

HISTORY OF HUMANITIES SERIES
SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR HUMANITIES INNOVATION

Dr Ilya Kalinin

Smolny College, St Petersburg State University

How Lenin's Language was Made:
The Meeting of the Poetic & the Political in Russian Formalism

Thursday, 1st June, 1pm, A29

The event is organised as part of the AHRC-funded
Open World Research Initiative (OWRI) programme



Russian Formalists rank among some of the most important innovators in the modern humanities, especially as pioneers of a science of art and language. Less well known is their excursion into the domain of politics, or rather, their application of the 'laws' of poetic art and conceptions of poetic language to an interpretation of a revolutionary history in which they themselves were immersed. This talk will examine how Russian Formalists used their studies of Lenin's language (collected in the special issue of the avant-garde journal *LEF*, 1924) as an opportunity to implement their conceptions of literary evolution and poetic language to the sphere of political history. The discussion will interrogate the conceptual work through which the Russian Formalists identified correspondences between the way Lenin's political discourse was made and the way Lenin made history. This analysis will serve as an opportunity for a broader debate about how theoretical and methodological innovation in the humanities responds to and engages with politics.

■ **Contact:** dusan.radunovic@durham.ac.uk