids, housewives and engineers, Bolshevik activists and dedicated opponents of the Soviet regime. In literary memoirs, oral interviews, personal dossiers, public speeches, and letters to the editor, these women document their diverse experience of the upheavals that reshaped Russia in the first half of this century. As is characteristic of twentieth-century Russian women's autobiographies, these life stories take their structure not so much from private events like childbirth or marriage as from great public events. Accordingly the collection is structured around the events these women see as touchstones: the Revolution of 1917 and the Civil War of 1918-20; the switch to the New Economic Policy in the 1920s and collectivization; and the Stalinist society of the 1930s, including the Great Terror. Edited by two preeminent historians of Russia and the Soviet Union, the volume includes introductions that investigate the social historical context of these women's lives as well as the structure of their autobiographical narratives.

From Publishers Weekly From "migr" memoirs to officially sanctioned autobiographies, from oral histories to archival documents, these accounts of Russian women's lives before WWII survey remarkable tales of celebration, adjustment, resistance and survival. Fitzpatrick (*Everyday Stalinism*) and Slezkine (*Arctic Mirrors*) present ordinary women's testimonies of personal highs and lows amid momentous public events: the 1917 Revolution, the horrors of civil war, early construction of Soviet society and the chaos of political purges. The 43 narratives are divided into three parts: 1917-1920, the '20s and the '30s. In Part I, Anna Andzhievskaja, who as a 19-year-old resort worker married a Bolshevik activist, recounts her revolutionary activities, the loss of her baby during the civil war and the execution of her husband by the Whites; P.E. Melgunova-Stepanova--an activist, teacher and anti-Bolshevik--details the evening in 1920 when the secret police arrested her husband and searched their apartment. In Part II, Paraskeva Ivanova's 1926 letter declares she is leaving the Communist Party because party men have sexually exploited her in the name of creating "new forms of everyday life" to replace "bourgeois morality." Part III includes Pasha Angelina's praise of the Soviet Union for permitting her, born in 1912 to poor peasants, to become the first woman tractor driver and, eventually, a deputy in the Supreme Soviet. Fitzpatrick's introduction provides social and historical context, and Slezkine's offers literary analysis. Many of these excerpts beg for the fuller story, yet they still give depth and human dimension to a place and period too often shrouded in polemics and ideology. (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s A collection of life stories of Russian women, accompanied by an analytical introduction and edited by scholars Fitzpatrick (History/Univ. of Chicago) and Slezkine (History/Univ. of California), from the perspective of direct participants in the unfolding historical drama begun in 1917. Contributing to the completeness of the picture, the documents selected for this publication vary in genre from literary autobiographies to edited interviews to formal letters and speeches, and their authors are just as diverse in social class, experience, age, and occupation. The objectivity of the narrative is bolstered because events are assessed from opposite points of view (from that of both the victims and the beneficiaries of the Revolution). These antagonistic positions merge in camp memoirs written by those who were at first strong supporters of the Bolshevik cause, but later fell from grace. One principle unifying almost all the narratives is the suppression of personal information. Instead of the traditional focus on marriage, childbirth, and family life, these women defined themselves in terms of historical and public events. The Revolution, civil war, collectivization, and industrialization were the major milestones of their lives. These personal accounts differ significantly in length and style. From Lenin's wife Nadezhda Krupskaja, for instance, we have a brief, dry, and extremely factual third-person account of her political activities. Princess Sofia Volkonskaja, on the other hand, produced a highly emotional story of her return to Russia from emigration in order to rescue her husband from jail. But even here, private circumstances are viewed against the broader background of disarray and brutality that reigned in post-revolutionary Russia. Yet another patriotic and upbeat narrative filled with praise of Stalin can be found in the autobiography of the Soviet Union's most decorated labor hero, tractor driver and Supreme Soviet Deputy Pasha Angelina. Each autobiography here transforms the story of a private life into the story of the country and the times: a volume sure to attract early Soviet history buffs. -- Copyright © 2000 Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "Give[s] depth and human dimension to a place and period too often shrouded in polemics and ideology."-- Publishers Weekly "Each autobiography here transforms the story of a private life into the story of the country and the times."--Kirkus s