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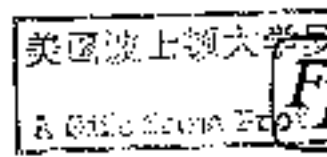
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

From Lenin to the Present



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Edward H. Carr



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Foreword

The large *History of Soviet Russia* for the past thirty years, and four instalments: *The Bolsheviks, 1917-1924*, *Socialism in One Country, 1924-1929*, *Stalin's Five-Year Plans, 1928-1933*, and *The Revolution of 1933-1934*. The detailed research and design to me that some purpose this research into a short book of the scholarly refinements of designed for the general reader a first introduction to the subject short history. The difference that this is substantially a new from the original work reappears.

The Russian Revolution: from 1917 to 1924 covers the same period as the large which in contrast with the large Soviet sources are available. It is in embryo much of the substance an understanding of what has what happened afterwards. It is in terms of a transition from to the Russian revolution of an over-simplification. But it historical process, the conclusions unforeseeable future.

The many friends and colleagues whose names are cited in the prefaces to successive volumes of the large history also claim acknowledgment here as indirect contributors to the present work. To Professor R. W. Davies, who collaborated with me in the first volume of *Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926-1929*, I am specially indebted for expert criticism of the chapters on industrialization and planning; and I have read with profit Professor Alec Novik's concise *Economic History of the USSR*. My warm thanks are once more due to Tamara Deutscher for her unfailing help in the preparation of this volume.

November 7 1977

E. H. CARR

List of Abbrev

Arcof	All-Russian C
CCP	Chinese Com
CLR	Chinese East
Chéka	Extraordinary
Comintern	Communist I
CPGB	Communist P
Glavk(s)	Chief Commi
Guelag	State Commi
	of Russia
Gospplan	State Plannin
GPU	State Political
IFTU	International
IKKI	Executive Co
	International
Kadec	Constitutional
Khozrashe	Commercial A
Kolkhoz(s)	Collective Far
KPD	German Com
MTS	Machine Tra
Narkomfin	People's Com
Narkomindel	People's Com
Narkomprod	People's Com
Narkomtrest	People's Com
Narkomzern	People's Com
NEP	New Econom

NMM	National Minority Movement
NUWM	National Unemployed Workers' Movement
OGPU	United State Political Administration
PCF	French Communist Party
PCI	Italian Communist Party
Profintern	Red International of Trade Unions (R.I.T.U.)
RSSSR	Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic
sovkhoz(y)	Soviet Farm(s)
Sovnarkhoz(y)	Council(s) of National Economy
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars
SPD	German Social Democratic Party
SR	Social-Revolutionary
T-1K	Central Executive Committee
USPD	German Independent Social-Democratic Party
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAPP	All-Russian Association of Proletarian Writers
Vesnikha	Supreme Council of National Economy
VT-1K	All-Russian Central Executive Committee



1 October 19

THE Russian revolution of 1917 and may well be assessed by the event of the twentieth century. It will continue for a long time hailed by some as a landmark from past oppression, and den and a disaster. It presented a capitalist system, which had to the end of the nineteenth century height of the first world war that war, was more than a deadly blow at the international existed before 1914, and revealed revolution may be thought of as a cause of the decline of capitalism.

While, however, the revolution significance, it was also routine. The imposing façade of a stagnant rural economy, which advanced since the emancipation and revive peasantry. Terror since the eighteen-sixties with and repression. This period of ment, later succeeded by the Social appeal was to the peasants. As to make important individuals into and the rise of an increasingly broad financial class, heavily encouraged the infiltration of ideas found their fullest expression in

monistic Party. But this process was accompanied by the growth of a proletariat of factory workers and by the early symptoms of proletarian turbulence; the first strikes occurred in the eighties nineties. These developments were reflected in the foundation in 1897 of the Marxist Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, the party of Lenin, Martov and Plekhanov. Seething unrest was brought to the surface by the frustrations and humiliations of the Russo-Japanese war.

The first Russian revolution of 1905 had a mixed character. It was a revolt of bourgeois Liberals and constitutionalists against an arbitrary and antiquated autocracy. It was a revolt of workers, sparked off by the atrocity of "Bloody Sunday", and leading to the election of the first Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies. It was a widespread revolt of peasants, spontaneous and uncoordinated, often extremely bitter and violent. The three strands were never woven together, and the revolution was easily put down at the cost of some largely unreal constitutional concessions. The same factors inspired the revolution of February 1917, but this time were reinforced and dominated by war-weariness and universal discontent with the conduct of the war. Nothing short of the Tsar's abdication could stem the tide of revolt. Autocracy was replaced by the proclamation of a democratic Provisional Government based on the authority of the Duma. But the hybrid character of the revolution was once more immediately apparent. Side by side with the Provisional Government, the Petrograd Soviet—the capital had changed its name in 1914—was reconstituted on the model of 1905.

The revolution of February 1917 brought back to Petrograd, from Siberia and from exile abroad, a host of formerly proscribed revolutionaries. Most of these belonged to one of the two wings—Bolshevik and Menshevik—of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party or to the Social-Revolutionary Party (SRs), and found a ready-made platform in the Petrograd Soviet. The Soviet was in one sense a rival of the Provisional Government set up by the constitutional parties in the old Duma; the phrase "dual power" was coined to describe an ambiguous situation. But the initial attitude of the Soviet was less clear-cut. Marx's historical scheme had postulated two distinct and successive revolutions—bourgeois and socialist. Members of the Soviet, with few exceptions, were content

to recognize the events of February as a revolution which would establish a new western model, and relegate a still undemocratized date in the Russian calendar. The Provisional Government was the only power which was shared by the first two leading revolutionaries, Lenin, Kamenev and Stalin.

Lenin's dramatic arrival in Petrograd on the night of April 16/17 shattered this precarious situation almost alone even among the Bolsheviks. He declared that the current upheaval was not a bourgeois revolution and nothing more. It was a proletarian revolution and nothing more. It could not be confined within the limits of a bourgeois revolution. The collapse of the autocracy was not a step towards a new authority (the "dual power") but a step towards a new society. The mood of workers and peasants, the majority of the population, was for the removal of a monstrous incubator of social evils. The desire to be left to run their own way, and by the means most practicable and essential. It was a demand for a new authority, not by a wave of immense enthusiasm for the emancipation of mankind, but by a demand for a new and despotic power. It had no use for parliamentary democracy as proclaimed by the Provisional Government. A centralized authority was rapidly established. Workers or peasants sprang up in every town and district declared themselves. Committees of workers claimed authority in their domain. The peasants organized themselves among themselves. And everywhere there was a demand for peace, for an end to a bloody and senseless war. Soldiers in military units, large and small, often demanding the election of a new authority. The armies at the front were in a state of military discipline, and showed no signs of an all-engulfing movement of revolt. To most Bolsheviks a picture of

of a new order of society; they had neither the will nor the means to check it.

When, therefore, Lenin set out to re-define the character of the revolution in his famous "April theses", his diagnosis was both perceptive and prescient. He described what had happened as a revolution in transition from a first stage, which had given power to the bourgeoisie, to a second stage, which would transfer power to the workers and the poor peasants. The Provisional Government and the Soviets were not allies but antagonists, representing different classes. The end in view was not a parliamentary republic, but "a republic of Soviets of Workers', Poor Peasants' and Peasants' Deputies all over the country, growing up from below". Socialism could not indeed be introduced immediately. But as a first step the Soviets should take control of "social production and distribution". Throughout the vicissitudes of the summer of 1917 Lenin gradually secured the adherence of his party followers to this programme. Progress in the Soviets was slower. When an All-Russian Congress of Soviets—the first attempt to create a central Soviet organization with a standing executive committee—met in June, out of more than 800 delegates, the SRs accounted for 28%, the Mensheviks for 24%, the Bolsheviks only for 10%. It was on this occasion that Lenin, in response to a challenge, made the much-debated pronouncement that there was in the Soviet a party ready to take governmental power: the Bolsheviks. As the prestige and authority of the Provisional Government waned, the influence of the Bolsheviks in the factories and in the army grew rapidly; and in July the Provisional Government decided to proceed against them on a charge of conducting subversive propaganda in the army and acting as German agents. Several leaders were arrested. Lenin escaped to Finland, where he carried on a regular correspondence with the party central committee, now working underground in Petrograd.

It was during this forced withdrawal from the scene of action that Lenin penned one of the most famous, and the most Utopian, of his writings, *State and Revolution*, a study of Marx's theory of the state. Marx had not only preached the destruction of the bourgeois state by the proletarian revolution, but looked forward, after the victory of the revolution and a transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat,

to the withering away and eventual disappearance of the state. What the proletariat needed, Lenin observed, was "only a state, i.e. so constituted that it will not be an instrument of class domination and cannot help dying away", a society of communism and the incompatible. Lenin summed up his views in a remarkable synthesis of the aspirations of the untutored masses. "So long as the state exists, freedom exists, there will be no socialism," he wrote. "So long as a professed student of Marx, the revolutionary mood of work-ism was fired by the prospect of a powerful and omnipresent a remarkable synthesis of the aspirations of the untutored masses mentioned in its pages.

By September, after an abortive attempt to overthrow the Provisional Government by a Right-wing general, Kornilov, a majority in the Petrograd Soviet, after some hesitation, revived the slogan "All power to the Soviets"—a direct challenge to the Provisional Government. In October he returned to dis- a meeting of the party central committee decided, with Lenin and Kamenev, to prepare for a revolution. The preparation was carried out by a military committee which had been formed by the Provisional committee of the Congress of Soviets, and was firmly in Bolshevik hands. Trotsky, after his return to Petrograd, took a leading part in planning the revolution. The revolution was carried out in the Old Style, equivalent to November 7, 1917, which was introduced a few days later. The revolution was composed mainly of factory workers and soldiers in the city, and advanced on Petrograd with almost no bloodshed. The Provisional Government, after some resistance. Some of the ministers, including the Minister, Kerensky, fled abroad.

The revolution had been formalized at the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd on October 25, 1917.

Députés, which opened on the following evening. The Bolsheviks now had a majority—359 out of a total of 633 delegates—and took charge of the proceedings. The congress pronounced the dissolution of the Provisional Government, and the transfer of authority to the Soviets, and unanimously adopted three major decrees, the first two being submitted to it by Lenin. The first was a proclamation, in the name of the "Workers' and Peasants' Government", proposing to all the belligerent peoples and governments to enter into negotiations for a "just and democratic peace" without annexations or indemnities, and appealing particularly to "the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind"—Britain, France and Germany—to help to bring the war to an end. The second was a decree on land, incorporating a text drawn up by the SRs, which responded to the petty bourgeois aspirations of the peasant rather than to long-term Bolshevik theories of a socialized agriculture. Landlords' ownership of land was abolished without compensation; only the land of "ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks" was exempt from confiscation. Private ownership of land was abolished for ever. The right of using land was accorded to "all citizens (without distinction of sex) of the Russian state desiring to cultivate it with their own labour". Mineral and other subsidiary rights were reserved to the state. The buying, selling and leasing of land, and the employment of hired labour, were prohibited. This was the charter of the small, independent peasant cultivating his plot of land with his own labour and that of his family, and serving primarily their needs. A final settlement of the land question was reserved for the future Constituent Assembly. The third decree, proposed by Karakozov, who presided at the session, set up a Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) as a Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government to govern the country under the authority of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and of its executive committee till the meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

These pronouncements had several distinctive features. Lenin had ended his speech a few hours earlier in the Petrograd Soviet with the bold words: "In Russia we must concern ourselves with the building of the proletarian socialist state." In the more formal decrees of the Congress of Soviets, the

concepts of "the state" and of the background. In the enthusiasm of the state with its attendant evils was eager to face the problem of revolution was international, and its boundaries. The Workers' and Peasants' Government had no territorial definition or designation of its authority could not be for the future: Lenin observed, in peace, that the victory of the workers was peace and socialism". But not socialism as the aim or purpose of the revolution, like its extent, was left to the future.

Finally, the gesture of deference to the Constituent Assembly, which was illogical, was accepted without reservation. In October the Provisional Government had both demanded a constituent democratic procedure for the election of the Constituent Assembly and the date of November 25 had been fixed. Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not wish, or did not expect, to see them. As was to be expected in a revolutionary situation, the vote gave an absolute majority to the Bolsheviks: out of 520 deputies, the Bolsheviks being made up of a large number of the deputies met in January 1918. The Provisional Government was firmly established and unlikely to abdicate in favour of the Bolsheviks. The confused moods of the country, Bukharin spoke of "the water-gate" divides this assembly into . . . two camps of principle . . . for socialism or against it. The assembly had not fully listened to much incoherently and it adjourned: and the government was re-assembling. It was a decisive step, and it turned its back on the conventional path.

The first consequence of the Bolshevik victory was the withdrawal from the western world, and to excite the Bolsheviks. Their withdrawal from the war at the desperate peak of their strength was a betrayal of their duty, and this unforgivable betrayal was of

ures as the repudiation of the debts of former Russian Governments and the expropriation of owners of land and factories, and when the revolution announced itself as the first stage in a revolution which was destined to sweep over Europe and the world, it was revealed as a fundamental assault on the whole of western capitalist society. But this threat was not taken very seriously. Few people in the west at first imagined that the revolutionary régime in Russia could survive for more than a few days or weeks. The Bolshevik leaders themselves did not believe that they could hold out indefinitely, unless the workers of the capitalist countries came to their aid by rising in revolt against their own governments.

This scepticism did not lack plausibility. The writ of the Workers' and Peasants' Government scarcely extended beyond Petrograd and a few other large cities. Even in the Soviets the Bolsheviks did not yet command unanimous support; and it was quite uncertain how far the All-Russian Congress of Soviets—the one sovereign central authority—would be recognized by the local Soviets which had sprung up all over the country, by the factory committees exercising "workers' control" in the factories, or by the millions of peasants now flocking back to their homes from the front. Bureaucrats, managers, and technical experts at all levels came out on strike, and refused to serve the new self-styled government. The armed forces at the disposal of the régime consisted of a nucleus of a few thousand Red Guards, and some loyal Cossack battalions surviving from the disintegration of the imperial armies which had fought in the war. Within a few weeks of the revolution, Cossack armies pledged to its overthrow were being organized in the regions of the Don, the Kuban, and the Urals. It had been easy for the Bolsheviks to topple the rickety Provisional Government. To substitute themselves for it, to establish effective control over the chaos which had overwhelmed the vast territory of the defunct Russian Empire, and to set up a new order of society geared to the aspirations of the masses of workers and peasants who had seen in the Bolsheviks their saviours and liberators, was a far more formidable and complex task.

2 The Two Worlds

The first constitutional act which the Workers' Government a territorial of Rights of the Working and E the third All-Russian Congress of S Bolshevik counterpart of the Dec Man and of the Citizen promulgat This proclaimed Russia to be a Rep Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, Soviet Republic is founded on c of free nations, as a federation of The form of words preserved the the revolutionary régime. Revolution: it implied the substitution o rival Powers. But the promotion also a prime necessity of the st was the only weapon available to fought with the embattled imper revolution, at any rate in the pr the régime could hardly hope to distinction be drawn between the t were equally standard-bearers of the revolution sought to destroy. foreign policy other than propagat first alien to Bolshevik thinking.

Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, c "I will issue a few revolutionary p of the world, and then shut up sh

External realities, however, soon forced on the struggling Soviet rep state in a world of national states,

nations for peace negotiations had fallen on deaf ears. Something had to be done about relations with Germany, whose armies had penetrated deep into Russian territory, and were still conducting operations of war. One of the first acts of the new government was to conclude an armistice with the imperial German Government and to sue for peace. In February 1918 peace negotiations opened at Brest-Litovsk. Trotsky, who led the Soviet delegation, demonstratively abandoned the traditional practices of diplomacy, appealed to the belligerent peoples over the heads of their governments, openly carried on anti-war propaganda among the German troops, and embarrassed the German delegation by pressing the demand for "peace without annexations or indemnities", which Germany, in dealings with the western Allies, had purported to accept.

But German intransigence and the overwhelming superiority of German arms presented an inescapable dilemma. Trotsky could not reconcile it with his revolutionary principles to sign a humiliating treaty with an imperialist Power—a course which Lenin came to regard as inevitable. On the other hand, his sense of reality did not allow him to support the demands of Bukharin and other "Left communists" for a renewal of "revolutionary war". He devised the formula "No peace, no war". When, however, the Germans, not impressed by this undiplomatic eccentricity, resumed their advance, the same dilemma recurred in still starker form. Trotsky reluctantly cast his vote with Lenin for the acceptance of what Lenin himself called a "stern peace", involving the abandonment of the Ukraine, and of other large areas of former Russian territory, and resigned his post as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The treaty was signed on March 3, 1918, and the German advance stayed. Simultaneously with the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, informal—and fruitless—approaches were made to British, French and American representatives in the hope of soliciting western aid against the Germans. These overtures to capitalist governments, no less than the signature of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, were bitterly resented, as a derogation from the international principles of the revolution, by a substantial minority of the party central committee, headed by Bukharin; and all Lenin's influence was required to secure approval for them.

The lessons of military impotence in on the Bolshevik leaders. On before the Brest-Litovsk treaty was originally called "the Workers' and Peasants' Government" came into being; the date has since as the birthday of the Red Army to indicate its international revolutionary purpose. But the proclamation announced headed "The Socialist Fatherland" as well as international consciousness. Trotsky was appointed People's Commissar for the task of organizing it. He was to suppose that an army could be maintained by levies. His first response was to recruit professional soldiers, formerly referred to as "military specialists". This expedient proved brilliantly successful. Of 1916 30,000 such officers had been in the Guard of 1917, which mustered to grow at the height of the civil war in five million. Trotsky himself displayed talents. But he was also known for his unquestioning obedience and in he had to extol virtues of military discipline had set out to destroy. Desperate in a desperate situation.

These expedients did not end the régime. Now transferred from Petrograd to Moscow, hostile "White" Russian forces mustered in different parts of the country remained, by agreement with a pro-Government, in occupation of the Caucasus, outraged by the revolutionary desertion of the Allies in the hour decided to act. In March 1918 British and American forces occupied the Caucasus—ostensibly to protect the oil fields there against a further German invasion. Many thousand Czech prisoners of war, deserters from the Austrian army, and a Czech legion, and with the agreement

ment set out for Vladivostok to embark there for the west. In Siberia the well-organized legionaries clashed with scattered and ineffective Soviet authorities, and—perhaps at first unwillingly—became a rallying-point for anti-Bolshevik forces. In April 1918 the Japanese Government, unwilling to be left out of the act, landed troops in Vladivostok, followed by British and American detachments two months later. In July British, French and American forces occupied Archangel. The survival of the Workers' and Peasants' Government in Moscow in the summer and autumn of 1918 seemed due not so much to its own strength as to the fact that the nations were linked in a life-and-death struggle on the western front, and had little thought for what happened elsewhere.

The collapse of Germany, and the armistice of November 11, 1918, gave a fresh turn to the screw. The incipient revolutionary situation in Berlin in the two months after the armistice, the successful revolutionary *coups* a few months later in Bavaria and in Hungary, as well as sporadic unrest in Britain, France and Italy, led the Bolshevik leaders to believe that the long-awaited European revolution was maturing. But events which offered hope and comfort to Moscow intensified the fear and hatred felt by the western governments for the revolutionary régime, and sharpened their determination to uproot it. The pretext that military operations in Russia were a subsidiary part of the war against Germany was perforce abandoned. Support was openly extended to Russian armies committed to the crusade against Bolshevism in Archangel, in Siberia, and in southern Russia. Now, however, a fresh complication occurred. The Allied troops, affected partly by war-weariness and partly by more or less outspoken sympathy for the workers' government in Moscow, were plainly unwilling to continue the fight. In April 1919 a mutiny in French naval vessels in Odessa forced the evacuation of the port. In Archangel and Murmansk the same end to the adventure was forestalled by the progressive withdrawal of the Allied troops. By the autumn of 1919 no Allied armed forces (except for Japanese and American contingents in Vladivostok) remained on Russian soil.

This set-back in no way modified the hostile intentions of the western Allies, who sought to compensate for the withdrawal of troops by an increased flow of military supplies,

diplomatic missions, and verbal assurances. The would-be Russian "governments" and the Bolsheviks. The most promising of these was the leadership of Kolchak, a former Czarist general who established some kind of authority over the vast territory and began to move into European Russia. At the conference of 1919 the Allied statesmen assembled in London entered into negotiations with the Whites, for the recognition of the Kolchak régime as the legitimate Russian Government. Kolchak, enjoying strong Allied support, controlled the Ukraine, and in the autumn of 1919 advanced to a point 200 miles south of Moscow. In the meantime a White army in the north had been organized on Petrograd. By this time, however, the Whites had become an effective, though ill-organized force. Various White armies were unable to coordinate their efforts or to win the support of the local populations in the territories they operated. By the end of 1919 they were in headlong retreat. In January 1920 the White forces were defeated and executed by the Bolsheviks. By the end of 1920 the White forces, except for a few islands, had been everywhere dispersed and

The civil war hardened the situation. The Russian Revolution, standing itself both in western and in eastern Europe, was a contradiction of two worlds conflicting in irreconcilable contradiction—the capitalist world and the revolution dedicated to overthrowing it. The German power in November 1918 became a bone of contention between the Whites and the Whites of revolution in Berlin in January 1919. In the confident belief of the Bolsheviks that the German Revolution had succeeded, and that the process of spreading westward was in progress, the atmosphere that Lenin set off in 1918 was nourished by him ever since the death of the defunct Second or Social-Democratic International had split and destroyed itself on the basis of its abandonment of the principles of

ism, by a truly revolutionary Third or Communist International. It was the logical sequel of a decision taken by the party congress in March 1918 to replace the old party name Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, now sullied through its association with German social-democrats and Mensheviks, by the name Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

Early in March 1919 more than 50 communists and sympathizers assembled in Moscow, of whom 35 held mandates from communist or near-communist parties or groups in 29 countries; many of these were small countries which had once formed part of the Russian Empire, and were now recognized as Soviet republics, including the Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic countries, Armenia and Georgia. The newly-founded German Communist Party sent a delegate with instructions to raise no objection of principle, but to seek a postponement of the creation of the International to a more propitious moment. Travel to Moscow from the west was virtually impossible. Groups in the United States, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Hungary had given mandates to nationals resident in Moscow; the one British delegate had no mandate at all. The caution of the German delegate was overruled by the weight of enthusiasm. The arrival of a revolutionary Austrian delegate is said to have tipped the scale. The congress, constituting itself as the first congress of the Communist International (Comintern), voted a manifesto, drafted by Trotsky, tracing the decay of capitalism and the advance of communism since the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848; these prepared by Lenin which denounced bourgeois democracy, proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat, and derided attempts to revive the discredited Second International; and finally a topical appeal to the workers of the world to bring pressure on their governments to end military intervention in Russia and recognize the Soviet régime. By way of providing the new-born International with an organization, the congress elected an executive committee (EKKI), and named Zinoviev as its president and Radek, now in a Berlin prison, as its secretary. A few days after the congress ended, the short-lived Hungarian Soviet republic was proclaimed in Budapest.

The fact of the foundation of a Communist International was more important than anything done at its first congress.

It was a dramatic announcement to the two worlds, and in particular of the first to itself within the international workers' movement. The Comintern firmly believed that the workers who had lived through the first war—and especially the German workers—would quickly abandon the Social Democratic and Labour Parties which had betrayed them in the holocaust, and rally to the cause of the workers of the world proclaimed by the Communist Manifesto. This did not happen, and when it did even showed signs of revival, the workers were led by corrupt and treacherous leaders and misguided followers. But the rift in the workers' movement between a minority of committed communists and a majority who remained faithful to "reformist" socialism deepened as time went on.

The breach was aggravated by the fact that the Comintern was not genuinely international; they looked to Moscow as their headquarters, and their headquarters might move to Berlin if it happened in Moscow in March 1919. The national communist parties were not merged into one, but the harnessing of a number of national groups to an essentially Russian organization and main motive force came nevertheless. The Russian party and the Soviet Government were the dominant force. The promotion of internationalism, which reinforced one another, was not the aim of all Marxists, but it was also an aim in the armoury of the hard-pressed workers as the overthrow of capitalist domination was a condition of the survival of the workers in Russia, there could be no independent movement of two elements; they were different forces, but they were of one and integrated purpose. But this meant that the Comintern was the foundation of foreign communist parties to Comintern, rather than the commitment to Comintern in Moscow.

The remainder of 1919 was a period of international intervention and Soviet isolation.

prod) were to supervise the collection, distribution and dispatch to the towns of grain and other agricultural produce. Lenin failed the constitution of these committees as "the October, i.e. proletarian, revolution" in the countryside, and thought that it signaled the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution. But the experiment was short-lived. The decree, like others of the period, was easier to write than to enforce. The spontaneous action of the peasants in the first year of the revolution resulted in the division of the land among a multiplicity of small cultivators living at subsistence level—an increase in the number, and reduction in the size, of units of cultivation which contributed nothing either to the efficiency of agriculture or to the supply of food to the towns, since the small producer was more likely to consume what he produced for his own needs. Poor peasants were not easily organized; and rivalry sprung up between the committees and the village Soviets. Class stratification in the villages was real enough. But the criteria of classification of the peasantry as *kulaks*, middle and poor peasants, were uncertain and fluctuating, and were partly dictated by the political requirements of the moment. *Kulak*, in particular, became a term of abuse directed by party propaganda against peasants who incurred the wrath of the authorities through failure to comply with demands for the delivery of grain. Nor could the poor peasants be counted on, as party leaders in Moscow expected, to act as allies of the government against the *kulaks*. The poor peasant was conscious of the oppression which he suffered at the hands of the *kulak*. But his dread of the state and its minions was often greater; and he was apt to prefer the evil that he knew to the menace of a remote authority.

In December 1918 the committees of poor peasants were abolished, and the authorities switched their appeal to the so-called "middle peasants", who rose above the indigent level of the "poor peasants", but did not qualify for the label of "rich peasants" or "*kulaks*". But in the chaos of the civil war no expedient could stimulate agricultural production. The authorities from time to time invoked the cherished socialist goal of large-scale collective cultivation. A number of agricultural communes or "collective farms" (*Kolkhozy*) were founded by communist idealists, some of them foreigners,

on the basis of working and living scarcely contributed to the problem. "Soviet farms" (*Sovkhozy*) were set up, by provincial or local Soviets, enterprises under the control of V. purpose of providing food for farm workers; they employed wage-labor, spoken of as "socialist grain factories" headway against the resistance of the *Sovkhozy* a return to the land by the revolution, especially when they were established on confiscated land the managers taken over from the one occasion repeated a saying all among the peasants: "We are Bolsheviks we are for the Bolsheviks because the but we are not for the communists individual holdings."

In industry, war communism began with a decree of June 28, 1918, on a category of industry. This seems to be by the growing menace of the civil to forestall spontaneous seizures of the knowledge or authority of V. the period called "elemental-chaotic from below". But formal nationalization. What mattered was to organize a been taken over—a function which was unable to exercise. This was the set up a number of "centres" or to manage whole industries; some to administered by local authorities. urgently for centralized control, which time have aggravated the chaos. and skills required for industrial to the new régime. Industry at a run in practice by those who had revolution, and who now manned the Party members were sometimes assigned the experience to make the directors, managers and engineers.

recognized as indispensable, were known as "specialists", and were rewarded with higher salaries and privileges. Industrial production was, however, increasingly dominated by the emergencies of the civil war. The demands of the Red Army were paramount. Effort had to be concentrated on a few essential industries at the expense of the rest. Small-scale enterprises employing only a handful of workers, and artisan industry both in the towns and in the countryside, were mainly immune from controls, but were frequently hampered by lack of materials. Manpower was mobilized for the front. Transport broke down. Supplies of raw materials were exhausted, and could not be replenished. Of the many statistics illustrating the catastrophic decline of industry perhaps the most revealing were those which recorded the depopulation of the big cities. In the three years after the revolution Moscow lost 44.5 per cent of its population, Petrograd, where the industrial concentration was heaviest, 57.5 per cent. The Red Army took its toll of the able-bodied; and masses of people drifted away to the countryside where, if anywhere, food might still be found.

The problems of distribution were no less recalcitrant. The aim announced in the party programme of replacing private trade by "a planned system of distribution of commodities on an all-state scale" was a remote ideal. A decree of April 1918 authorizing Narkomprod to acquire stocks of consumer goods for exchange against peasant stocks of grain remained a dead letter. Plans to enforce rationing and fixed prices in the towns broke down in face of the shortage of supplies and the absence of any efficient administration. Trade flowed, where it flowed at all, in illicit channels. Leaders, sufficiently numerous to acquire the familiar nickname of "bagmen", travelled round the country with supplies of simple consumer goods which they exchanged with peasants for foodstuffs to be sold at exorbitant prices in the towns. "Bagmen" were frequently denounced by the authorities, and threatened with arrest or shooting, but continued to prosper. Some attempt was made to use the existing machinery of the cooperatives, and control was established, not without friction, over the central cooperative organs. Since money was rapidly losing its value, schemes were hatched for the barter of commodities between town and country; but the goods wanted by the

peasant were also in short supply. In the course of the civil war, when the survival of the state hung by a thread, and the territory controlled by it was being constantly contracted by the armies of the Whites, the method by which the Red Army, of the factories engaged in the urban population were mobilized, requisitioning, dictated and justified. It was the economic policy, and little affected civilian needs or civilian susceptibilities, of the widespread requisitioning of supplies from the peasants, since the danger for them to rebel against the harshnesses of

War communism had important implications for the organization of labour. The initial measures which would have to be applied to land and labour, the bourgeoisie, the labour of the workers, and the voluntary self-discipline was a form of "control" over production, exercised by the elected factory committee, which emerged in the first flush of revolution, and the take-over of power, soon became a necessity. In the rapidly thickening crisis atmosphere, significantly quoted the familiar, "neither shall he eat", as "the programme of the People's Commissar for Labour". It was the and necessary measures of compulsion, and the word to say for piece-rates and for the American system for improving the productivity of the man to the machine". Later he denounced the introduction of what was called "the American system" in industry—the direct antithesis of the party congress of March 1918. The Brest-Litovsk treaty also demanded a raise in the self-discipline and discipline of the workers. These proposals, like the Brest-Litovsk treaty, met the indignation of the then Left opposition, and Radek played leading parts.

The revolution had spot-lighted

trade union is a workers' state. Relations between Soviets of Workers' Deputies and trade unions, both purporting to represent the interests of the workers, had been a crux since the earliest days of the revolution, when the strongest unions were dominated by the Mensheviks. When the first All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions met in January 1918, the Bolsheviks had secured a majority, though the Mensheviks and other parties were also well represented. The congress had no difficulty in calling the factory committees to order on the ground that the particular interest of a small group of workers must yield to the general interest of the proletariat as a whole. Only a few anarchist delegates opposed the decision to convert the committees into organs of the unions. Herein the principle of the centralization of the authority dispersed by the revolution was already at work.

The issue of the relation of the trade unions to the state was far more stubbornly contested. Were the unions to be an integral part of the apparatus of the workers' state like other Soviet institutions? Or would they retain the function of defending specific interests of the workers independently of other elements of the workers' state? The Mensheviks, and some Bolsheviks, arguing that, since the revolution had not yet outlived its bourgeois-democratic stage, the unions still had their traditional rôle to play, stood out for complete independence of the unions from the state. But Zinoviev, who presided, had no difficulty in securing a comfortable majority for the official Bolshevik view that, in the process of the revolution, the trade unions must "inevitably be transformed into organs of the socialist state", and in that capacity must "undertake the chief burden of organizing production". Declining production, and the needs of a desperate situation, made this mandate vital. To raise labour productivity, to improve labour discipline, to regulate wages and to prevent strikes were responsibilities which the trade unions, in partnership with Vesenkha and other state organs, were now required to assume. The distinction between the functions of the trade unions and those of the People's Commissariat of Labour (Narkomtrud) became mainly formal; most of the principal officials of Narkomtrud were henceforth trade union nominees.

The emergency of the civil war revived and kept alive the mood of enthusiasm generated by the revolution itself

and made strict measures of discipline necessary. Military service was ordered; and to include the drafting of labour. At the same time labour camps were sentenced to his force of punishment. The military courts, who were to the direction of Soviet institutions of these camps, known as "reserves" for those who had engaged in activities in the civil war, and for particularly arduous work. It made no voluntary self-discipline. on the workers for what were named when some thousands of workers volunteered to work over-time with despatch of troops and supplies to the front was followed a year later. The shock workers, to carry out special speed deals from this time. Without compulsion and spontaneous enthusiasm have been won.

Early in 1920, with the defeat of the military emergency had been way for the equally grave political and economic collapse; and it seemed should be met by the same force brought victory in the field. "Pro for War made himself" the end and "militarization" of labour economic revival. During the period the trade unions had been harshly conscripted for work behind the fighting ceased, military units were "battalions" for necessary work of "revolutionary army of labour" in January 1920. Now, however, over, the mood changed. There was askance at measures of compulsion those who stood for the independence and those who for other reasons

eminence in the party, joined in attacking his masterful procedures. He defended his policies in face of mounting opposition at the party congress in March 1920, and secured Lenin's support. The outbreak of the Polish war stifled the voices of dissent. But when the war ended in the autumn of 1920, and the last embers of the civil war had been stamped out in the south, fierce opposition arose in the party to the continued conscription of labour and the virtual by-passing of the trade unions. Trotsky, impressed by the vast and urgent problems of economic reconstruction, and irritated by trade union resistance to his plans, added fuel to the flames by demanding a "shake-up" of the unions. Lenin joined company with Trotsky on the issue; and a bitter debate of unprecedented dimensions raged throughout the winter—only to be resolved when the policies of war communism were finally abandoned at the party congress of March 1921.

Party attitudes to war communism were divided and ambivalent. The conglomeration of practical policies collectively known by that name was approved as necessary and proper by all but a small minority of dissidents. But interpretations of its character diverged widely—more widely, perhaps, in retrospect than at the time. The first eight months of Soviet rule had broken the power of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, but had not yet brought into being a socialist economic order. In May 1918 Lenin still spoke of an "intention . . . to realise the transition to socialism". The sudden introduction in the summer, under the name of war communism, of measures which seemed to many Bolsheviks a foretaste of the future socialist economy, was treated by more prudent party members simply as a forced response to an emergency, an abandonment of the cautious advance hitherto pursued, a plunge—necessary, no doubt, but rash and full of hazards—into uncharted waters. This view gained in popularity when the civil war ended, and the burdens of war communism seemed no longer tolerable; and it became the accepted line when peasant revolt finally forced a decision to abandon war communism in favour of NEP.

Other communists, on the other hand, hailed the achievements of war communism as an economic triumph, an advance into socialism and communism more rapid than had hitherto been deemed possible, but none the less impressive on that

account. Industry was c industrial production still placently of "the revol as" a historically necessar of the ruble could be bourgeois capitalists, and society of the future, wher ing to needs. Already, it largely eliminated as the were requisitioned from t were in principle ratione worked chiefly on govern and allocated in respons but to social and milit realities of a desperate co with this Utopian pictur many party consciences and the divergences of communism repeated th character and permanen

4 The Breathing-Space of NEP

War communism had been made up of two major elements: on the one hand, a concentration of economic authority and power, including centralized control and management, the substitution of large for small units of production; and some measure of unified planning; on the other hand, a flight from commercial and monetary forms of distribution, and the introduction of the supply of basic goods and services free or at fixed prices, rationing, payments in kind, and production for direct use rather than for a hypothetical market. Between these two elements, however, a fairly clear distinction could be drawn. The processes of concentration and centralization, though they flourished exceedingly in the firing-hotels of war communism, were a continuation of processes already set in motion during the first period of the revolution, and indeed during the European war. Here war communism was building on a foundation of what had gone before, and many of its achievements stood the test; only in their detailed application were its policies afterwards subject to rejection and reversal. The second element of war communism, the substitution of a "natural" for a "market" economy, had no such foundations. Far from developing logically out of the policies of the initial period of the revolution, it was a direct abandonment of those policies—an unprepared plunge into the unknown. These aspects of war communism were decisively rejected by NEP; and it was these aspects which most of all discredited it in the eyes of its critics.

Between the two major elements of war communism there was, moreover, a further distinction. The policies of concentration and centralization were applied almost exclusively in industry, attempts to transfer them to agriculture met with

no success. It was here that the social basis of its support, and it showed some of the features of a policies of the flight from money a "natural" economy arose, not from but from inability to solve the problem agriculture which occupied more population. They were an experience difficulty of attempting to run in the revolution of a peasantry with and the anti-bourgeois, anti-capital proletarian, and of coping with and country inherent in the attempt bilities which eventually brought r mianism and destroyed it.

By the autumn of 1920, when whole economy was grinding to a or practice of war communism re-start processes of production and to a standstill. The nodal point, economy, was grain. The policy worked after a fashion during the. The peasant retreated into a sub no incentive to produce surplus by the authorities. Whitespread in central Russia during the w of demobilized soldiers roamed t food, and lived by banditry. It of the country was not to star with the incentives which were de of requisition. Nor was all well w group calling itself a "Workers under the leadership of Shlyapni who had been People's Commiss Soviet Government, and Alexan some prestige in the early days of t was directed mainly against th and political controls and the and state machine; it obtained t original ideals of the revolution. of 1918 to the surrender of B

of the group was not very impressive. But it enjoyed wide sympathy and support in the party ranks.

A change of front was now urgently necessary. The essence of the new policy worked out during the winter of 1920-1921 was to permit the peasant, after the delivery of a fixed proportion of his output to state organs (a "tax in kind"), to sell the rest on the market. To make this possible, encouragement must be given to industry, especially small artisan industry, to produce the goods which the peasant would want to buy—a reversal of the emphasis under war communism on large-scale heavy industry. Private trade must be allowed to revive; here much reliance was placed on the cooperatives—one of the few pre-revolutionary institutions to retain some degree of vitality and popularity. Finally, all this implied—though the point was not grasped till somewhat later—a halt to the headlong fall of the ruble and the establishment of a stable currency. The package known as the New Economic Policy (NEP), with particular emphasis on concessions to the peasant, was approved by the central committee for presentation by Lenin to the historic tenth party congress in March 1921.

On the eve of the congress its proceedings were overshadowed by a sinister and ominous disaster. The sailors of the Red fleet based on the fortress of Kronstadt rose in revolt, demanding concessions for workers and peasants and the free election of Soviets. The mutiny had no direct association with the Workers' Opposition, but reflected the same deep feelings of discontent with the trend of party policy. Such leadership as there was appears to have been anarchist; the suspicion of the Bolsheviks that it had been planned or inspired by White émigrés was unfounded, though they afterwards made much capital out of it. Parleys and calls to surrender were fruitless. On March 17, while the congress was debating Lenin's proposals, units of the Red Army advanced on the fortress across the ice. After a bloody battle, fought on both sides with great tenacity, the rebels were overpowered and the fortress seized. But this massive revolt of men hitherto honoured as heroes of the revolution was a staggering blow to the prestige and confidence of the party. It may well have increased the readiness of the congress to accept the New Economic Policy, as well as proposals to tighten party discipline and

provide stronger safeguards.

When Lenin submitted his proposals to the congress, the chantment with which was common was too acute to brook Lenin's assurance that "the would remain in the firm monopoly of foreign trade resolution was accepted, in grace and formal unanimity at the congress arose out trade union question which Trotsky, inspired by the supported after some heat pounded his plan for transduction unions", and ma of the workers' state". At the Workers' Opposition and control of production represented in the trade Manoeuvring between the succeeded in rallying the which, however, skirted them. The taint of "nihil unions were recognized which had to be won over them in the state machi proper instrument, though ruled out. The trade un for production; as earl council established a Ce of, and training in, me prove the productivity of bilities was emphasized i to maintain labour disc this should be done th organs of the state. Th majority, but not with for two dissentient draft

The bitterness of the left its mark on the c

which had shaken the party, and of "the luxury of discussions" and "disputes" which the party could ill afford. The congress adopted a special resolution bearing the title "On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in our Party", which declared dissemination of the programme of the Workers' Opposition to be incompatible with party membership, as well as a general resolution "On the Unity of the Party". This demanded "the complete abolition of all factionalism"; disputed issues could be discussed by all members of the party, but the formation of groups with "platforms" of their own was banned. Once a decision had been taken, unconditional obedience to it was obligatory. Infringement of this rule could lead to expulsion from the party. A final clause, which was kept secret and published only three years later, laid it down that even members of the party central committee could be expelled on these grounds by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members of the committee. These provisions, designed to ensure loyalty and uniformity of opinion in the party, seemed necessary and reasonable at the time. As Lenin put it, "during a retreat discipline is a hundred times more necessary". But the vesting of what was in effect a monopoly of power in the central organization of the party was to have far-reaching consequences. Lenin at the height of the civil war had proclaimed "the dictatorship of the party", and maintained that "the dictatorship of the working class is carried into effect by the party". The corollary, drawn by the tenth congress, was the concentration of authority in the central organs of the party. The congress conceded to the trade unions a measure of autonomy vis-à-vis the organs of the workers' state. But the rôle which they were to play was determined by the monopoly of power vested in the party organization.

The stringent ban on opposition within the party was the product of the crisis which accompanied the introduction of NEP. The same process logically overtook the two Left opposition parties which had survived the revolution: the SRs and the Mensheviks. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918 had proclaimed the determination of the Bolsheviks to exercise supreme power, and laid the foundations of the one-party state. But during the next three years—the period covered by the civil war—mutual relations

between the Soviet Government and the opposition parties were ambiguous and fluctuating, and often inconclusive. A few of the Left SRs broke away from the government to form a coalition with the Bolshevik People's Commissars. The SRs, however, were expelled in March 1918, which was done not only by the Bolsheviks and by Mensheviks, but also by the new government, which was now coming out openly against the SRs as being responsible for the disorders of 1918, as well as for the assassination of Lenin and of two leading Bolsheviks in the attempt on Lenin's life (see below). The Right SRs and the "Left SRs" were expelled on the ground of their association with "counter-revolutionaries". Their newspaper, *Pravda*, was banned, but often re-appeared. The ban on the SR newspaper was published in the *Pravda* newspaper. Intermittent harassment, but not a total ban, reflected ambivalence on the part of the authorities.

The civil war, which was a desperate struggle between two parties. The Mensheviks, however, recently, denounced the actions of the governments which aided and abetted the régime, which supported the régime, which supported the régime, which supported the régime. The ban on the SR newspaper was published in the *Pravda* newspaper. Intermittent harassment, but not a total ban, reflected ambivalence on the part of the authorities. The civil war, which was a desperate struggle between two parties. The Mensheviks, however, recently, denounced the actions of the governments which aided and abetted the régime, which supported the régime, which supported the régime, which supported the régime. The ban on the SR newspaper was published in the *Pravda* newspaper. Intermittent harassment, but not a total ban, reflected ambivalence on the part of the authorities. Two thousand Mensheviks were expelled from the central committee, were expelled from the central committee, were expelled from the central committee, were expelled from the central committee.

within the ruling Bolshevik party. Many of those arrested were later released, and the leading Mensheviks allowed to go abroad. But a hard core of SR leaders were put on trial in 1922 for counter-revolutionary activities, and sentenced to death (these sentences were not carried out) or long-term imprisonment.

The benefits offered by NEP to the peasant, which in any case came too late to affect the sowings for 1921, were retarded by a natural calamity. Severe drought ruined the harvest over a large area, especially in central Russia and in the Volga basin. The famine was more widespread, and worked greater havoc on a much tried and enfeebled population, than the last great Russian famine of 1891. The horrors of the ensuing winter, when millions starved, were partly mitigated by supplies from foreign relief missions, notably the American Relief Administration. Sowings for 1922 were extended. The harvests for that year and for 1923 were excellent, and appeared to herald a revival of Soviet agriculture: small quantities of grain were actually exported. It was remarked that NEP, by re-introducing market processes to the countryside, had reversed the levelling policies of war communism, and encouraged the re-emergence of the rich peasant, or *kulak*, as the key figure in the rural economy. The poor peasant produced for the subsistence of himself and his family. He consumed what he produced; if he came to the market, it was more often as a buyer than as a seller. The *kulak* produced for the market and became a small capitalist: this was the essence of NEP. The right to lease land and to employ hired labour, theoretically prohibited since the early days of the régime, was conceded with some formal restrictions in the new agricultural code of 1922. But, so long as the peasants had enough to eat, and provided surpluses sufficient to feed the towns, few even of the most devoted party members were in a hurry to challenge the derogations from the principles and ideals of the revolution which had yielded these fortunate results. If NEP had done little or nothing to help industry or the industrial worker, and less than nothing to promote the cause of a planned economy, these problems could safely be left to the future.

It was at this point that the party about the change to be reflected in differences and consequences of NEP. of March 1921, the substitution of policies of war communism a welcome and necessary step but not wholly reconciled was thought of, not as an aberration but as an aberration dictated in response to the civil war of steps from a regrettable situation, and a return to the war communism was treated dash forward into the high no doubt but otherwise necessary withdrawal from position to hold at the moment, later to be regained; and whose position was not a "defeat" and "a retreat" at the tenth congress said and for a long time." The that an estimate of 25 years hostages both to the view of correction of the errors of that it would itself have superseded. The unspoken practical necessity of taking economy and peasant in the second was the need to depress the position of the main bulwark of the for the moment by the of the winter of 1920-1921 re-appeared in a further later.

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