

DRAWING WOMEN'S HISTORY IN RUSSIA. A COMIC BOOK ABOUT BESTUZHEV COURSES – FIRST WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT — Der Artikel beschäftigt sich mit der Produktion eines historischen Comics, der auf der Geschichte der ersten Frauenuniversität im Russland des 19. Jahrhunderts basiert – den Bestuzhev-Kursen. Diese waren eine private Bildungsinitiative, die darauf abzielte, Frauen durch den Erwerb von Kenntnissen und Qualifikationen größere Chancen und Rechte in der Gesellschaft zu verschaffen. Die Absolvent*innen der Kurse waren etwa 7000 Frauen über einen Zeitraum von 40 Jahren, die im späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert in Russland Wissenschaftlerinnen, Schriftstellerinnen und Politikerinnen wurden. Diese Geschichte wird in der wissenschaftlichen Literatur zwar behandelt, ist der Öffentlichkeit jedoch nicht weithin bekannt, obwohl sie als einzigartige und fruchtbare Initiative der Frauengeschichte bezeichnet werden kann. Die Autor*innen des Beitrags diskutieren ihren aus Archivrecherchen und öffentlichen Projekten bestehenden Arbeitsprozess, der darauf zielt, die Geschichte der Bestuzhev-Kurse bekannt zu machen. In der Arbeit wird ihre Erfahrung bei der Erstellung des Comics analysiert. Der Artikel konzentriert sich auf die Ziele der Autor*innen und die Probleme, historisches Material in Form einer Comic-Erzählung zu arrangieren. Er erklärt auch, warum das Comic-Format gewählt wurde und inwiefern sich diese Entscheidung auf andere historische Comics bezieht. Zudem wird dargestellt, welche Werkzeuge verwendet wurden, um die Perspektive der Frauen auf die Geschichte zu vermitteln und zugleich die Nuancen der „Stimme“ der weiblichen Charaktere zu hinterfragen.

INTRODUCTION — The project we want to talk about in this paper is a comic book on the first women's university in Russia of the 19th century – Bestuzhev courses¹⁾. The comic book is the result of research and preparatory work that had been carried out over several years.

— In 2017 we collaborated²⁾ to organize four exhibitions dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the Bestuzhev courses that were finally held in October 2018 in Saint Petersburg, Russia³⁾. We launched the exhibitions as we considered it important to draw public attention to the topic of women's education then and now and show the domestic case of struggle for it. State university,

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The comic "Bestuzhevki. The First Women's University" was published in 2021 by the Samokat publishing house. Authors: Anna Rusinova, Dmitry Gusev. Illustrator: Tatiana Tsyrlina.

2)

Our academic background is partial in women's history. Anna Rusinova completed her Master's thesis on the history of women's education. After graduation Anna continued her research on Russian women's education. Dmitry's Gusev background lies in the museum and curatorial work.

3)

Virtual 3D tours of all 4 exhibitions can be viewed on the website of St. Petersburg University: <https://bestuzhevskie.spbu.ru/>

photo gallery, library and digital archive – all were involved in the exhibitions as partners. As a result, people could see artifacts and get in touch with the history of Bestuzhev courses for several months.

— One of the main motives of that initiative was to reveal that today's right for women's education is a hard-earned result of the struggle of many women in the past. For us personally, the interest in women's education is not limited to a specific case of the Bestuzhev courses, but it is the broader intention to talk about women's history and the struggle for women's rights in total, it is about raising the issue of historical justice and the return of memory of outstanding women as well.

— The comic book “Bestuzhevki. The First Women's University” [fig. 1] is an extension of the exhibitions and a response to the people's interest in the Bestuzhev courses. The choice of a comic book format had several reasons.

— Firstly, we sought to tell the story of the struggle for women's rights to an even larger audience. Our idea was that the format of a comic book is the best fit for our purpose: it is easier to create a comic book than, say, to make a film, and you can show the exact part of the big story that seems important to you.

— Secondly, we were inspired by the fact that we can combine fiction with the reconstruction of real events and characters. Let's add to this that no comics about Russian women and the history of Russian feminism have yet been published in Russia. All books deal with the history of world feminism and do not have a domestic scope familiar to a Russian audience.

— And finally, we defined the main goal as follows: to draw attention to the history of the Bestuzhev courses to a wide audience, and to stimulate interest in the national women's history. We believe that the comic will tell a story that is not widely known to the general public and is not very popular among researchers of the women's movement in Russia. Despite the fact that the Bestuzhev courses are generally known among historians, from our point of view, they deserve more attention and more intensive highlighting in the narrative of Russian historical and social sciences.

1. WHAT ARE THE BESTUZHEV COURSES? — The comic covers a large historical period – from the 1860s until 1918 – and depicts the Bestuzhev courses in the context of crucial Russian historic events: liberation reforms of Alexander II, the women's movement, first



// Figure 1
Comic cover “Bestuzhevki. The First Women's University” (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)

Russian revolution of 1905, World War I and Revolution of 1917.

— Let's now figure out what prompted the creation of a university for women – the Bestuzhev courses – and how the courses were operated.

— By the middle of the 19th century, despite the reforms of Alexander II, women in Russia did not obtain any serious political and civil rights, they could not receive higher education as well. Universities of that period admitted only men to study, with the aim of training civil servants, which ruled out any opportunity for women to enter higher education (Dudgeon 1992: 1) and which blocked their path to the intellectual labor market and the opportunity to earn money on their own.

— In 1863, the Russian government issued a new university charter, which finally prohibited women from studying at universities in the Russian Empire. From this moment, the struggle for the right of women to get higher education began as Russian feminists focused on the struggle for the right to education and work (Johanson 1987: 5).

— During the 1860s, many women's public organizations emerged (Iukina 2020: 3). One of them, led by the first Russian feminists Maria Trubnikova, Nadezhda Stasova and Anna Filosofova, the so-called "triumvirate" [fig. 2], was helping women to gain access to higher education.

— For almost twenty years, these three leaders of the Russian women's movement had been systematically working to open a university for women: they wrote petitions to the emperor and the government, negotiated with different authorities, submitted projects of educational institutions for women for discussion, wrote letters to prominent scientists and various scientific societies and associations.

— Finally, under public pressure and under the threat of a massive departure of women from Russia to European universities (in which many women were involved in the revolutionary activities), the Russian government allowed to open a non-state higher educational institution for women – the Higher Courses for Women [fig. 3].

— The higher women's courses opened in St. Petersburg on September 20, 1878 as a private educational institution, and the



// Figure 2

The "triumvirate": Anna Filosofova, Maria Trubnikova, Nadezhda Stasova (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)



// Figure 3

The building of the Bestuzhev courses.
Photo: Studio K.K. Bulla. 1903

historian Konstantin Bestuzhev-Ryumin was appointed their first director. According to his name, the courses received their informal name, which later became the main one – the Bestuzhev courses (St. Petersburg Higher Women’s Courses for 25 years 1903)⁴⁾.

— The curriculum was equated to the university’s, the full training lasted 4 years, and at the end the students passed exams and received a certificate of completion. Although the courses did not receive any state funding, but were supported by private donations and funding, they became a full-fledged university that trained female scientists, teachers and specialists in various fields: natural sciences and mathematics, history, philology, and arts, as well as later in political economy, statistics, and jurisprudence (Valkova 2008: 152-53; Johanson 1987: 73).

— In total, the courses existed for 40 years until 1918, when, due to the decrees of the Soviet government, they were attached to the Petrograd University. During this period, more than 7,000 women graduated from the courses (Valk 1973).

— The appearance of the Bestuzhev courses and their activities influenced the role of women and the range of her life scenarios and led to changes in Russian society as well (Korilova 2017: 363-364; Iukina 2007: 149). Here are the most significant results of the existence of Bestuzhev courses:

1. The courses gave women the opportunity to receive higher education, regardless of property status, beliefs, and origin.
2. The courses increased the number of women who had access to higher education, as the higher education became available to Russian women beyond European universities.
3. The courses changed the social status of thousands of women by giving them the opportunity to earn on their own by work in the pedagogical and intellectual field.
4. The courses aimed at providing women with higher education which in turn raised the question of giving women equal civil and political rights with men.
5. The courses changed the attitude towards women in science since they produced many well-educated women highly qualified in the research field⁵⁾.

— Thus, the Bestuzhev courses, on a par with the courses that arose later in Moscow, Kazan, Tomsk, Kyiv and Kharkiv, made a

4)

General information about the Bestuzhev courses can be found on the website of the Presidential Library of the Russian Federation: <https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619592>

5)

Consider just two facts. Firstly, women participated in the scientific and educational process from the very beginning of the courses: “about a hundred women taught at the Bestuzhev courses, at least 45 worked as assistants helping professors in compiling reports, textbooks, processing lecture texts for printing, solving other issues” (Pushkareva 2020: 304). Secondly, studying at the courses was equated to a university diploma: by the Government’s enactment of the 19 December 1911 “women ‘who passed the test of university proficiency’ were finally able to ‘acquire master’s and doctoral degrees from universities” (ibid. 310).

great contribution to the development of women's struggle for the rights and for changing women's position in Russian society.

2. UNVOICED FRAGMENT OF WOMEN'S HISTORY — The effect that the courses had on the women's history of Russia and the fact that this effect was not given enough attention (Muravyeva et al. 2014) allows, from our point of view, to call the history of the Bestuzhev courses underestimated or unvoiced.

— Bestuzhev courses are known to researchers of the women's movement and education in Russia of the 19th century and are represented in research literature. However, it is important to understand the premises and the character of these studies.

— Scientific research of the history of the Bestuzhev courses began only in the 1960s, when the latest generation of courses' graduates decided to create something like an archive of courses⁶⁾ and collect memories of them. Later, the first editions appeared: this is a bibliographic index of press publications about the Bestuzhev courses (Kuznetsova 1966) and short collective work "Bestuzhevki among the Builders of Socialism" (Pylaeva 1969). Then some memoirs were published (Valk 1973) and later an overview of courses based on them (Fedosova 1980).

— Since that time only few researchers have worked directly with surviving evidence and documents (Vakhromeeva 2018). Although there are not many of them, their work contributes to the knowledge about the courses. However, due to the research interests of the respective authors, their works deal with certain aspects of the courses' life such as teaching on courses, prominent professors and revolutionary activities of students, ignoring other dimensions of course life.

— Even though the Bestuzhev courses were recognized as an important institution and were mentioned in quite authoritative studies (Stites 1978; Rutchild 2010), the courses are still not considered in detail as a case of the self-organization of the women's movement and a successful example of building an educational organization with a developed infrastructure and supportive networks. We assume that such publications could highlight the true work of the courses' creators and show the entire scale and meaning of the courses for women's history (in particular, Russian).

— Another thing that should be mentioned is that academic papers are often out of reach to non-academic audiences. Research and revised facts on historical events rarely become a part of public knowledge if they don't scale the discovery of new tombs in the pyramids. Of course, some characters and historical facts about

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These memoirs and evidence in the form of the student's profiles are stored in the Museum of History of St. Petersburg State University. Another piece of information about the courses is kept in the Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg (CSHA) in fund № 113. It contains the office documentation of the Bestuzhev courses.

the Bestuzhev courses enter into popular culture but this is not enough to realize the scale of the story or to address the questions of women's liberation and the problem of gender equality.

— A good example of telling the story of Bestuzhev courses as an element of drama, without a substantive representation of the 40-year struggle and any reflection on the problem of women's education and rights, is the movie "The Silver Skates" (directed by Michael Lockshin, 2020)⁷⁾. Its story is built around the love affair of Matvey Polyakov, an ice-skating courier, and tsarist minister's daughter Alisa Vyazemskaya, who desired to study natural sciences at the Bestuzhev courses. This is still not a story about the Bestuzhev courses as complex and unique phenomenon, but more a love drama. Though the main character Alisa clearly articulates that she wants to become a student of Bestuzhev courses, and wants to "do science", and does everything to overcome all obstacles and study there, the main outcome of the drama ends with her marriage and children instead of a scientific career.

— Therefore, even the presence in the research discourse, as well as in popular culture, does not promise a full-fledged representation of the inspiring story and example of women's struggle for their rights.

— Thus, we can talk about the lost voice of the history of the Bestuzhev courses, which would be important to be made accessible. This can be done for two purposes:

1. to deliver the story to different audiences and share it with as many people as possible to go beyond the academic world.
2. to give a new impetus to a deeper and more comprehensive study of Bestuzhev's courses among researchers, especially those who are just starting to get involved in the subject of women's history or are looking for new research areas.

3. WHEN A "HISTORY" IS NOT A "STORY" AND WHAT DOES A COMIC HAVE TO DO WITH IT

— This is a challenge – to skip over a history that has not been described in detail, and exists only in an extremely general form, and to build a realistic story based on facts, evidence, and proper historical materials. The story that is understandable to different audiences: from researchers and the feminist community to adolescents and their parents.

— From this point of view, the main task is to choose the most effective medium – that would tell the story without losing its

7)

See in IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10525672/>

important components, but at the same time in a vivid and attention-grabbing format. Finally, we settled on a comic book format. Over the past decades, there has been a steady trend to use the comic book format to popularize complex and non-obvious topics, including scientific ones. There is a big debate about how effective this is (Farinella 2018: 2–3). This can be evidenced by numerous projects for collecting and analyzing comics as part of scientific communication⁸⁾.

— Researchers note that the comic book medium is especially well received in the field of history, as it allows to show and tell a specific story in a most complete way, and also has an advantage over a scientific text as it gives the reader the opportunity to make his interpretation without prescribing some kind of dogma (Getz 2019). Among the most well known cases are the comics *Maus*, *Persepolis*, *Catherine's War*, *Anne Frank's Diary*⁹⁾.

— The segment of comic books dedicated to women's history needs special mentioning since our story is directly related to this topic. These comics, originally addressed to a feminist audience, but later gained recognition and attention from a wide audience. The presence of women in comics has been studied for a long time and the evolution of a woman hero in a comic book has been recorded by many researchers (Robbins 1999; Chenault 2007). While the mainstream comics' characters transformed from a white female superhero to a black female superhero, feminist comics focused on feminist issues: telling a story about women, discussing important issues – abortion, motherhood, choosing one's own destiny, violence against women and etc. (Robbins 2014). Comics about women and women's history, however, changed along with the entire genre of comics, when new themes and a complex story came to the fore.

— Now it is considered that the key to the success of this genre is storytelling (Alverson 2017), which allows to engage the audience, emotionally include in the story and lead through the necessary elements of the story. However, the problem of the reliability of the story in the comics and the dependence of the reader remains in question. The author is able to decide what to tell and how to tell a story. In a broader sense, the problem of comics is the same as with historical narratives: there is always a question of the ethics of the thrust and comprehensiveness of the story and the predilections of the narrator/author (Iadonisi 2012). If you are aware of these risks and keep them in mind in the process, then working with a comic book allows not only to profitably use the storytelling technique, but also revitalize the story by introducing living characters and

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Here are just a few examples of such initiatives: <http://www.cartoonscience.org/>, <https://www.cartoonstudies.org/>, <https://www.comicsgrid.com/>.

9)

Best Sellers in Historical & Biographical Fiction Graphic Novels by Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Historical-Biographical-Fiction-Graphic-Novels/zgbs/books/7422605011>

use dialogues structures to saturate the story with emotional connections between the reader and the story.

— Therefore, we approached our task of creating a comic book about the Bestuzhev courses in such a way as to take the most of the strengths of the comics and be attentive to the possible weaknesses of the genre.

— The comic gave us the necessary freedom – to build a plot with sufficient flexibility and focus on key turns of the courses’ story, scenes, and dialogues. That is, the comic allows to represent the story via storytelling technique, discarding everything we consider superfluous and irrelevant. This suits the goal to popularize the history of the Bestuzhev courses by making the story personal through the highlighting three main characters.

4. HOW TO TELL A NON-EXISTENT STORY AND GIVE VOICE TO SILENCED PEOPLE

— The whole story of the comic is built around the Bestuzhev courses and their life cycle. It begins with an insight into the status of a Russian woman in the mid-19th century. The start of the story are the reforms of Emperor Alexander II, who abolished serfdom and carried out many liberal reforms, but did not change the status of women. This gave rise to the so-called “women’s question” in Russian society – the question of women’s rights.

— Our three main characters – Maria Trubnikova, Anna Filosofova and Nadezhda Stasova joined efforts to help women. They tried various ways to alleviate the fate of women: opened kindergartens and nurseries, organized cheap and affordable housing for working women, helped women to find income. However, these measures helped a small number of women and did not solve the main problem – financial dependence on men. Then our characters decided to operate differently: it is necessary to give women higher education so that they can earn money and be independent.

— The comic shows how Trubnikova, Stasova and Filosofova obtained permission from the government and the emperor to educate Russian women. First, they opened courses for everyone, then courses for women, and finally the higher courses for women, which later became a real university.

— In the comic we are talking about how the courses were arranged, what subjects were studied by female students, and who taught them. Another part of the story is how society reacted to the courses, criticizing the women who studied on them.

— The comic traces the history of the courses from their opening in 1878, through the experience of the First World War, to their closure after the 1917 revolution. It ends with a chapter dedicated

to some of the outstanding graduates of the courses: women scientists, politicians, teachers, researchers.

— While creating the comic, we focused on its two main elements: plot and material. There was no accepted straightforward narration even in the research literature that could be used as a plot, the information about the courses seemed to be distributed across multiple domains: organizers, teaching, graduates, professors, fundraising and revolutionary activities. In other words, the material was redundant and unstructured. Below we will highlight several basic principles that guided us in the process of work to overcome these two obstacles.

— *Our core principle* was to narrate the story from the perspective of female characters. There are two reasons for this.

— Firstly, the story is based on the struggle of three women for the opening of the Bestuzhev courses. The courses did not appear by themselves but were the result of many years of persistent struggle of these women with officials and critics, stereotypes and prejudices, and laws as well.

— Therefore, it is reasonable that the main characters of the comic are the founders of the Bestuzhev courses and leaders of the movement for women's rights in 19th century Russia – Nadezhda Stasova, Anna Filosofova, Maria Trubnikova. The story throughout the comic is told from their perspective. Even though by the time the courses were closed in 1918, none of them were alive, they remain in the comic as characters explaining the ongoing events.

— Secondly, we believe that the story should be told by a woman as it is a part of women's history. Usually, the memories of the participants of such events are few and the history of the Bestuzhev courses is not an exception: it is told from the perspective of men, appropriated by their predominant views and assessments. For example, Vladimir Stasov (brother of Nadezhda Stasova and renowned Russian art critic) describes the work on the memories of his sister and her activities this way:

“When, at the end of 1895 and throughout the entire 1896, I wrote my ‘Memories of my sister’, I used her long-term notes, my personal memories and many printed materials concerning the history of the Russian women's movement [...] In addition to all this, I managed to convince many of our [women's movement] activists of the 60s, 70s and 80s to write their ‘notes’ for me and my work.” (Stasov 1899: 10–11)

— Thus, Vladimir Stasov did not publish either the memories of

his sister or the memories of the female participants in the women's movement, thereby giving the voice to women, but reworked their memories and published his own overview – man's attitude and vision of the situation. A male voice remained in history.

— For the comic, we reversed the situation: our story is about women talking about themselves, telling how they fought to create a university for women. Of course, we cannot return the voice to women completely by excluding ourselves as authors. Since constructing and reconstructing a character's speech in a comic carries the risk of replacing her probable vision, her probable 'real' thoughts and reactions (as we see them as authors) and therefore constituting her reality as your own (Lanser 1992), we tried to rely on memories of our female characters and factual citations where possible, thoroughly scrutinizing the memories of men and our interpretations. Working on this task we used archival materials, the memoirs of women of the 19th century, so that the stripes with the direct speech of the main characters are based on archival data.

— Our second essential principle was that we focused not only on the voice and the role of women, but also their everyday life in all its little things, their feelings, and emotions – the inner world as we perceived it from our study of the archival material. We wanted to make our comic characters more realistic, thus, closer and attractive to the reader. Based on the memories about them, we imagined what their characters and behavior could be. By representing words and emotions of the women, we could better represent both their characters and the motivations as well and the context of their decisions and actions.

— Due to the lack of detailed memories of our characters, we had to come up with not only a general narrative for the comic about how the struggle went and how the Bestuzhev courses were created, but also the everyday routine of the characters. This required the invention of scenes and dialogues that are linking plot twists: For example, we did not know how our characters met with the rector of the Imperial St. Petersburg University or the Minister of Public Education, but we know that they did it. The details, the dialogues, the emotional component, so significant for the comic, were not available to us, except for the memories of one of the male participants (professor Beketov). Therefore, based on the existing pieces of information about our characters and Beketov's memories, we reconstructed the conversation, and came up with the possible reactions and replicas for the characters.

— Creating a vivid figure of the character was as important as direct speech of the women's characters. In this moment, the

historical figure becomes a compelling character, not a mere mention or a fact in a history textbook. Gaining characters, the women became subjects shaping their history. Their actions were entrenched in them. We believe this is necessary for the formation of women's history, because frequently the historical narrative is limited to fixing events without differentiating and articulating motifs, values and experiences, handing it all over to fiction.

— After returning subjectivity to our characters, we had to fill in their life with details and context to create a full-fledged story. In addition to the main characters, the plot is full of secondary characters that could be divided into two categories: characters who represent historical prototypes (founders of courses, professors, graduates, critics of courses), and fictional characters, such as female students.

— The work with real characters was strictly based on the facts and evidence (periods of life and teaching in courses, role in relation to courses or course organizers, etc.) as it was important for us to come as close as possible to the historical events that would inspire not by the fictitious plot, but by the real activism of our characters. Fictional characters were introduced to build the necessary context and convey the mood.

— As for the factual authenticity the *third principle* was to work exclusively with historical material to make the story as realistic and compelling as possible. We used all the material available to us: to prepare the comic we worked in archives and libraries – in the Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg, and in the funds of the Museum of History of St. Petersburg State University, also in the Russian National Library. This approach was applied to both parts: visual and the plot twists.

— For example, to emphasize the quality of education at the courses and the level of their equipment, the illustrator of the comic Tatiana Tsyrlina used the surviving drawings of the courses' observatory [fig. 4] or photographs of the chemical laboratory [fig. 5 & fig. 6]. This decision made it possible to reliably show the achievements of the courses as an educational institution of the world class.

— The very facts about the courses have also undergone careful selection, reconstruction, and layout. For example, the erection of the courses' building: it is known that initially in 1878 the courses occupied classrooms in the building of the women's gymnasium,



// Figure 4
Scheme of the astronomical observatory at the Bestuzhev courses (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)



// Figure 5
Chemical laboratory at the Bestuzhev courses (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)



// Figure 6
Real photo of a chemical laboratory at the Bestuzhev courses.

but in 1885 they entered their own building. We collected information and showed how the characters looked for a suitable building site, decided about the architect, and thought about how funds for the building were to be raised.

— That is, in addition to collecting historical material, we also needed to find many details. As a result, a lot of factual material was included in the comic – reports, estimates, drawings of buildings, curricula, financial documents some have been redrawn by the illustrator, while others are included in their original form as pictures. The visual basis for some of the scenes, decorations and interiors was the real photographs of the Bestuzhev courses, preserved in the archives.

— So, the following tools were used when creating a comic: the voice of women as the main focus and a way to tell the story, adding the emotional part of the story, carefully assembling the plot, working with historical material, and integrating it into the narrative.

— The result of the work on the project, which lasted about one and a half year, is a comic of 8 chapters on 100 pages. The second edition was released in 2022.

— How can we assess the value of the work done? For the publisher, the main criterion is, perhaps, the success of the sales of the book, its mention in the media. For us, as authors, there are different principles for measuring the effect of our work. First, it is the number of positive reviews received at public events and online platforms. Secondly, participation in various events and presentations of the comic, meetings with readers and their feedback, and also speaking at schools to children and to the students is especially valuable.

— Speaking about our general task, we consider it achieved. The purpose of creating a comic about Bestuzhev courses is to return the lost and missing knowledge about women, as well as to demonstrate an example of an effective initiative that has changed the lives of entire generations, social norms and the national history. Here it is appropriate to refer to the thesis that it is the articulation of concrete actions and the demonstration of examples of women's success that pushes for changes in their own lives and in society (Baumann 2017).

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Fig. 1: Comic cover “Bestuzhevki. The First Women’s University” (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)
Comic book cover

“Bestuzhevki. The First Women’s University”

Comic book about women who changed the world

Anna Rusinova, Dmitry Gusev, Tatiana Tsyrlina

Illustration: Tatiana Tsyrlina

Fig. 2: The “triumvirate”: Anna Filosofova, Maria Trubnikova, Nadezhda Stasova (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)

Women who created the Bestuzhev courses, so-called “triumvirate” Anna Filosofova, Maria Trubnicova, Nadezda Stasova

Illustration: Tatiana Tsyrlina

Fig. 3: The building of the Bestuzhev courses.

Online project “History of Russia in photographs” / From the collection of St. Petersburg

University: <https://russiainphoto.ru> (November 20, 2021)

The building of the Bestuzhev courses. Photo: Studio K.K. Bulla. 1903

Fig. 4: Scheme of the astronomical observatory at the Bestuzhevsky courses (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)

Replica of a professor of astronomy at the moment of discussing the construction of an observatory for Bestuzhev courses:

As you know, astronomy is the science of not only calculations, but also observations. Now the students are very interested in it. We could make discoveries right here if we had our own observatory.

Illustration: Tatiana Tsyrlina

Fig. 5: Chemical laboratory at the Bestuzhev courses (Gusev and Rusinova 2021)

The chemical laboratory of Bestuzhev courses

Illustration: Tatiana Tsyrlina

Fig. 6: Real photo of a chemical laboratory at the Bestuzhev courses.

Online project “History of Russia in photographs” / From the collection of St. Petersburg

University: <https://russiainphoto.ru> (November 20, 2021)

The chemical laboratory of Bestuzhev courses

Photo: Studio K.K. Bulla. 1903

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We are studying the history of the Bestuzhev courses, doing research in archives, and holding exhibitions about courses (2018), as well as doing online projects.

// FKW is supported by the Mariann Steegmann Institute and Cultural Critique / Cultural Analysis in the Arts ZHdK

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