

monopolization of industry which made it possible, to some extent, for obsolete factories to survive because of decreased market competition.

The effects of nationalism on the Socialist movement was of even greater significance. Indeed, it was so important that it disrupted the Second International in 1914-1919. Marx had insisted that all the proletariat had common interests and should form a common front and not fall victim to nationalism, which he tended to regard as capitalistic propaganda, seeking, like religion, to divert the workers from their legitimate aims of opposition to capitalism. The Socialist movement generally accepted Marx's analysis of this situation for a long time, arguing that workers of all countries were brothers and should join together in opposition to the capitalist class and the capitalist state. The Marxian slogans calling on the workers of the world to form a common front continued to be shouted even when modern nationalism had made deep inroads on the outlook of all workers. The spread of universal education in advanced industrial countries tended to spread the nationalist point of view among the working classes. The international Socialist movements could do little to reverse or hamper this development. These movements continued to propagate the internationalist ideology of international Socialism, but it became more and more remote from the lives of the average worker. The Social Democratic parties in most countries continued to embrace the international point of view and to insist that the workers would oppose any war between capitalist states by refusing to pay taxes to support such wars or to bear arms themselves against their "brother workers" in foreign countries.

How unrealistic all this talk was became quite clear in 1914 when the workers of all countries, with a few exceptions, supported their own governments in the First World War. In most countries only a small minority of the Socialists continued to resist the war, to refuse to pay taxes, or to serve in the armed forces, or continued to agitate for social revolution rather than for victory. This minority, chiefly among the Germans and Russians, became the nucleus of the Third, or Communist, International which was formed under Russian leadership in 1919. The Left-wing minority who became the Communists refused to support the war efforts of their various countries, not because they were pacifists as the Socialists were but because they were anti-nationalist. They were not eager to stop the war as the Socialists were, but wished it to continue in the hope that it would destroy existing economic, social, and political life and provide an opportunity for the rise of revolutionary regimes. Moreover, they did not care who won the war, as the Socialists did, but were willing to see their own countries defeated if such a defeat would serve to bring a Communist regime to power. The leader of this radical group of violent dissident Socialists was a Russian conspirator, Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, better known as Lenin (1870-1924). Although he expressed his point of view frequently and loudly during the war, it must be confessed that his support, even among extremely violent Socialists, was microscopic. Nevertheless, the fortunes of war served to bring this man to power in Russia in November 1917, as the leader of a Communist regime.

Chapter 24—The Bolshevik Revolution to 1924

The corruption, incompetence, and oppression of the czarist regime was forgotten at the outbreak of war in 1914 as most Russians, even those who were sent into battle with inadequate training and inadequate weapons' rallied to the cause of Holy Mother Russia in an outburst of patriotism. This loyalty survived the early disasters of 1914 and 1915 and was able to rally sufficiently to support the great Brusilov offensive against Austria in 1916. But the tremendous losses of men and supplies in this endless warfare, the growing recognition of the complete incompetence and corruption of the government, and the growing rumors of the pernicious influence of the czarina and Rasputin over the czar served to destroy any taste that the Russian masses might have had, for the war. This weakening of morale was accelerated by the severe winter and semi-starvation of 1916-1917. Public discontent showed itself in March 1917, when strikes and rioting began in Petrograd. Troops in the capital refused to suppress these agitations, and the government soon found itself to be helpless. When it tried to dissolve the Duma, that body refused to be intimidated, and formed a provisional government under Prince Lvov. In this new regime there was only one Socialist, Minister of Justice Alexander Kerensky.

Although the new government forced the abdication of the czar, recognized the independence of Finland and Poland, and established a full system of civil liberties, it postponed any fundamental social and economic changes until the establishment of a future constituent assembly, and it made every effort to continue the war. In this way it failed to satisfy the desires of large numbers of Russians for land, bread, and peace. Powerful public feeling against efforts to continue the war forced the resignation of several of the more moderate members of the government, including Prince Lvov, who was replaced by Kerensky. The more radical Socialists had been released from prison or had returned from exile (in some cases, such as Lenin, by German assistance); their agitations for peace and land won adherents from a much wider group than their own supporters, and especially among the peasantry, who were very remote from Socialist sympathies or ideas but were insisting on an end to the war and a more equitable system of land ownership..

In St. Petersburg and Moscow and in a few other cities, assemblies of workers, soldiers, and peasants, called soviets, were formed by the more radical Socialists in opposition to the Provisional Government. The Bolshevik group, under Lenin's leadership, put on a powerful propaganda campaign to replace the Provisional Government by a nationwide system of soviets and to adopt an immediate program of peace and land distribution. It cannot be said that the Bolshevik group won many converts or increased in size very rapidly, but their constant agitation did serve to neutralize or alienate support for the Provisional Government, especially among the soldiers of the two chief cities. On November 7, 1917, the Bolshevik group seized the centers of government in St. Petersburg and was able to hold them because of the refusal of the local military contingents to support the Provisional Government. Within twenty-four hours this revolutionary group issued a series of decrees which abolished the Provisional Government, ordered the transfer of all public authority in Russia to soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants, set up a central executive of the Bolshevik leaders, called the "Council of People's Commissars," and ordered the end of the war with Germany and the distribution of large land-holdings to the peasants.

The Bolsheviks had no illusions about their position in Russia at the end of 1917. They knew that they formed an infinitesimal group in that vast country and that they had been able to seize power because they were a decisive and ruthless minority among a great mass of persons who had been neutralized by propaganda. There was considerable doubt about how long this neutralized condition would continue. Moreover, the Bolsheviks were convinced, in obedience to Marxist theory, that no real Socialist system could be set up in a country as industrially backward as Russia. And finally, there was grave doubt if the Western Powers would stand idly by and permit the Bolsheviks to take Russia out of the war or attempt to establish a Socialist economic system. To the Bolsheviks it seemed to be quite clear that they must simply try to survive on a day-to-day basis, hope to keep the great mass of Russians neutralized by the achievement of peace, bread, and land, and trust that the rapid advent of a Socialist revolution in industrially advanced Germany would provide Russia with an economic and political ally which could remedy the weaknesses and backwardness of Russia itself. [At this stage Germany was already a secret ally.]

From 1917 to 1921 Russia passed through a period of almost incredible political and economic chaos. With counterrevolutionary movements and foreign interventionist forces appearing on all sides, the area under Bolshevik control was reduced at one time to little more than the central portions of European Russia. Within the country there was extreme economic and social collapse. Industrial production was disorganized by the disruption of transportation, the inadequate supply of raw materials and credit, and the confusions arising from the war, so that there was an almost complete lack of such products as clothing, shoes, or agricultural tools. By 1920 industrial production in general was about 13 percent of the 1913 figure. At the same time, paper money was printed so freely to pay for the costs of war, civil war, and the operation of the government that prices rose rapidly and the ruble became almost worthless. The general index of prices was only three times the 1913 level in 1917 but rose to more than 16,000 times that level by the end of 1920. Unable to get either industrial products or sound money for their produce the peasants planted only for their own needs or hoarded their surpluses. Acreage under crops was reduced by at least one-third in 1916-1920, while yields fell even more rapidly, from 74 million tons of grain in 1916 to 30 million tons in 1919 and to less than 20 million tons in 1920. The decrease in 1920 resulted from drought; this became so much worse in 1921 that the crops failed completely. Loss of life in these two years of famine reached five million, although the American Relief Administration came into the country and fed as many as ten million persons a day (in August 1922).

In the course of this chaos and tragedy the Bolshevik regime was able to survive, to crush counterrevolutionary movements, and to eliminate foreign interventionists. They were able to do this because their opponents were divided, indecisive, or neutralized, while they were vigorous, decisive, and completely ruthless. The chief sources of Bolshevik strength were to be found in the Red Army and the secret police, the neutrality of the peasants, and the support of the proletariat workers in industry and transportation. The secret police (Ckeka) was made up of fanatical and ruthless Communists who systematically murdered all real or potential opponents. The Red Army was recruited

from the old czarist army but was rewarded by high pay and favorable food rations. Although the economic system collapsed almost completely, and the peasants refused to supply, or even produce, food for the city population, the Bolsheviks established a system of food requisitions from; the peasants and distributed this food by a rationing system which rewarded their supporters. The murder of the imperial family by the Bolsheviks in July 1918 removed this possible nucleus for the counterrevolutionary forces, while the general refusal of these forces to accept the revolutionary distribution of agricultural lands kept the peasants neutral in spite of the Bolshevik grain requisitions. Moreover, the peasants were divided among themselves by the Bolshevik success in splitting them so that the poorer peasants banded together to divert much of the burden of grain requisitions onto their more affluent neighbors.

The most acute problem facing the revolutionary regime at the end of 1917 was the war with Germany. At first the Bolsheviks tried to end the fighting without any formal peace, but the Germans continued to advance, and the Bolsheviks were compelled to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918). By this treaty Russia lost all the western borderlands, including Poland, the Ukraine, and the Baltic areas. The German forces tried, with little success, to obtain economic resources from the Ukraine, and soon advanced far beyond the boundaries established at Brest-Litovsk to occupy the Don Valley, the Crimea, and the Caucasus.

In various parts of Russia, notably in the south and the east, counter-revolutionary armies called "Whites" took the field to overthrow the Bolsheviks. The Cossacks of the Don under L. G. Kornilov, Anton Denikin, and Pëtr Wrangel occupied the Caucasus, the Crimea, and the Ukraine after the Germans withdrew from these areas. In Siberia a conservative government under Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak was set up at Omsk and announced its intention to take over all of Russia (late 1918). A group of 40,000 armed Czechoslovaks who had deserted from the Habsburg armies to fight for Russia turned against the Bolsheviks and, while being evacuated to the east along the Trans-Siberian Railway, seized control of that route from the Volga to Vladivostok (summer 1918).

Various outside Powers also intervened in the Russian chaos. An allied expeditionary force invaded northern Russia from Murmansk and Archangel, while a force of Japanese and another of Americans landed at Vladivostok and pushed westward for hundreds of miles. The British seized the oil fields of the Caspian region (late 1918), while the French occupied parts of the Ukraine about Odessa (March 1919)..

Against these various forces the Bolsheviks fought with growing success, using the new Red Army and the Cheka, supported by the nationalized industrial and agrarian systems. While these fought to preserve the revolutionary regime within Russia, various sympathizers were organized outside the country. The Third International was organized under Grigori Zinoviev to encourage revolutionary movements in other countries. Its only notable success was in Hungary where a Bolshevik regime under Béla Kun was able to maintain itself for a few months (March-August 1919).

By 1920 Russia was in complete confusion. At this point the new Polish government invaded Russia, occupying much of the Ukraine. A Bolshevik counterattack drove the Poles back to Warsaw where they called upon the Entente Powers for assistance. General Weygand was sent with a military mission and supplies. Thus supported, Poland was able to re-invade Russia and impose the Treaty of Riga (March 1921). This treaty established a Polish-Russian boundary 150 miles east of the tentative "Curzon Line" which had been drawn along the ethnographic frontier by the Western Powers in 1919. By this act Poland took within its boundaries several millions of Ukrainians and White Russians and ensured a high level of Soviet-Polish enmity for the next twenty years.

Much of the burden of this turmoil and conflict was imposed on the Russian peasantry by the agricultural requisitions and the whole system of so-called "War Communism." As part of this system not only were all agricultural crops considered to be government property but all private trade and commerce were also forbidden; the banks were nationalized, while all industrial plants of over five workers and all craft enterprises of over ten workers were nationalized (1920). This system of extreme Communism was far from being a success, and peasant opposition steadily increased in spite of the severe punishments inflicted for violations of the regulations. As counterrevolutionary movements were suppressed and foreign interventionists gradually withdrew, opposition to the system of political oppression and "War Communism" increased. This culminated in peasant uprisings, urban riots, and a mutiny of the sailors at Kronstadt (March 1921). Within a week a turning point was passed; the whole system of "War Communism" and of peasant requisitioning was abandoned in favor of a "New Economic Policy" of free commercial activity in agricultural and other commodities, with the reestablishment of the profit motive and of private ownership in small industries and in small landholding. Requisitioning was replaced by a system of moderate taxation, and the pressures of the secret police, of censorship, and of the government generally were relaxed. As a result of these tactics, there was a dramatic increase in economic prosperity and in political stability. This improvement continued for two years, until, by late 1923, political unrest and economic problems again became acute. At the same time, the approaching death of Lenin complicated these problems with a struggle for power among Lenin's successors.

Because the political organization of the Bolshevik regime in its first few years was on a trial-and-error basis, its chief outlines were not established until about 1923. These outlines had two quite different aspects, the constitutional and the political. Constitutionally the country was organized (in 1922) into a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR). The number of these republics has changed greatly, rising from four in 1924 and eleven in the 1936-1940 period to fifteen in the 1960's. Of these, the largest and most important was the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR), which covered about three-quarters of the area of the whole Union with about five-eighths of the total population. The constitution of this RSFSR, drawn up in 1918, became the pattern for the governmental systems in other republics as they were created and joined with the RSFSR to form the USSR. In this organization local soviets, in cities and villages, organized on an occupational basis, elected representatives to district, county, regional, and provincial congresses of soviets. As we shall see in a moment, these numerous levels of indirect representation served to weaken any popular influence at the top and to allow

the various links in the chain to be controlled by the Communist political party. The city soviets and the provincial congresses of soviets sent representatives to an All Russian Congress of Soviets which possessed, in theory, full constitutional powers. Since this Congress of Soviets, with one thousand members, met no more than once a year, it delegated its authority to an All-Russian Central Executive Committee of three hundred members. This Executive Committee, meeting only three times a year, entrusted day-to-day administration to a Council of People's Commissars, or Cabinet, of seventeen persons. When the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics was formed in 1923 by adding other republics to the RSFSR, the new republics obtained a somewhat similar constitutional organization, and a similar system was created for the whole Union. The latter possessed a Union Congress of Soviets, large and unwieldy, meeting infrequently, and chosen by the city and provincial soviets. This Union Congress elected an equally unwieldy All-Union Central Executive Committee consisting of two chambers. One of these chambers, the Council of the Union, represented population; the other chamber, the Council of Nationalities, represented the constituent republics and autonomous regions of the Soviet Union. The Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR was transformed, with slight changes, into a Union Council of Commissars for the whole Union. This ministry had commissars for five fields (foreign affairs, defense, foreign trade, communications, and posts and telegraphs) from which the constituent republics were excluded, as well as numerous commissars for activities which were shared with the republics.

This system had certain notable characteristics. There was no separation of powers, so that the various organs of government could engage in legislative, executive, administrative, and, if necessary, judicial activities. Second, there was no constitution or constitutional law in the sense of a body of rules above or outside the government, since constitutional laws were made by the same process and had the same weight as other laws. Third, there were no guaranteed rights or liberties of individuals, since the accepted theory was that rights and obligations arise from and in the state rather than outside or separate from the state. Last, there were no democratic or parliamentary elements because of the monopoly of political power by the Communist Party.

The Communist Party was organized in a system similar to and parallel to the state, except that it included only a small portion of the population. At the bottom, in every shop or neighborhood, were unions of party members called "cells." Above these, rising level on level, were higher organizations consisting, on each level, of a party congress and an executive committee chosen by the congress of the same level. These were found in districts, in counties, in provinces, in regions, and in the constituent republics. At the top was the Central Party Congress and the Central Executive Committee chosen by it. As years went by, the Central Party Congress met more and more rarely and then merely approved the activities and resolutions of the Central Executive Committee. This committee and its parallel institution in the state (Council of People's Commissars) were dominated, until 1922, by the personality of Lenin. His eloquence, intellectual agility, and capacity for ruthless decision and practical improvisation gave him the paramount position in both party and state. In May 1922, Lenin had a cerebral stroke and, after a

series of such strokes, died in January 1924. This long-drawn illness gave rise to a struggle, for control of the party and the state apparatus, within the party itself. This struggle, at first, took the form of a union of the lesser leaders against Trotsky (the second most important leader, after Lenin). But eventually this developed into a struggle of Stalin against Trotsky and, finally, of Stalin against the rest. By 1927 Stalin had won a decisive victory over Trotsky and all opposition.

Stalin's victory was due very largely to his ability to control the administrative machinery of the party behind the scenes and to the reluctance of his opponents, especially Trotsky, to engage in a showdown struggle with Stalin lest this lead to civil war, foreign intervention, and the destruction of the revolutionary achievement. Thus, while Trotsky had the support of the Red Army and of the mass of party members, these were both neutralized by his refusal to use them against Stalin's control of the party machinery.

The party, as we have said, remained a minority of the population, under the theory that quality was more important than quantity. There were 23,000 members in March 1917, and 650,000 in October 1921; at this latter date a purge began which reduced the party rolls by 24 percent. Subsequently, the rolls were reopened, and membership rose to 3.4 million by 1940. The power to admit or to purge, held in the hands of the Central Executive Committee, completely centralized control of the party itself; the fact that there was only one legal party and that elections to positions in the state were by ballots containing only one party, and even one name for each office, gave the party complete control of the state. This control was neither weakened nor threatened by a new constitution, of democratic appearance and form, which came into existence in 1936.

In 1919 the Central Executive Committee of nineteen appointed two subcommittees of five each and a secretariat of three. One of the subcommittees, the Politburo, was concerned with questions of policy, while the other, the Orgburo, was concerned with questions of party organization. Only one man, Stalin, was a member of both of these; in April 1922, a new secretariat of three was named (Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Valerian Kuibyshev) with Stalin as secretary-general. From this central position he was able to build up a party bureaucracy loyal to himself, purge those who would be most opposed to his plans, or transfer to remote positions those party members whose loyalty to himself was not beyond question. At the death of Lenin in January 1924, Stalin was the most influential party member, but still lurked in the background. At first he ruled as one of a triumvirate of Stalin, Grigori Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev, all united in opposition to Trotsky. The last was removed from his position as war commissar in January 1925, and from the Politburo in October 1926. In 1927, at Stalin's behest, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party. Zinoviev was later restored to membership but in 1929 Trotsky was deported to exile in Turkey. By that time Stalin held the reins of government firmly in his own hands.