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EPISODE FIVE

**THE BOHEMIANS**

**SYLLABUS**





## Episode Five: The Bohemians Syllabus



### OVERVIEW:

Born in 1885 and raised in Nevada, Louise Bryant was an American journalist, activist and writer best known for covering the unfolding events of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 with her husband, fellow journalist John Reed. She met Reed in 1915, and left her first husband and comfortable middle-class life in Portland, Oregon, to live with Reed among the bohemians, agitators and artists in New York's Greenwich Village. Bryant wrote a book about the Russian Revolution called *Six Red Months in Russia*, and she and Reed toured the U.S. after returning home to raise awareness and funds for the Communist cause. Reed's death during a return visit to Russia in 1920 devastated Bryant, but she rebounded to lead an eventful and colorful life among the expat writers and artists of Paris' "Lost Generation" before succumbing to disease, depression, alcoholism and an early death in 1936.

### EPISODE SUMMARY:

In this episode, we chronicle the life and times of Louise Bryant and her husband, John Reed, whose story was the basis for the Oscar-nominated film *Reds*, starring Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton. Bryant and Reed were at the center of a group of artists, activists and bohemians in Greenwich Village during the 1910s, and the two ambitious reporters ended up at ground zero for the Russian Revolution — in which Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks appeared to be the first blow struck in a worldwide Socialist revolution. The Bolshevik experiment, as well as Bryant and Reed's dynamic life together, would prove to be short-lived. Had she ended up with Eugene O'Neill, one of her former lovers, history may have been different.

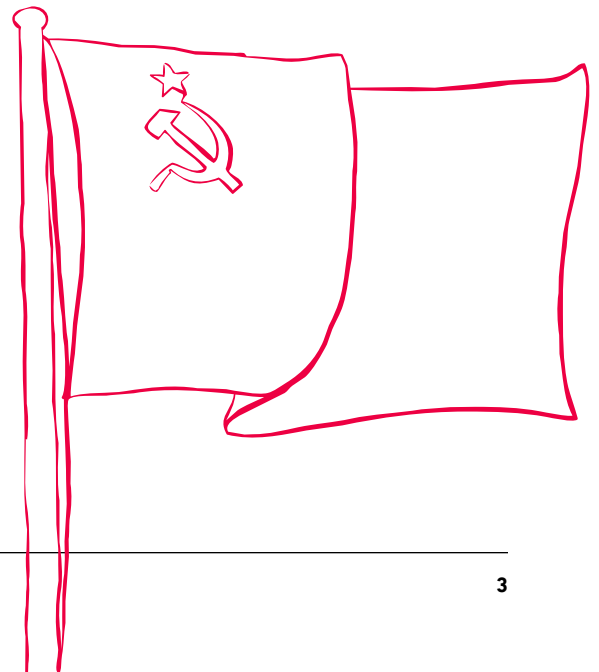
# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions based solely on material discussed in the podcast.

- 1 What made Louise Bryant and her husband, John Reed, “bohemians”?
- 2 What were some of the obstacles that Louise Bryant had to overcome to become a globe-trotting reporter?
- 3 Why did Louise Bryant find it hard to escape John Reed’s shadow?

## BONUS QUESTIONS (for college listeners)

- 1 Why did John Reed and Louise Bryant grow disillusioned with the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia?
- 2 What do you think would have happened if Louise Bryant had not accompanied John Reed to Russia to cover the revolution?



# EPISODE QUIZ (with answers)

Questions based solely on material discussed in the podcast. **Correct answers in bold.**

1 In which European city did Louise Bryant spend her final years?

- a. Vienna
- b. Paris**
- c. Prague

2 What was the name of the book Louise Bryant wrote about her time in Russia?

- a. Six Red Months in Russia**
- b. *Ten Days That Shook the World*
- c. *The Hunt for Red October*

3 In which Russian city did the Bolshevik Revolution begin?

- a. Moscow
- b. Petrograd**
- c. Stalingrad

4 What was the cause of John Reed's death?

- a. heartbreak
- b. typhus**
- c. gunshot wound

5 What was the name of the American playwright that Louise Bryant had an affair with in Provincetown during the summer of 1916?

- a. Arthur Miller
- b. Tennessee Williams
- c. Eugene O'Neill**



# PRIMARY SOURCES:

- *The Thread*, Episode 5, "The Bohemians." Available at [ozy.com/thethread](https://ozy.com/thethread).
- *The Thread* immersive story page. Available at [ozy.com/thethread](https://ozy.com/thethread).
- "The Last Days With John Reed," a November 1920 Letter from Louise Bryant. Read at [marxists.org](https://marxists.org).
- *Six Red Months in Russia* (1918), by Louise Bryant
- *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919), by John Reed

# SECONDARY SOURCES:

- *The Queen of Bohemia* (1996), by Mary Dearborn
- *So Short a Time; A Biography of John Reed and Louise Bryant* (1973), by Barbara Gelb
- *Romantic Revolutionary: A Biography of John Reed* (1981), by Robert A. Rosenstone
- *Reds* (1981), a film directed by Warren Beatty

