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FROM GINKHUK TO WARSAW TO BAUHAUS: KAZIMIR MALEVICH'S TOUR OF EUROPE

Kazimir Malevich's spring 1927 tour of Europe on behalf of GINKhUK involved a visit to Poland. We introduce a hitherto obscure article connected with his time in Warsaw, "The Creation of a New Russian Culture." It appeared in the Riga, Russian-language newspaper *Segodnia* on 5 April 1927, a week after Malevich had left the Polish capital for Germany. This article was written by Sergei Voitsekhovskiy on the basis of an interview he conducted with the visiting Soviet artist. The accompanying commentary examines Voitsekhovskiy's particular national and ideological framing of Malevich's cultural and artistic identity. This identity debate vis-a-vis Malevich is as relevant in the 2020s as it was a hundred years ago.

Keywords: Kazimir Malevich, *Segodnia*, GINKhUK, Cultural identity, Artistic milieu, Émigré culture.

Европейское турне Казимира Малевича весной 1927 года включало посещение Польши. Здесь мы представляем фактически неизвестный документ, имеющий отношение к его пребыванию в Варшаве — статью «Создание новой русской культуры», — напечатанную в эмигрантской газете *Сегодня* 5 апреля 1927 года, через неделю после отъезда художника из польской столицы в Германию. Статья была написана Сергеем

Войцеховским на основе взятого им интервью. Сопроводительный комментарий поясняет специфику национально-идеологического оформления Войцеховским культурной и художественной идентичности Малевича. Эта дискуссия о его национальной и культурной идентичности так же актуальна в 2020-е годы, как и сто лет назад.

Ключевые слова: Казимир Малевич, газета *Сегодня*, ГИНХУК, культурная идентичность, художественная среда, культура эмиграции.

Leaving Moscow on Monday, 7 March 1927, Kazimir Malevich looked forward to an extended European tour with stops in Poland, Germany, and France.¹ In his letter to Nikolai Suetin and Boris Ender, Malevich informed his colleagues: “I’m travelling on [sic!] Monday,² the ticket to Warsaw is in my pocket, the entire journey with luggage is 40 rubles. By the way, it costs a brutal 20 rubles, to Negor[eloe]–Stolbtsy on our rail li[nes?], but from Negor[eloe]–Stolbtsy to Warsaw, second class is 10 rub[les].”³

He was bound westward at a time when it seemed almost impossible for Soviet artists to leave the USSR, as they would have faced enormous difficulties in receiving the necessary permissions for any type of international travel from the ascendant bureaucracy. Malevich’s tour was a long time in the making. Even as early as 1924, he and his Leningrad colleagues in the State Institute of Artistic Culture (GINKhUK) were in correspondence with European artists and curators, as they endeavored to showcase the Institute’s artistic novelties as well as to connect with western theorists and practitioners of contemporary art.

On 30 December 1924 Malevich received the following letter from the Kesner-Gesellschaft, a private artistic society in Hanover, Germany:

¹ Although Malevich originally intended to visit France, he never made it there as his trip was curtailed.

² Cf. the original: «Я еду в понедельник...». Mirroring Malevich, we have, in our translations, “cyrillicized” those portions of text that Malevich “latinized.”

³ The previously accepted date of the artist’s departure suggested by Troels Andersen — 8 March 1927 (Andersen 1971: 13) — must be corrected on the basis of Malevich’s letters to Ender and Suetin, as well as to Suetin and Vasilii Vorob’ev: “Hello to all who saw me off, I’m leaving on Monday. I await more letters in Warsaw. Everyone — write. I very much regret that I didn’t take the wall newspapers [*stengazety*].” (Malevich 2004: 184). See an alternative timeline in Andrzej Turowski’s interpretation: “A precise date of Kazimir Malevich’s arrival in Warsaw is unknown. After Troels Andersen, Tuesday, 8 March 1927 is repeated in all the biographies, but [this date] is not evidenced in the documents” (Turowski 2022: 140). Further on, he refers to a brief announcement in *Głos Prawdy* which informed readers on 3 March that “W tych dniach przybył z Moskwy do Warszawy p. Kazimierz Malewicz, malarz i architekt, twórca kierunku w malarstwie t.zw. Suprematyzmu” (*Ibid.*). Turowski suggests that Malevich left Moscow on 1 March and arrived in Warsaw at the main station the next day: “Malewicz zatrzymał się w Moskwie, aby przynajmniej zabrać pozostawione tam obrazy i zapewne wsiadł do pociągu pośpiesznego odjeżdżającego o godz. 16.10 czasu miejscowego we wtorek 1 marca 1927 roku, aby być w Warszawie w środę 2 marca na Dworcu Głównym o godz. 18.30” (*Ibid.*). However, we believe that Andersen and later Joop Joosten (Joosten 1988: 82) surely had some evidence-based reasons for proposing their particular date.

Kestner-Gesellschaft
 Hanover, Königstraße, 8
 To: Herr Prof[essor] K. Malevich, Leningrad, Pochtamtškaia ulitsa, 9

Most Esteemed Herr Professor!

Thanks to the initiative of Herr El Lissitzky, Locarno, we would like to pose the question as to whether it would be possible to organize an exhibition of your work, as well as the work of the laboratories of the Institute of Contemporary Artistic Culture. The exhibition could travel away from us to other German cities, such as, for example, Hamburg, Berlin, Braunschweig, etc. For us, it would be most desirable if we could organize an exhibition in March or April 1925. Please inform us as soon as possible if such an exhibition would be possible and how we could procure it.

With deep respect
 Krentz (Malevich 2004: 485).⁴

On 7 March 1925 Malevich wrote a letter to Fëdor Petrov (1876–1973), the Deputy Director of Glavnauka (The Central Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic and Museum Institutions), stating, “In view of the fact that for 7 years of revolutionary activity many of my comrades were able to go abroad and display their works as well as familiarize themselves with the work of western artists, thereby increasing their knowledge, I consider it possible at this time to raise before you the question of assistance for me to travel abroad (to Germany) and to arrange an exhibition there” (Malevich 2004: 486). This initial application offers several reasons for why such a tour would be necessary. Malevich specifically points out that, “a trip abroad is necessary for me also because the Institute’s work concerning the research of artistic culture and artistic works requires materials and data about western art, which foreign travel will provide me, and consequently, it will also provide the opportunity to promote all of the work of the Institute of Artistic Culture, which is being created for the first time on Soviet territory.” (Malevich 2004: 487).⁵

Several days later, he addressed his request also to Mikhail Kristi (1875–1956), who was at the time the Head of the Leningrad Division of Glavnauka. In this letter from 16 March of the same year, Malevich requests travel permission not just for himself, but for the whole of GINKhUK:

The Council of the Institute of Artistic Culture is requesting you to file a petition through the People’s Commissar for Enlightenment Anatolii Lunacharsky and the Director of Glavnauka comrade Petrov, addressed to the Commission on the organization of foreign artistic tours and artistic exhibitions, about the provision to the

⁴ As the commentators explain, “Sophie Küppers [(née Schneider; 1891–1978). — *A. U., B. M.*] implemented an independent exhibition policy, showing the work of such artists as Paul Klee, Kurt Schwitters, Piet Mondrian et al. In 1922, she met with Lazar Lissitzky and arranged his personal exhibition.” (Malevich 2004: 485). Küppers and Lissitzky were married in 1927 and moved to the Soviet Union.

⁵ See full text in the original Russian in Appendix 1.

Institute of Artistic Culture for the opportunity to arrange an exhibition of the work of our research centers: Material culture (dir[ector] Vladimir Tatlin), Formal-Theoretical (dir[ector] Kazimir Malevich), Organic culture (dir[ector] Mikhail Mat-iushin), Experimental (dir[ector] Pavel Mansurov) (Mansurov 1995: 61).

Malevich again applied for permission to leave the USSR and visit Europe in the coming winter. This time he states his desired itinerary: Warsaw, Germany, then France. In his personal application from 9 December 1925, he states: "The scientific-artistic work trip in the Division of Painting Culture is justified by the study in these places of all the circumstances of painting movements and their developments, acquaintance with all of the painters' works and achievements, the compilation of all possible forms concerning Painting Culture, etc. [...] The works will be showcased in Germany in the city of Berlin, in France in the cities of Paris and Aix, in museum collections, in private collections and in the personal workshops of artists" (Malevich 2004: 502).⁶

The rhetoric of both March and December applications foregrounds collective needs. This foreign tour was presented as necessary for the continued progress of the entire GINKhUK. Moreover, according to Malevich, exhibiting the Institute's work abroad in Europe would strengthen the profile of contemporary Soviet art among international observers. However, with Kristi leaving for Moscow in 1926, where he was appointed the Deputy Director of Glavnauka, Malevich's applications were never answered. He would have to wait exactly two years to receive permissions for his tour of Europe. Even though he received an official permission for his "research trip abroad" on 11 March 1926, he was unable to travel. As Joop Joosten explains in Malevich's "Biographical Outline," earlier in February 1926, the artist was "dismissed as director of the GINKhUK," while by December, "GINKhUK [was] dismantled by merging the staff and their departments with the State Institute for the History of Art (GII)" (Joosten 1988: 82).

Malevich's tour finally took place in the spring of 1927. He stayed in Warsaw for a few weeks prior to traveling to Germany to meet with his contacts at the Bauhaus. Here is an itinerary of Malevich's European tour according to Joosten's chronology:

On March 8 he leaves for Warsaw,⁷ where he stays until March 29 and shows the Polish artists a selection of the work which he has brought with him, conducts a lecture, and is given a banquet in his honor at Hotel Polonia. Stays in Berlin from March 29 until June 5. Tadeusz Peiper travels along with him from Warsaw. He finds lodging with Gustav von Riesen, who had been connected with the German embassy in St. Petersburg in the period before 1914.

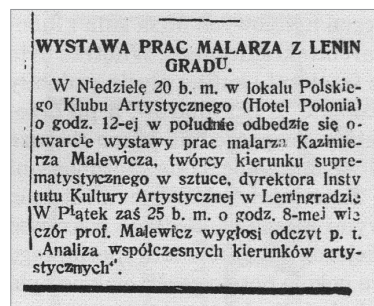
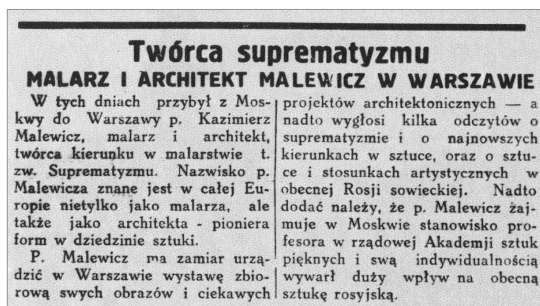
On April 7 he visits the "Bauhaus" in Dessau together with Peiper; there he meets Walter Gropius and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. The latter sees to it that Malevich's introduction on Suprematism and the additional element in art is published in the series "Bauhausbücher." Through the association of progressive Berlin archi-

⁶ See full text of both December applications in the original Russian in Appendix 2.

⁷ See note 1.

tects, Malevich is given his own space to show his work at the “Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung” of that year, which opens on May 7 and closes September 30. [...]

Upon his departure on June 5, Malevich entrusts his host Von Riesen with a package containing theoretical writings and the secretary of the architectural association, Hugo Häring, with the works which he brought with him, the series of explanatory cards, as well as a similar series of cards by Matiushin (Joosten 1988: 82).



*Announcements of Malevich's visit to Warsaw
in the newspapers Głos Prawdy and Kurier Polski*

Polish artists and critics welcomed Malevich and praised his 30-work exhibition in Warsaw's Hotel Polonia, which opened on March 20. He informed Mikhail Matiushin (1861–1934) of his Warsaw success in his letter where he also discussed his personal “definite plan,” which was not just related to his tour of Germany but also concerned his future intentions after returning home to Leningrad. We preserve the idiosyncrasies of Malevich's orthography and epistolary style:

Dear Misha.

On the 20th I'm opening my exhibition in Warsaw, a tiny little exhibition, 30 canvases, and everything here is tiny and little, clean and tidy.

But you really need to be an idiot to travel with this kind of капитал.⁸ I'm going to Germany on the 30thth, what will be will be. I'll be home in May. There's a definite plan for me.

From October 1, I should work as an artist, only as an artist.

Regards to Ol[ga] Konstant[inovna]

You[rs] Kazik.

Andrzej Turowski provides the fullest picture of Malevich's itinerary, aims, contacts, and outcomes of his Warsaw stay in these three weeks of March 1927 (Turowski 2022: 140–210). Crucially though, one fascinating publication, a “conversation” with Kazimir Malevich conducted by Sergei Voitsekhovskiy (1900–1984) and published in the Riga-based émigré newspaper *Segodnia* (*Today*), has not been included in any studies on Malevich's European tour. The article “Sozdanie novoi russkoi kul'tury” (“The Creation of a New Russian Culture”)

⁸ Cf. the original: «Но всё же нужно быть идиотом с таким капиталом ехать».

appeared in *Segodnia* on 5 April 1927, a week after Malevich had left Warsaw.⁹ Voitsekhovskiy was *Segodnia*'s Warsaw correspondent; this particular article was published under the pseudonym "A. Dobrotin."¹⁰

Voitsekhovskiy was born to a Russian military family in Warsaw; he later studied in Mogilëv and Nizhnii Novgorod. He was an enemy of Bolshevism and a committed monarchist. In 1921, he emigrated from Soviet Russia to Warsaw, where he was to live as a stateless person with a Nansen passport (Voitsekhovskiy 1978: 50).¹¹ Voitsekhovskiy was active in Russian cultural and political life in Poland throughout the interwar period. In addition to being a Warsaw special correspondent for *Segodnia*, he served as an editor for the newspaper *Molva*, a short-lived Warsaw-published newspaper founded in 1932.

Clearly, Malevich's tour and his activities in Warsaw were not only of local (Polish) interest, but in fact garnered the attention of the wider émigré community. It is entirely possible that Voitsekhovskiy tried to publish his "conversation" with Malevich in the Berlin newspaper *Rul'* (*The Rudder*), where he also served as a special correspondent. All of Voitsekhovskiy's pieces in this paper were published under the signature "–sky." He mostly covered general issues; for instance, the political scene in Poland ("From our Warsaw Correspondent," *Rul'*, no. 1907 (9 March 1927): 2; "In Poland: From our Warsaw Correspondent," *Rul'*, no. 1923 (27 March 1927): 2; et al.). He also authored reports concerning the state of Russian émigrés in Poland — e.g., "Russians in Poland: From our Warsaw Correspondent," *Rul'*, no. 1906 (8 March 1927): 2; or, "Russians in Poland: From our Warsaw Correspondent," *Rul'*, no. 1918 (22 March 1927): 2.

There were no mentions of Malevich in the *Rul'* section "Khronika" ("Chronicle"). This section did feature, however, the following announcement concerning "Aleksandr Vertinsky's Refutation from Warsaw": "In the Paris newspaper *Russkoe vremia* [*Russian Times*], there appeared a note concerning the famous artist A. Vertinsky, who, as a Red jester in Kharkov, is already singing and dancing a funeral tribute to the White Guardsmen with the permission of the GPU. Currently located in Warsaw, Mr. Vertinsky addressed *Russpress* with a request to refute in the most categorical terms *Russkoe vremia*'s fantasy." (*Rul'*, no. 1921 (25 March 1927): 4). A Soviet artist touring abroad was, manifestly, considered

⁹ We discovered this article before finding its reference in Yuri Abyzov's "inventory" of that newspaper's contents, see: (Gazeta "Segodnia" 2001: 216). After the article's official title, "Prof. K. Malevich" is mentioned in square brackets.

¹⁰ For the attribution, see (Schruba 2018: 65). Thanks to the assiduous work of Lazar Fleishman, Boris Ravdin, and Yurii Abyzov, *Segodnia* has increasingly been recognized by scholars as a north star of interwar "Russia Abroad" journalism and literary culture. *Segodnia*'s editors took care to navigate their "independent, democratic" paper away from rigid identification with any one ideology, political party, or national-ethnic grouping (see also Abyzov, 2006: 12).

¹¹ Voitsekhovskiy's memoir recounts a series of snapshots from his life as a leader of the local Russian community in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, his evacuation to Germany in 1944, and his subsequent struggle against forced repatriation to the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, a variety of émigré periodicals engaged his pen (e.g., *Vozrozhdenie*, *Novyi Zhurnal*, *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, etc.).

newsworthy to the editors of *Rul'*, particularly when politics and political scandal were thrown into the mix.

Malevich also did not appear in the appended illustration section “Zhizn' i Sharzh” (“Life and Caricature”), where, for instance, under the title “At the Exhibition of AKhRR,” reproductions of Mikhail Sharonov’s and Sergei Prokhorov’s paintings — “Pionerka” (“The Pioneer Girl”) and “Sel’skaia kommuna” (“The Rural Commune”) respectively — were printed (*Rul'*, no. 1911 (13 March 1927): 6).¹² Voitsekhovskiy may have wanted his “conversation” to appear in *Rul'*, timing its publication with Malevich’s visit to Germany. It is conceivable that the newspaper editors denied him, as they might have refused to publish anything to do with Soviet, a.k.a. “Bolshevik,” art.

Voitsekhovskiy’s multiple claims about Malevich presented in the conversation require a careful commentary. The tone of the article “Sozdanie novoi russkoi kul'tury” makes clear his distrust and dislike of all things Soviet, especially, his remark on how Malevich avoids the “usual, official Soviet self-congratulation.” Like many Russian émigrés, including other contributors to *Segodnia*, Voitsekhovskiy refused to use “Leningrad” as a signifier of Russia’s former capital. His text consistently refers to the “**Petersburg** Institute of Artistic Culture” [emphasis ours. — *A. U., B. M.*]. Besides making an ideologically motivated revision of the toponym, it is worth noting that in titling this particular institute, Voitsekhovskiy also introduces an historical inaccuracy.

There are two relevant institutes here. One was the above mentioned GINKhUK (1923–1926) and the other was the State Institute of the History of Art (*Gosudarstvennyi institut istorii iskusstv*, “GII”, 1912–1929). GINKhUK was, by decree, assimilated into GII in December 1926, a process described by Kseniia Kumpan through her detailed reading of GII’s archival record.¹³ This is all to say that in March 1927, on paper at least, the institute in which Malevich taught and worked was properly called GII. It is possible that Malevich in his conversation with Voitsekhovskiy still referred to his place of work as GINKhUK, as the institute’s full assimilation into GII was a prolonged process. Natal'ia Malevich and Konstantin Rozhdestvensky claim that “the real move [from GINKhUK to GII] occurred later, between 1928 and 1929” (Malevich 2015: 537). Regardless, Malevich would certainly not use “Petersburg” in connection with any of these institutions.

“Russianness” for Voitsekhovskiy was obviously a cultural and national identity in which he took great pride. In speaking of Malevich and his colleagues at GINKhUK, Voitsekhovskiy praises the artist for his creative accomplishments as an artistic practitioner working specifically within the Russian tradition. Even

¹² In the following Sunday edition of “Zhizn' i Sharzh”, a painting by Lado Gudiashvili was reproduced with this caption: “A painting by the Georgian artist L. Gudiashvili, entitled ‘Tri brata’ [‘Three Brothers’]. The French critic Moris Rainar [Moris Reinal — *A. U., B. M.*] has written and published a monograph about Gudiashvili’s work in French” (*Rul'*, No 1917 (20 March 1927): 10).

¹³ See especially pp. 571–572 in (Kumpan 2014).

if, albeit implicitly, Malevich is in one instance in the text identified as an “official Soviet figure” who holds a Soviet passport, Voitsekhovsky does not condemn or criticize him for technically belonging to this category, given that the artist is “a stranger to politics.” (Voitsekhovsky is complimenting Malevich here). The opening paragraph locates the artist in a particular national matrix. Malevich, the “famous Russian artistic figure,” is “Polish by birth and ethnic belonging, but Russian culturally and according to his sympathies.” Such a claim invites critical comment, especially as the author and his editors place it in a position of prominence in the very first paragraph of the conversation.

Voitsekhovsky notably omits the fact that Malevich was born in Ukraine, lived there for his entire childhood, and wrote essays and letters in Ukrainian. Myroslav Shkandrij has resurfaced the extent to which Ukraine, Kyiv, and Ukrainian folk arts played particular roles in the artist’s life and work.¹⁴ Malevich himself filled out an OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate) questionnaire for arrestees and detainees in September 1930, in which he lists his nationality as “Ukrainian” (Malevich 2015: 563). Since at least 2022, some scholars, curators, and activists have debated how to classify Malevich in museum collections, with some institutions — such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City — categorizing Malevich as “Ukrainian.” But in the pages of *Segodnia* in 1927, Ukrainian attributes and influences nourishing Malevich’s sense of self had no place in this Russian-centered portrait of the artist.

Malevich’s Polish roots as well as family connections to Warsaw further complicate this question of cultural belonging. Members of the Polish contemporary art scene embraced Malevich as a Pole who could easily be adopted into their country’s artistic tradition. Władysław Strzemiński (1893–1952), a prominent Polish constructivist who helped to initiate Malevich’s visit to Warsaw, described him in the press as “our countryman” who happened to work in Soviet Russia.¹⁵ Tadeusz Peiper, a leader of the Polish literary avantgarde, fantasized about Malevich staying permanently in Poland in an essay published in the magazine *Zwrotnica* (no. 11, 1927), which Peiper edited. He stated in that essay: “[Malevich’s] collaboration could give new impetus to Polish art and could provide valuable support. We miss Malevich” (Peiper 2002). “Our countryman” (Peiper’s words) Malevich ought to be enticed to stay in Poland and pursue his artistic innovations among his compatriots; Peiper concludes his essay with an exclamatory flourish: “Malevich should not just visit us! Malevich should not just visit us!” (Peiper 2002).

Malevich himself mused on his own complicated relationship to various East European national-artistic traditions. In writing to his wife Natal’ia on the

¹⁴ See: (Shkandrij 2002). Granted, many of these Ukrainian influences and Ukrainian-language publications in Malevich’s work became especially visible in 1928, a year after Malevich’s meeting with Voitsekhovsky in Warsaw.

¹⁵ See: (Malevich 2015: 271). Cf. his earlier statement from 1922: “Malevich is not the first preeminent Pole in Russian art” (Strzemiński 2002: 275).

eve of his tour in March 1927, he pondered: “In Belorussia they consider me a Belorussian artist. [...] They say that the Belorussian republic wants to move me to their republic. Maybe the Poles will consider me one of them” (Malevich 2015: 270–271). Marie Gasper-Hulvat reads Malevich’s letters penned in Warsaw as evidence that this Warsaw episode was a homecoming of sorts, given his Polish ethnic roots (Gasper-Hulvat 2019) — the artist of course spoke Polish. We must remember that the Polish Republic and the USSR considered one another adversaries throughout the interwar period. In fact, the Polish-Soviet War had concluded just several years prior. Polish artists’ appropriation of Malevich as their own — or for that matter, a public embrace of Polish identity on Malevich’s part — would have been perceived as a provocative political statement in multiple political contexts, especially in the Soviet Union.

We should also notice the absence of the Soviet identifier in regard to Malevich and his creative activity. Despite the artist’s association with Soviet institutions and arts, Voitsekhovsky privileges Malevich’s contribution to the development of *Russian* contemporary art. Here, the title already conveys Voitsekhovsky’s particular point of view: “The Creation of a New Russian Culture.” All signifiers of Malevich’s Soviet-ness — his embeddedness not just in Lenin-grad’s artistic institutional life, but also his contribution to Soviet revolutionary aesthetics — are erased in the author’s discussion with the artist. Voitsekhovsky in part achieves this erasure through a shrewd selection of genre, as he does not offer a traditional question-and-answer interview. His own perspective as a participant in the “conversation” dominates and Malevich is never quoted directly.

This discussion illustrates that there were multiple possible (and actual) understandings of Malevich’s cultural positioning in the late 1920s, some offered by the artist himself and others explicitly fashioned by the artist’s mediators in the European press. (The contentious identity debate over Malevich continues today). The *Segodnia* “conversation” carves out a reading of Malevich as an artist trying his best to deepen the Russian cultural tradition in an inhospitable, if not downright inimical, Soviet context. Voitsekhovsky in concluding his article calls on his younger readers to follow Malevich’s example: “For this reason, the strivings and aspirations of Russian youth on either side of the border should be directed to the creation of a new Russian culture.”

While in 1927, there was already no hope of regime change in the Soviet Union, Voitsekhovsky apparently saw a path for the creation of a new Russian culture even on the eastern, Soviet side of the interwar border, which separated Europe from the USSR (a binary formulated by Voitsekhovsky). Malevich and his Warsaw exhibition emerge as mediating agents. In Voitsekhovsky’s image of Russian culture, Malevich contributes to supra-political and supra-national (but still Russian!) art.¹⁶ When discussing what this new culture might look like,

¹⁶ Russian identity among members of “Russia Abroad” constituted a contentious field of meanings. There were plural answers as to how Russian culture should relate to the imperial past, local non-Russophone surroundings in the diasporic present, and of course, the continuous development of Russian culture within the USSR.

Voitsekhovsky gives few specifics. The substance of Malevich's art and artistic-theoretical vision is given short shrift here for at least three reasons.

The first concerns Voitsekhovsky's own artistic background (or lack thereof). His creative interests were more literary. Decades after moving to the United States in 1951, Voitsekhovsky published a collection of his poems in 1981. These poems are taken from the entire range of his adult life, from 1914 to 1980. Judging from this selected verse, filled as it is with poetic clichés, his literary gifts were meager.¹⁷ Second, *Segodnia* was a generalist newspaper, not a specialized art journal. A deep dive into Malevich's artistic philosophy would have been ill-fitting for this particular outlet and readership. Readers of this "conversation" only encounter a handful of "isms" (artistic movements and approaches), all of which apparently find a place in Malevich's maximally tolerant creative laboratory.¹⁸ Third and finally, to the extent that Malevich's art and art theory were formative of an "aesthetic of rupture" carried out by "the first commissar of the Bolshevik Revolution," Voitsekhovsky as a monarchist and émigré would have found this aspect of Malevich's project to be far from meritorious (cf.: Shkandrij 2002: 405). Thus, the lack of serious discussion of Malevich qua artist could also be considered as an ideologically motivated omission.

All in all, the very publication of Voitsekhovsky's "conversation" with Malevich during the artist's visit to Poland threw Malevich onto a radically different cultural-ideological canvas than the artist himself might have expected from his tour abroad. For Malevich, the fact that this "conversation" appeared in a Russian émigré newspaper could have filled the *noise of time* with unexpected sounds.

In writing to Matiushin a week later, Malevich expressed satisfaction with his copacetic Polish reception: "I demonstrated your charts along with mine, and both are generating strong interest. Ah, this is fantastic treatment. Praise is falling down like rain. But they've shifted my itinerary, so I'm returning in May, and I'll relate everything in detail then. Pass along greetings to all of your folks. [March] 25th is the banquet, and that's the end." (Malevich 2004: 185). Staying in Warsaw a few more days after the banquet at the Hotel Polonia, Malevich, accompanied by Tadeusz Peiper, travelled by train to Berlin on 29 March 1927.¹⁹ A week later, Malevich visited the Bauhaus in Dessau where he met with Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy among others. In reaching Germany,

¹⁷ Voitsekhovsky also published poetry in *Segodnia*, e. g., S. Voitsekhovsky, "Igroki," *Segodnia*, No. 200 (21 July 1929): 5.

¹⁸ Voitsekhovsky does mention Malevich's *Teoriia pribavochnogo elementa v zhivopisi* (*A Theory of a Surplus Element in Painting*), as this small booklet appeared in Polish translation during the artist's visit to Warsaw. The erroneous title given by Voitsekhovsky — "Teoriia pribavochnykh elementov" — suggests that Malevich was not consulted prior to this "conversation's" publication. We should not assume that Malevich was ever aware of this publication during his stay in Germany.

¹⁹ This is the date given by Joosten (Joosten 1988: 82, 83), while Turowski more cautiously states that Malevich left Warsaw for Berlin between Tuesday, 29 March and Friday, 1 April 1927 (Turowski 2002: 140–141).

Malevich had finally arrived at the most important destination in this, his last European tour.

It was in Berlin that Malevich showed more than 70 of his works in the *Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung*, an exhibition that ran from 7 May to 30 September. Hugo Häring, an architect, secured Malevich's participation in that show (Andersen 1970: 57). A few sales of paintings combined with the subsequent publication of Malevich's treatise *Bespredmetnyi mir* (*The Non-Objective World*) provided the artist with much needed income (Gasper-Hulvat 2019).²⁰ Although Malevich left Berlin and returned to Russia on 5 June, his work continued to be displayed in the German capital.

His participation in the Berlin exhibition, the varied contents of which subsequently stayed in western Europe, combined with theoretical writings that Malevich delivered to the von Riesen family, kept the artist's fame alive. Malevich's works ensured that his achievement would endure in the world of contemporary art as a pellucid expression of the modernist *Zeitgeist* even after his oeuvre faded into regime-enforced obscurity in the totalitarian conditions of the Soviet Union.

²⁰ *Die Gegenstandslose Welt* was published by Albert Langen (Munich) in 1927 and translated from Russian into German by Alexander von Riesen.

**Создание новой русской культуры.
(От варшавского корреспондента «Сегодня».)**

*Петербургский институт художественной культуры и его директор. —
Проф. Малевич за границей. — Беседа с проф. Малевичем. —
Русское искусство и заграничные впечатления профессора.*

С 1919 года в Петербурге существует институт художественной культуры, работы которого, как и всё происходящее в Советской России вне официального коммунистического трафарета, мало известны за границей. Директором института, с первого дня его основания, является известный русский художественный деятель, проф. Казимир Малевич, поляк по рождению и этнической принадлежности, но русский по культуре и своим симпатиям.

Выдвинув в 1917 году идею создания института художественной культуры ради изучения и развития всякого художественного творчества, главным образом в области пластических искусств, проф. Малевич не покинул России в наступившее для нее тяжелое время, создал в полуголодном Петербурге свой институт и довел его до такой степени развития, когда оказалось возможным показать работы института вне пределов России.

Первым этапом совершаемой ныне проф. Малевичем поездки по Европе явилась Варшава, в которой он, с помощью польских художественных кругов организовал выставку произведений своих учеников, воспитанников института, и которая сердечно чествовала русского художника, желая как бы показать, что вечные начала искусства и устанавливаемая ими между отдельными народами и культурами связь выше преходящих политических обстоятельств и национальных различий. Из Варшавы проф. Малевич выехал в Берлин и Париж, где также будет демонстрировать достижения руководимого им института.

*

Политика советской власти делает встречи между русскими заграничными журналистами и официальными советскими деятелями совершенно невозможными. Но эта преграда не существует, когда за границу попадет, хотя бы и с советским паспортом, лицо, чуждое политике, но принимающее видное участие в культурной работе, поскольку она сейчас в России возможна. И поэтому сотрудник «Сегодня» обратился к проф. Малевичу с просьбой поделиться результатами своей работы в России.

В той беседе, которая между нами происходила, проф. Малевич очень сдержанно говорил о себе лично, совершенно не касался политики, но подробно и с любовью останавливался на жизни руководимого им института и на тех задачах, которые этот институт преследует. Выставка работ учеников института, среди которых были и картины самого проф. Малевича, произвела в Варшаве большое впечатление. На-днях на польском языке

выходит из печати его книга под заголовком: «Теория прибавочных элементов в живописи» <sic!>. Польский текст переведен с русского, изданного в Сов<етской> России.

Отправляясь на Запад, проф. Малевич рассчитывал прежде всего познакомиться с новыми достижениями Европы в области искусства, но первое его соприкосновение с тем, что создала Европа в этом отношении в последние годы, его разочаровало. С большой гордостью говоря о своих талантливых учениках и об их работах, проф. Малевич, в течение беседы, несколько раз высказывал убеждение, что через несколько лет не Россия будет учиться у Европы, а западная культура будет черпать в русской примеры и образцы. И надо отметить, что говоря это, проф. Малевич, по-видимому, был далек от обычного казенного советского самовосхваления, а лишь передавал действительное собственное ощущение, основанное на сознании тех громадных культурных возможностей, которые таятся в русском народе.

*

Заслуга создания института художественной культуры принадлежит, по словам проф. Малевича, не только ему лично и старшему преподавательскому составу института, но, главным образом, молодым художественным силам, вышедшим из состава первых учеников института. В настоящее время в институте обучается около 2500 человек, целиком посвятивших свои усилия искусству и культуре. Цель института близка к цели всякой лаборатории, подробно изучающей сложные проявления жизни. Так, например, изучая всевозможные изыскания в области формы, в ее применении к пластическим искусствам, институт производит опыты над различными течениями в передаче форм. Под руководством самого проф. Малевича в институте произведены были изыскания в направлении объединения и синтеза стилей готического, византийского и русского в архитектуре.

Стремление к художественной культуре, к распространению художественных знаний, чистого и прикладного искусства в России, по словам проф. Малевича, необычайно велико, но направление собственной русской художественной культуры еще не найдено, в этом отношении производятся постоянные опыты, и петербургский институт приобрел благодаря ним почетное место в художественной жизни современной России. В поисках культурных свойств искусства Россия, как говорит проф. Малевич, натолкнулась после революции на всевозможные направления в искусстве, т. н. «измы», которых в настоящее время можно насчитать до 15-ти. Институт относится ко всем этим направлениям, даже самым крайним, терпимо. Проф. Малевич не является даже противником уродливости в искусстве.

Стремление современной русской молодежи к искусству не совпадает, к сожалению, с достаточным уровнем художественных знаний. Молодые ученики института нередко в анкетах допускают путаницу в самых общих понятиях о стиле и направлении искусства и т. п.

Как мы уже выше указали, мы не задавали проф. Малевичу политических вопросов и не расспрашивали его об общих условиях жизни в Советской России, не желая причинять ему неприятностей после его возвращения в Петербург. Но отдельные замечания, слова и фразы нашего собеседника помогли нам всё-же восстановить некоторую общую картину, рисующую, увы, жизнь современного Петербурга в невеселых тонах. Постепенное вымирание интеллигенции, бедность, в которой приходится работать даже наиболее известным ее представителям, хулиганство, доходящее до того, что в Петербурге на улице прохожий не гарантирован от брошенного в него камня — всё это, вместе взятое, составляет обстановку, совершенно чуждую европейскому пониманию. Но, вместе с тем, — и это очень сильно было выражено во всех заявлениях проф. Малевича — в психологическом отношении Россия 1927 года ушла очень далеко от России 1917 года. Растет новое поколение, для которого прошлое — только история, а не живая реальность. Это, конечно, не предопределяет отношения этой молодежи к прошлому и не исключает возможности тяготения и даже симпатии по отношению к нему, но делает простое восстановление минувшего культурного облика России невозможным ни при каких политических условиях. Усилия и стремления русской молодежи по обе стороны рубежа, в силу этого, должны быть направлены к созданию новой русской культуры.

Ближайшими помощниками и сотрудниками проф. Малевича по петербургскому институту художественной культуры являются профессора Матюшин и Пуни<н>, ассистент Суетин и проф. Никольский из петербургского института гражданских инженеров.

А. Добротин



Банкетъ въ честь проф. Малевича,
устроенный въ артистическомъ клубѣ въ Варшавѣ. Въ банкетъ приняли участіе пред-
ставители польскаго м-ва иностр. дѣлъ, польскіе ученые, артисты, писатели и пр.
Фото-«Праса».

*Appendix I***LETTER I**

7 марта 1925 года

Заведующему Главным Управлением Научных
Учреждений Академического Центра тов. Петрову

Ввиду того, что за 7 лет революционной деятельности многие мои товарищи успели побывать за границей и показать свои работы, а также ознакомиться с искусством западных художников и пополнить, таким образом, свое знание, я в настоящее время считаю возможным возбудить перед Вами вопрос о содействии мне в выезде за границу (Германию) и устройстве там выставки.

Проработав 5 лет в Наркомпросе в качестве профессора высших художественных школ, я последнее время работаю над созданием Исследовательского Института в области художественных наук и имею значительное количество экспонатов, как живописно-художественных, так и лабораторных работ Института. Полагаю, что таковая выставка явится впервые на западе, так как будет экспонировать не только мои живописные работы, но и работы лаборатории исследований. За успех этой выставки ручаются приезжие представители германского искусства, а также это видно из прилагаемого приглашения германской фирмы. Но не желая быть эксплуатируемым фирмой, обращаюсь к Вам за содействием в ходатайстве перед Комитетом по устройству артистических турнэ и выставок за границей об отпуске мне средств на поездку и устройство выставки на западе.

Выданную мне сумму обязуюсь возратить от доходов с выставки.

Кроме того, поездка за границу является для меня необходимой еще потому, что институтская работа по исследованию художественной культуры произведений требует материалов и сведений о западном искусстве, которые мне доставит заграничная поездка, а следовательно, даст возможность продвинуть дальше всю работу Института Художественной Культуры, которая впервые в мире создается на советской территории.

Ленинград. Институт Художественной Культуры.
Ул. Союза Связи, д. № 2/9.

LETTER II

Заведующему Отделением <Главнауки> М.П. Кристи.
16 марта 1925

Совет Института художественной культуры просит Вас возбудить ходатайство через Народного Комиссара по Просвещению А. В. Луначарского и Заведующего Главнаукой тов. Петрова перед Комиссией по организации

заграничных артистических турнэ и художественных выставок о предоставлении Институту художественной культуры возможности устройства выставки работ своих исследовательских Отделов: Материальной культуры (зав<едующий> В. Е. Татлин), Формально-Теоретического (зав<едующий> К. С. Малевич), Органической культуры (зав<едующий> М. В. Матюшин), Экспериментального (зав<едующий> П. А. Мансуров).

Основанием к устройству выставки послужил большой интерес, проявленный как западной прессой, так и людьми, приезжающими из-за границы и находящими работу Института первой в мире, что подтверждается также и заинтересованностью в организации такой выставки частных предпринимателей, например: «Кестнер-Гезелльшафт» в Ганновере.

Демонстрация работ Института поддержит преимущество перед Западом развития нашего искусства и его научной линии, которая уже ярко обозначилась в умах западных товарищей. Недавно посетившие Ленинград д<окто>р Халле (Вена) и д<окто>р Вернер (Берлин) указывали в своих докладах на наши успехи перед Западом. В свою очередь Институт, устраивая выставку, сможет собрать на Западе много материалов, в которых нуждается его исследовательская работа.

Институт из доходов выставки обязуется выплатить Комитету сумму, ассигнованную им на устройство выставки.

К. С. Малевич.

Appendix II

I. MALEVICH'S GENERAL APPLICATION
TO TRAVEL ABROAD

[9 декабря 1925 года]

В Главнауку Художественный отдел

Копия: Ленинградск<ий> Отдел Главнауки

Директора Государственного

Института Художественной Культуры К. С. Малевича

Предложение 1. Мне кажется, что волна наших живописных и художественно-промышленных выставок на западе окончена, все произведения в этой области показаны — представлены Мастера Р.С.Ф.С.Р. и их достижения. Теперь нужно готовиться к новой волне, к новым выставкам, которые показали бы и другую работу в той же художественной области, а именно показать художественную, исследовательскую и научную работу. Показать то, что еще в области эстетики не осуществлено на Западе и чем сейчас там очень интересуются. Очень важно, чтобы мы первые установили научно-художественную проблему, ибо это укажет на ход нашего развития.

Мне кажется, что устроенная Главнаукой в Москве первая научная и научно-художественная выставка, кроме всех других целей должна включить и цель *первого смотра* пригодности устройства выставки такого рода за границей. Она может быть лучшим показателем всей нашей деятельности. Институт Художественной Культуры уже настолько начинает осязать свою крепость и силу в поставленной им задаче над анализом живописной, органической и материальной культуры, что может показать свою работу западу и впервые обратить его внимание на многие вопросы в Художественной Науке.

Убежденный в этом Институт Художественной Культуры обращается в Главное Управление Научными Учреждениями с просьбой о выдаче ему субсидии на подготовку и устройство научно-художественной выставки Института за границей: в Германии, Франции и Америке.

Предложение 2. В случае же если устройство выставки работ Института окажется невозможным, то Институт делает заявку на поездку за границу нижеследующих научных сотрудников Института: 1). Завед<ующего> Отделом Живописной культуры (Формально-теоретическим) — К. С. Малевича, 2). Зав<едующего> Отдел<ом> Общ<ей> Методологии — Н. Н. Пунина, 3). Зам<естителя> Зав<едующего> Отдела Матер<иальной> Культуры Н. Н. Суетина и Научного Сотрудника Отдела Органической культуры — Б. В. Эндера, отдельные заявки при сем прилагаются.²¹ Все вышепереч<исленные> научн<ые> работники отправляются в командировку вперые.

²¹ See Malevich's personal application to travel abroad also in Appendix 2.

Предложение 3. В крайнем случае, если Главнаука не найдет возможным в этом году дать средства на устройство выставки или на поездку отдельным заведующим, то я как Заведующий Отделом Живописной культуры (Формально-теоретическим) возбуждаю перед Главнаукою вопрос о содействии мне в получении виз и мандата для оказания мне содействия в пути во Францию через Варшаву и Германию пешком, который я полагаю начать 15 мая и достигнуть Парижа 1-го ноября с расчетом прибыть обратно поездом 1-го декабря.²²

Директор Института

(К. Малевич)

II. MALEVICH'S PERSONAL APPLICATION TO TRAVEL ABROAD

<9 декабря 1925 года>

Заведующего Отделом Живописной Культуры
(Формально-теоретическим)

К. С. Малевича

Научно-художественная командировка по Отделу Живописной Культуры оправдывается изучением на местах всех обстоятельств живописных течений и их изменений, ознакомление<м> со всеми работами живописцев и их достижениями, составлением всевозможных анкет, касающихся Живописной Культуры и т. д.

Добавляю, что серьезность работы Отдела требует более точных образцов, нежели те фотографии, над которыми работа ведется сейчас.

Работы будут проводиться в Германии в г. Берлине, во Франции в г. Париже, в г. Эксе, в музейных собраниях, частных коллекциях и личных мастерских художников.

К. Малевич.

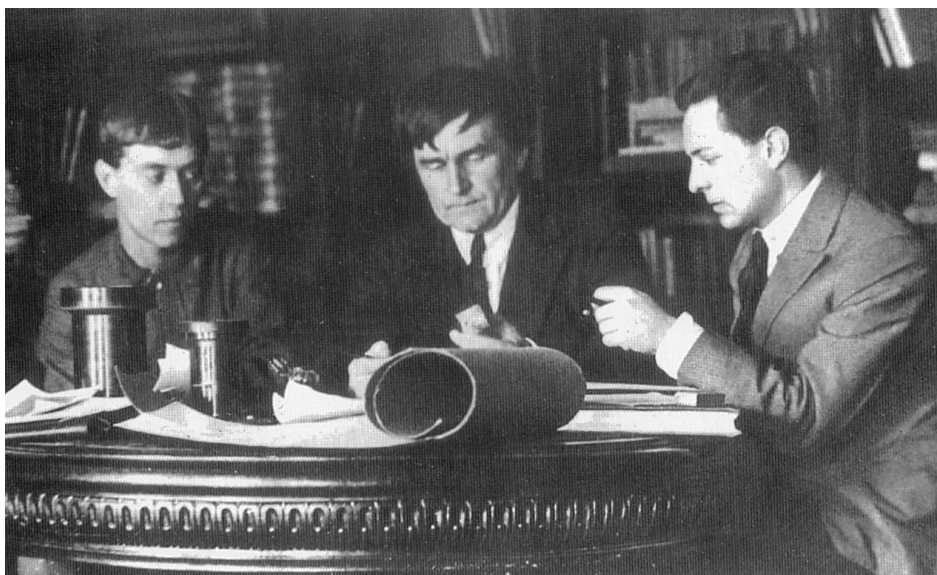
²² As specified in the accompanying commentary, "Only one point received Glavnauka's approval, 'proposal no. 2': with the resolution of the Commission for Research Travel from 11 March 1926, Malevich received approval for his trip (TsGALI SPb. 244-1-53), which, at that time, he could not put to use. (Malevich 2004: 502).



*Malevich next to his paintings at the
Museum of Artistic Culture (MKhK).
1924*



Malevich in 1925



Nikolai Suetin, Kazimir Malevich, Ilya Chashnik at GINKhUK. 1924



Nikolai Punin, Kazimir Malevich, Mikhail Matiushin at the MKhK. 1925



Malevich in Warsaw. March, 1927



Banquet in Malevich's honor at the Hotel Polonia. 25 March 1927



Malevich's postcard to his mother from Berlin. 21 May 1927

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Бенцамин Музакио, Андреј Устинов

ОД ГИНХУК-А ДО ВАРШАВЕ ДО БАУХАУСА:
ТУРНЕЈА КАЗИМИРА МАЉЕВИЧА ПО ЕВРОПИ

Европска турнеја Казимира Маљевича у пролеће 1927. укључивала је посету Пољској. Овде представљамо један готово непознат документ везан за његов боравак у Варшави — чланак „Стварање нове руске културе“, објављен у емигрантском листу *Данас* 5. априла 1927. године, недељу дана након што је уметник отишао из пољске престонице у Немачку. Чланак је написао Сергеј Војцеховски на основу интервјуа који је направио. Пропратни коментар објашњава специфичности национално-идеолошке формулације Војцеховског у вези са Маљевичевим културним и уметничким идентитетом. Ова дебата о његовом националном и културном идентитету актуелна је 2020-их година, као и пре сто година.

Кључне речи: Казимир Маљевич, новине *Данас*, ГИНХУК, културни идентитет, уметничка средина, култура емиграције.