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Anna Larina Bukharin

Lead: As a teenager Anna Larina fell deeply in love with Nicholai Ivanovich Bukharin, a hero of the Russian Revolution, a man twenty-six years her elder. She shared his fate at the hands of Joseph Stalin.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: As a girl, Larina met most of the old Bolsheviks. Her father, Yuri was one of the inner circle and often in the 1920s Lenin or Stalin would dine in their apartment

in the Metropole Hotel in Moscow. Bukharin lived just upstairs and soon her crush on him became evident to all around them. Once she wrote a love letter and slipped up the stairs to put it under his door. On the way she nearly ran into Stalin who was headed that way. She gave him the note to deliver. The irony of one of the twentieth century's great butchers passing romantic notes for a love-sick teenager is inescapable.

Bukharin also fell in love but was reluctant due to the age difference to marry her. This hesitation was overcome by her father who told her that ten years with Bukharin was far better than a lifetime with anyone

else. She never even got that. In the 1930s when Stalin began to round up the Party leadership, run them through show trials, and then have them shot, Bukharin, despite, or perhaps because of his popularity, his long service to the Revolution, and clear innocence of any indictable offense, was netted in the spider's deadly web. Before he was arrested he wrote and then caused Anna to memorize his political will and testament. In it he denied his guilt and begged for future generations to exonerate him.

At the trial, Stalin's henchman Vishinsky compared Bukharin to Judas Iscariot but though the

prisoner confessed to general guilt, he denied having done anything specific, a strategy probably designed to protect his family. He was shot in the depths of the Lubyanka Prison and cremated. Larina was not present, she had begun a twenty-year voyage in the islands of the Gulag, the Russian prison system. Their son was given to relatives and she did not see him for eighteen years.

Anna Larina Bukharin returned home sick and tubercular in the 1950s but it was not until 1988 under Gorbachev's perestroika that her husband and the other old Bolsheviks were rehabilitated. Her life spanned that of the Soviet Union and she knew

both the triumph and horror of its works.

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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