Description: Depicts scenes of daily life during the Russian Revolution. The paintings show the Revolution’s unheroic side: the brutality and vulgarity of the winners, the poverty and humiliation of the losers. Many are of Petrograd street scenes, under leaden gray skies, where the desperate search for food and fuel takes many forms, including, in a scene familiar during the years 1919 and 1920, a house being dismantled for use as firewood. There are village dramas--a landlord and a priest are sentenced to death; thuggish Bolsheviks come to requisition cattle and wood from distraught peasants--but Vladimirov’s main theme here is the tragic fate of former aristocrats and bourgeois, hungry and cold and struggling to stay alive. Vladimirov is credited with having painted some of the earliest works inspired by the October Revolution. He had formal art training in Vilna, St. Petersburg, and Paris. These paintings were procured for the Hoover Institution by Frank Golder in 1922, and most were commissioned by Golder. Vladimirov may have been paid for his work in the form of American food packages, which were highly coveted in those hungry times, even by established artists. (Description taken nearly verbatim from Bertrand M. Patenaude, A Wealth of Ideas: Revelations from the Hoover Institution Archives, 2006.)

Subject(s):
Revolution, 1917-1921; Soviet Union

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