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## 7. Modern Totalitarianism: Russian Communism

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## 7. Modern Totalitarianism: Russian Communism

### Abstract

Some political analysts place fascism at the extreme right of the political spectrum, Communism at or near the extreme left. This classification has been much favored by Marxist writers who believe that fascism is the last desperate effort of embattled capitalism to stave off the proletarian victory. Doubtless, Communist writers are aware of the value in some circles of the leftist label with its overtones of progress, freedom, and the general welfare. We have already noted the origin of the terms "Left" and "Right" in the French Revolution when they were used to distinguish between the advocates of change and the more conservative. Survival of these labels into a later age with vastly different problems and proposals has not helped clarify political thinking. It may already have occurred to the thoughtful reader that to classify Nazism as a near relative of conservatism creates as many difficulties as it solves. Similar difficulties attend the classification of Russian Communism as a party of the Left. [*excerpt*]

### Keywords

Contemporary Civilization, Communism, Marxism, Karl Marx, Conservatism, Nazism

### Disciplines

Comparative Politics | European History | History | Models and Methods | Political History | Political Science | Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies

### Comments

This is a part of [Section XVIII: The Western World in the Twentieth Century: The Historical Setting](#). The [Contemporary Civilization](#) page lists all additional sections of *Ideas and Institutions of Western Man*, as well as the [Table of Contents](#) for both volumes.

### More About Contemporary Civilization:

From 1947 through 1969, all first-year Gettysburg College students took a two-semester course called Contemporary Civilization. The course was developed at President Henry W.A. Hanson's request with the goal of "introducing the student to the backgrounds of contemporary social problems through the major concepts, ideals, hopes and motivations of western culture since the Middle Ages."

Gettysburg College professors from the history, philosophy, and religion departments developed a textbook for the course. The first edition, published in 1955, was called *An Introduction to Contemporary Civilization and Its Problems*. A second edition, retitled *Ideas and Institutions of Western Man*, was published in 1958 and 1960. It is this second edition that we include here. The copy we digitized is from the Gary T. Hawbaker '66 Collection and the marginalia are his.

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\* Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), pp. 327, 284-285, 294, 297, 300-301, 623, 65, 382, 82, 91, 210-211, 212, 107, 351, 380, 381, 343, 171, 150, 446, 180-181, 242, 407-408, 645-646. Used with permission.

*Causes of Revolution - industrial backwardness. (w.w.I) collapse on front of the  
barrels; freeing of serfs - payment obligations, subject to certain special laws)  
Inadequacy of the regimes' leadership, corrupt, weak, lost contact with reality.*

In the vast amount of contemporary literature about modern Russia that has appeared in the non-Communist world, three approaches stand out. The first is through Marxism and the exegesis of Lenin and other Communist theoreticians. It focuses on the role of this ideology in shaping the institutions and actions of the regime. The second treats Communism as an example, along with fascism, of a social, intellectual, and political movement peculiar to this century: totalitarianism. In this interpretation the political spectrum is not a straight line but a circle, with the ends meeting. The third approach may be labeled the historical because it emphasizes the importance of specifically Russian factors of time and place, both long-range and immediate. In this view ideology is significant primarily as a rationalization of a situation which is less Communist than Russian.

In a preceding chapter the story of Bolshevism was carried up to World War I, which proved to be the undoing of tsardom. The first flush of wartime patriotism soon wore off as, for three years, the giant but poorly equipped Russian armies threw themselves against the Central Powers, only to be driven back each time. One estimate places Russia's war casualties in the neighborhood of nine million. For the front-line troops the burden of humiliating defeat and crushing casualties was heightened by the knowledge that all was not well on the home front. Non-Russian subjects of the tsars were lukewarm in loyalty or downright hostile to the regime which had attempted to Russify them. The economy, still in the early stages of industrialization, could not stand the strain of modern warfare. Breakdowns in the transportation system caused shortage, and even famine.

Hardship brought to the surface the unrest of the Russian peasant. That this unrest was endemic may seem odd since by 1917 approximately eighty per cent of the arable land of Russia was peasant-owned, but these statistics tell only part of the story. Land was distributed very unevenly among the peasants, many of whom simply did not have enough to live on. All eyed hungrily the land owned by the nobility and the Church, land which the peasants believed rightly theirs. "We are the tsar's, but the land is ours." ran their old saying. Most of the land listed above as peasant-owned was owned not by individuals, but by village communities, run inefficiently in a way reminiscent of the medieval manor in the West. Whether freeholders or members of such a community, peasants were second-class citizens, subject to special oppressive laws and a bureaucracy that was corrupt and inefficient.

These and other deficiencies of wartime Russia would have been more bearable, perhaps even surmountable, if there had been effective leadership at the center of the regime. The royal family was shut off from reality, placing their trust in court favorites who were either adventurers or religious fanatics. The tsar lost contact with the bureaucracy, whose efficiency and prestige suffered accordingly. The emancipation of the serfs (1861) had accelerated the decline of the nobility. Voluntary

*still had a general title to the land.*  
 ideas - Bolshevism, Marxist schools, Westerners, - liberal, <sup>and</sup> powerful democratic government. What the "overthrow" was a democratic republic (was new) Russian liberals overthrew Tsarism. Peasants - a feeling of discontent against

efforts to organize relief activities were hampered by officials fearful of subversion. The Duma, Russia's adolescent parliament, was allowed no influence in the government.

For those who would hear, there were voices of protest aplenty. By virtue of restrictive electoral laws, the Duma was not representative of popular sentiment but the majority of its members, conservatives as well as liberals, called for a constitutional monarchy with a responsible ministry. The loosely knit Social Revolutionaries (the S. R.'s) advocated rather vague programs which boiled down to agrarian anarchy. With their cry of "Land for the peasants," this uniquely Russian party most closely reflected the demands of the countryside. The Mensheviks (moderate Social Democrats) put forward the standard program of socialism.

In this welter of protests and programs the other branch of Social Democracy, the Bolsheviks, did not stand out. From his exile in Switzerland, Lenin ran the party with an iron hand, although factional disputes were numerous. His doctrinal intransigence and tactical skill prevented reunion with the Mensheviks whose relative moderation he condemned as counterrevolutionary. Always flexible, he did permit collaboration with them in elections to the Duma, but he kept his own organization intact. Some of his party's funds came from "expropriations" (bank robberies), in which a key figure was a young Georgian revolutionary, Josef Dzhugashvili, better known by his party names, Koba, and later, Stalin (1879-1953). Upon the outbreak of World War I, Lenin opposed uncompromisingly what he contended was a capitalist trick to divert the attention of the working class from its mission: "The only correct proletarian slogan is the transformation of the present imperialist war into a civil war...[and] the lesser evil for the Russian Social Democrats would be the defeat of the tsarist monarchy." Consequently the government drove underground the party, by then reduced to some 20,000 active members. This disciplined minority did its best to sabotage the war effort. Soldiers were urged to fraternize with the enemy and desert. Workers were encouraged to strike. Peasant unrest was fanned. However, when revolution came, it was not engineered by any group. Rather, it was a formless outburst compounded of many grievances and programs.

The revolutionary year, 1917, opened with increasing strikes and general discontent. In February (March in the Western calendar, not introduced in Russia until 1918), a local food crisis led to riots and demonstrations in Petrograd, the new name for St. Petersburg. Uncomprehending to the end, the government dissolved the Duma and ordered out troops. When the latter mutinied and joined the demonstrators, the capital was out of control.

Into the vacuum stepped the Duma members who created a provisional government consisting mainly of moderate liberals. Simultaneously, self-appointed demonstrators and miscellaneous

radicals set up a Soviet (Council) of Workers Deputies, which summoned the Russian people to reject tsardom. Whereupon, under pressure from both revolutionaries and his own advisers, Nicholas II abdicated.

The provisional government which for eight months tried to install in Russia a fairly democratic regime ended in tragic failure. Based at first on the Duma, it failed to comprehend popular sentiment. The chauvinism of many of its members led it to continue the war, with disastrous results. The troops simply deserted -- "voted against war with their feet," in Lenin's phrase. Nor did the government understand the urgent need for economic reforms, particularly in the land system. Everywhere peasants were seizing land they wanted, but the government postponed taking action until a new constitution could be drawn up and reforms introduced in an orderly manner. Since chaos had accompanied the breakdown of the old regime, preparations for a constitutional convention proceeded slowly, giving critics of the government additional ammunition.

Consequently, the government was harassed from all directions. In August it was able to beat off an attack by conservative-sponsored troops only by calling for help from the armed militia of the Soviet. The Petrograd Soviet, now in collaboration with similar bodies which had sprung up elsewhere, was actually a parallel government, sometimes giving its support to the nominal government and sometimes following an independent policy. Although all shades of radicalism were represented in its ranks, by September Bolsheviks were in the majority.

In securing this favored position, Lenin followed an opportunistic policy with only occasional setbacks. Taken unawares by the revolution, he had managed to return to Russia with the help of the Germans, who hoped he would further weaken Russia's war effort. Accurately gauging public sentiment, he endeavored to identify his party with the popular demand for "Peace, Land, Bread." A good example of his pliability in tactics was his handling of the land question. Putting aside his own plans for its ultimate settlement, he gave every encouragement to the peasants to seize land. He tried to curb impatient radicals until the party was in a strong position, but when in July a group, including some Bolsheviks, staged a revolt in Petrograd, he ordered the party to participate so as to keep in the vanguard of the revolution. For a time thereafter he was forced to go into hiding to escape arrest.

Thus, while the government lost its power to govern and the other opposition parties dissipated their efforts in mutual recriminations, Lenin perfected his own organization and tightened his party's control at key points. In late autumn he persuaded his followers with some difficulty that it was time to strike. In October, Bolshevik-led troops and armed workers seized Petrograd government buildings. The next day, an All-Russian Congress of Soviets, from which moderate socialists absented themselves, handed over power to a Council of People's

*Bolsheviks often very intelligent. Foreign occupation - public Russians help drive them out. Ditcher was a great organizer. very pliable*

Commissars, headed by Lenin and including Stalin as commissar for national minorities and Leon Trotsky (1874-1940), president of the Petrograd-Soviet, as commissar for foreign affairs. A land decree authorized peasants to seize land for their own use. Another decree turned over large factories to committees of workmen. Still another proclaimed the right of non-Russian nationalities to secede and establish their own governments, which was, in fact, already being done. An ominous portent of the future was the regime's establishment of an extraordinary political police force, the Cheka (later known as the OGPU, then the NKVD, and now the MVD). When fairly free elections to the long-promised constitutional convention gave 420 seats to the S. R.'s, as against only 225 to the Bolsheviks, Red troops cut short its sitting. After this most of those S. R.'s who had hitherto cooperated with the Bolsheviks were driven from positions of authority.

Lenin recognized that the Bolsheviks needed peace at any price to consolidate their position. Moreover, since he believed that a general world revolution was just around the corner, he considered the actual terms of only secondary importance. They would soon have to be revised anyway. Consequently in the spring of 1918 he signed a humiliating treaty with Germany which stripped Russia of a band of territory along her western frontier from the Ukraine north to Finland. In one blow Russia lost most of the western acquisitions of Peter the Great and his successors. The capital was moved from Petrograd (soon to be renamed Leningrad) to the less exposed Moscow.

Proclamation of a new government and of peace with Germany did not bring an end to hostilities. The Bolsheviks had to conquer the country province by province, often village by village. In the Caucasus and elsewhere non-Russian nationalities declared their independence. Anti-Bolshevik White governments were established in a number of places. For varied reasons, Japan, France, Britain, and the United States sent money, materiel, and even troops to the far north, south, and east.

Despite local White victories, the anti-Bolshevik movement ended in failure. In Trotsky the Red army found a military administrator of real genius. Public opinion in the interventionist powers, some of it leftist, some merely antiwar, made itself felt. Just what intervention was to have accomplished was never clear anyway. The White governments, representing virtually every shade of anti-Bolshevik opposition, were incapable of cooperation. To the Russian peasant they stood for the reimposition of a hated regime, and one tainted by foreign control at that. Consequently, by 1922 the civil war was over with Siberia, Caucasia and Transcaucasia, and the Ukraine reunited with Bolshevik Russia.

By the same date there was a halt in the expansion of Communism beyond the frontiers. Communist parties -- the label "Communist" was formally adopted by the Bolsheviks in 1918 -- were formed in most countries, often by hiving off from the

Socialist parties. Their activities were coordinated from Moscow through the Comintern (Third or Communist International, as distinguished from the Second or Socialist body). Colonial peoples were urged to revolt. But the Bolshevik expectation that the collapse of the Central Powers would open the way to a mass uprising of the proletariat proved incorrect. Brief uprisings there were with Bolshevik blessing and backing, for example, in Germany and Hungary in 1919. During a Russo-Polish war over the borderlands in 1920-1921, a Bolshevik army was thrown back only at the gates of Warsaw. But there was no world revolution.

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks were busy reorganizing what territory they already had. For this task Marx provided only a very incomplete blueprint. He had analyzed nineteenth century society in some detail, but his predictions of what would happen when the proletariat seized power were imprecise. The same was true of Lenin's writings up to 1917. Lenin confidently considered himself to be the interpreter of Marx, whose goals he identified completely with his own. Within the broad outline thus provided, he operated flexibly. He once wrote, "If you are not able to adapt yourself, if you are not inclined to crawl in the mud on your belly, you are not a revolutionary but a chatterbox."

In 1918 a new constitution was promulgated for the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (R. S. F. S. R.), which was soon to stretch from Leningrad eastward across European Russia and Siberia to the Pacific. All land, forest and mineral resources, factories, livestock, stores, banks, and communication facilities were declared to be the property of the state. Labor was proclaimed to be the duty of everyone. Workers were guaranteed the right to education and to hold religious or atheistic opinion. Oppression of national minorities was forbidden. The franchise was granted to those of both sexes, over eighteen, who were workers or members of the armed forces. Among the groups deprived of the franchise and the right to hold office were traders for private profit, former tsarist police, persons deriving income from sources other than their own labor, clergymen, and opponents of farm collectivization (and their children). Electoral districts were generally based on occupation rather than geographical area. Voting was by show of hands and, for the pyramid of soviets, indirect. The rural voter elected members of his village soviet, which handled local matters. Village soviets sent delegates to district soviets, and they in turn to regional soviets. Town and factory soviets, whose members were considered more dependable, had a somewhat greater privilege of direct election. At the top of the pyramid was the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, with membership heavily weighted to favor urban areas.

In 1922, by which time a number of non-Russian borderlands had been recaptured, the R. S. F. S. R. was made a subdivision of a new federal state, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U. S. S. R.). Each of the constituent republics was given a



constitution modeled on that of the R. S. F. S. R. Acquisitions through 1940 brought their number to sixteen. Within the existing framework the number was capable of further expansion.

Absence of the word "Russian" from the title represented the claim that tsarist Russification and other aspects of "bourgeois nationalism" had been abandoned. Much propaganda capital was made of the assertion that the U. S. S. R. alone had succeeded in solving the modern problem of nationalism. Cultural aspects of nationalism were encouraged. Books were printed in the various tongues of the Union. Where, as in the case of many Asiatic peoples, no printed language existed, one was invented. Local historical monuments were maintained. Performances of folk songs, folk dances, and other aspects of popular national culture were fostered. Political autonomy of the republics was in practice limited to administrative matters, and even there overall supervision was exercised from Moscow. In theory, any republic could secede from the Union, but this right was more than counterbalanced by the determination to permit no retrogression to capitalism, which secession was construed to be.

Critics assert that even cultural autonomy was more apparent than real. The official Soviet concept of federalism is "national in form, socialist in content." Certainly national cultures are heavily edited. Anti-Russian references are deleted from folk songs. National histories are not permitted to give inconvenient prominence to religion or to classes under suspicion. As far and away the largest, the most safely Bolshevik, and one of the most advanced peoples of the Union, the Russians dominate the regime. The Russian language is taught everywhere, along with local tongues, and knowledge of it has real practical value. Migrations of Russian workers and officials have changed the character of many formerly non-Russian areas. Yet with all its shortcomings, the avowed Soviet nationalities policy has been a valuable tool for the regime. Without it territorial expansion might have been much more difficult.

The constitution of the U. S. S. R. gave to the central government powers unusually broad for an avowedly federal state. In theory, foreign policy and trade, economic planning, defense, justice, education, and public health were the sole concern of the Union government. In practice, the competence of the Union government was unlimited. It will be noted that here as in other branches of the regime no real distinction is made between executive, legislative, and judicial functions. Courts, for example, are instruments to carry out state policy, with no pretense to political impartiality.

The new constitution placed a new body at the top of the hierarchy of soviets: the All-Union Congress of Soviets. This body was too large and met too seldom to do more than listen to speeches and approve the work of the Union Central Executive Committee and the Union Council of Commissars. The Executive Committee had full powers to act for the Soviet between sessions

but here again a smaller body, the Presidium, tended to assume direction of its functions. The Executive Committee was also supposed to supervise the cabinet, the Council of Commissars (later renamed Council of Ministers).

There is a certain amount left unsaid about the realities of political life in any constitution. This is particularly true of the Soviet constitution, above all because of its near silence about the Communist party. In the organization as forged by Lenin, the word "party" was a historical accident, apt to mislead if considered analagous to parties in democratic countries. The Communist party is an organization of those with a vocation for leadership to a communist society. At Lenin's death it was still a relatively small elite of about 500,000. Most of the party magnates had worked and suffered together for years. No matter how high their position they were supposed to receive the same wages as other workers of brain and brawn. The faint-hearted, the morally slack, and those who retained such "bourgeois" traits as religious belief were expelled. Lenin likened them to radishes, red outside but white at heart. Within the party inner circle there was considerable and often bitter debate, but once a decision had been reached, united action was required of all members.

The structure of the party paralleled that of the state. Communist youth organizations indoctrinated young people until they were accepted by the "cells" at the bottom of the party hierarchy. At the top was the party congress, which in practice approved the work of its committees: a Central Committee of about seventy members and a Commission of Party Control entrusted with maintenance of discipline among party members. In the Lenin period important decisions were made in the Central Committee but later it tended to fall under the influence of three smaller bodies, supposedly its agents: the secretariat, responsible for "the current work of organization and execution;" the organization bureau (Orgbureau), responsible for propaganda, promotion and demotion, and conditions of membership; and the political bureau (Politbureau), which determined general policies. Considerable duplication of membership knitted together these central bodies.

At each level similar duplication interlocked the party with the state and other public bodies. Party policies were thus fed into national life. Party approval was necessary for inclusion on the single slate of candidates permitted at elections. All other parties were outlawed. Other potential rallying points of disaffection were either narrowly circumscribed, as in the case of the Greek Orthodox church, or taken over by the state, as were the press and other means of communication. This was dictatorship by the party in the name of the proletariat.

The economic policy first introduced by the new regime, and lasting until 1921, has been labeled war communism. At the commencement of Bolshevik rule, land, factories, and communica-

tions were in the hands of peasants and workers who had, in Marx's phrase, "expropriated the expropriators." The party had encouraged this for tactical reasons, but once in power it proceeded to nationalize the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Producers were required to hand over to the state what they did not need for their own consumption. To replace money, whose use was discouraged as a capitalist hangover, rationing was established to allocate goods on the basis of social utility. Family ties, regarded as another capitalist feature, were weakened by lenient marriage and divorce laws. Private trading was outlawed as counterrevolutionary. By these and other devices the regime sought to hustle Russia into communism.

The result was disastrous. Devastation by foreign and civil war was bad enough. There were no reserves of raw materials or replacements for parts or livestock. The new system made things worse. Peasants went on a sit-down strike, refusing to turn over their surplus or only producing for their own needs. What they wanted was land for themselves, not state supervision. In their ignorance they had believed that all taxes and rents would vanish. The transportation system deteriorated further. Armed factory workers roamed the countryside in search of food. Committees of workmen were unable to manage plants efficiently. Despite aid from foreign relief organizations, famine stalked the land. Unrest culminated in 1921 in a revolt of the sailors of the Kronstadt naval base, hitherto ardent supporters of Bolshevism.

The revolt was crushed, but it galvanized the party into some serious rethinking of tactics. An example of the bitter intraparty debate which ensued concerned the role of the trade unions. One group, fearful of dictatorship by the party bureaucracy, insisted that the unions should control economic matters. At the other extreme were those, including Trotsky, who felt that there was no need for trade unions in a workers' state. On this and other matters he carried the day, and a New Economic Policy (1921-1928), usually abbreviated as N. E. P., was proclaimed.

*injection of capitalism*  
The N. E. P. proposed to build the Soviet economy by a judicious and temporary injection of a limited amount of capitalism. "The commanding heights." Lenin's phrase for key industries, transport, and foreign trade, were to be kept in state ownership and expanded, but private individuals were permitted to open small factories. Concessions were granted foreign capitalists. Private trading and a money economy were reintroduced. In the countryside, peasants on collective farms were allowed to sell on the open market anything produced over and above a state levy. It was permitted to reintroduce private farming, hire labor, and rent land. A new class of small capitalists appeared, urban "Nepmen" and rural kulaks. So successful was this "temporary retreat" from communism that by 1928 production of most goods attained prewar levels. Simultaneously, a corresponding shift in foreign policy dampened  
*rich peasant*  
*by 1922 - economy back to medieval level.*

Soviet support of world communism.

By this time Lenin was no longer at the helm. His health broke down in 1922 and at the beginning of 1924 he died. There ensued a struggle for power among the party leaders, of whom two, Trotsky and Stalin, stand out. On the surface, Trotsky held the better cards. Although a latecomer to Bolshevism, he had stood close to Lenin, was a brilliant controversialist, and, as witnessed by his organization of the Red army, possessed administrative talent of a high order. Possibly his chief weakness lay in his consciousness of his own brilliance, which led him into incautious acts and statements. He suffered mediocrities badly, and mistakenly included Stalin in their number. Stalin had never been intimate with Lenin, but he had been a useful and important party worker. Endowed with an excellent sense of timing, he succeeded in giving an impression of rigorous Bolshevik orthodoxy. In 1922 he became party general secretary, a post he used to build up a personal following in the party apparatus. Lenin's political testament, known inside Russia only in party circles, warned against both Trotsky's mercurial temperament and Stalin's heavy hand.

The ideological conflict between these two centered around two major tactical questions, which each man answered by appealing to the Marxist-Leninist canon. The first involved the Soviet Union's position in the world. Stalin argued that, since the collapse of capitalism was not imminent, "socialism in one country" should be constructed in Russia as a halfway house to communism. The Soviet Union would then be a showcase to the world proletariat, whom it would lead in due course to world communism. Trotsky argued that the world could not exist part capitalist, part socialist or communist. To attempt to create socialism in one country, especially in a relatively unindustrialized country like Russia, would lead inevitably to bureaucratic dictatorship. Communism could come only through "permanent revolution," an immediate and continuing spread of revolution into industrialized countries and thence throughout the world.

Relevant here is the other major ideological bone of contention, the relative importance of industrial workers and peasants. Trotsky believed that only industrial workers, by virtue of the cooperative conditions of their work, were capable of comprehending Marxism at this point. Therefore, since they alone could develop a revolutionary consciousness, they should be favored over the peasantry. Consequently, industrialization must be pushed at the expense of agriculture. Stalin argued that an immediate increase in agricultural production was essential and that therefore temporary concessions must be made to the peasants, especially to their addiction to individual proprietorship.

Later, under different circumstances, Stalin did adopt these and other contentions of Trotsky, but for the time being he succeeded in getting them condemned as heretical. Using his

*From the N. E. P. to the period of the plans.*

control of the party machine, he played off Trotsky and other magnates against each other. Trotsky committed tactical errors, above all when he violated party discipline by appealing over the heads of the central committee to the rank and file. One by one Stalin's opponents were demoted, or expelled from the party, or forced abjectly to recant their errors. Trotsky, accused of "factionalism," a heinous party sin, was eventually exiled abroad in 1929. He continued his agitation from afar until 1940, when he was assassinated in Mexico by a Stalinist agent. Between 1929 and 1931 the ax fell on the so-called Right Opposition whom Stalin accused of going too far in advocating independence for trade unions and concessions to the peasantry.

By then the economic policy of the Union had entered an important new phase. Stalin asserted that the capitalist elements of the N. E. P. had been milked for all they were worth. It was now time to so manipulate social forces as to advance further toward socialism. The initial step in this "new socialist offensive" was the First Five Year Plan (1928-1932). Nepmen and other temporary concessions to capitalism were abolished. Subsequent plans followed, not always on schedule. The sixth began in 1956. In all of them the key words were collectivization and industrialization.

It was the avowed intention of the planners to turn the Soviet Union into an industrialized state. In the first plan (declared completed in four years) industrial production was more than doubled. Capital goods received the greatest emphasis. "Giantomania" seized the planners, who insisted on the biggest dams, the largest factories, the tallest skyscrapers. Later plans abandoned this for more economical concepts. Later plans also claimed to place more emphasis on quality than on quantity, and on consumer goods, although troubled international relations in the 1930's meant priority to defense industries. Official Soviet statistics showing a 650 per cent increase in gross industrial output between 1928 and 1940 are exaggerations, but the U. S. S. R. would not be today the world's second industrial power unless they contained a large element of truth.

All this required an immense effort from the Russian people. In the interest of increased productivity in the long run they were told to tighten their belts and work harder. A more rigid factory discipline was enforced. Piecework pay and other forms of wage incentives were introduced under the principle "from each according to his abilities, to each according to the amount he produces." Propaganda was mobilized to make up for the lack of consumer goods. "Shock troops," bands of dedicated Communists, were thrown into key positions in the "battle for steel" and other products. Artists and writers were ordered to follow the canons of "socialist realism" by producing art which would carry a Communist message in a form comprehensible to the masses. "Stakhanovites," workers who had surpassed their production quotas, were honored as Heroes of Socialist Labor. Where propaganda failed, the police took over with their slave labor camps.

*Economy. War commission Variety of national groups is a problem.*  
 2. N. E. P.  
 3. Plans

While industrialization was producing giant factories and new cities where there once had been empty steppes and quiet forests, rural collectivization was causing a revolution in the countryside in the 1930's. The regime needed more food for the growing cities and for export than small private farmers could produce. Kulaks were now relegated to the ashcan of history, "liquidated as a class." They were ordered to merge their land, equipment, and livestock with that of poor peasants to form collective farms. There each household was to have for its own use a dwelling and a tiny garden plot, with all other land being farmed jointly. Its income would come from garden vegetables and from a share in the profits of the collective after meeting all expenses, including the required deliveries to the state. This share was based too on the amount and quality of labor performed. Along with collectivization went a drive to introduce machinery and improved agricultural techniques.

The kulaks and others met collectivization with the age-old weapons of the peasant, passive resistance and violence. Fields stood untilled. Cattle and equipment were destroyed to keep them out of the hands of the state. Government agents were attacked. The government retaliated with propaganda, monetary inducements, and force. In the Ukraine, where agrarian unrest was combined with nationalism, the state deliberately permitted a famine to run its course in order to starve resistance. Millions were deported to slave labor camps or to new lands in the east. Poor peasants were incited against their more prosperous brethren. The government achieved its goal, at the cost of immense suffering and a temporary set-back in agricultural production. By 1933, about two-thirds of the peasant households, cultivating about eighty-five per cent of the arable land, belonged to collective farms.

*people wanted their own lands.*

For an assessment of the early plans as a whole only a few general observations can be made here. That productivity, education, and urbanization took great strides is indubitable. That many found opportunities for more profitable and interesting work, and that many too were exhilarated by sharing in a great achievement, is equally true. The cost was also high. For many it meant drudgery, privation, and a break with an accustomed way of life. For others it meant starvation or forced labor. For all it meant obedience to orders from above. Few other countries so completely transformed their economy in a generation. One was nineteenth century Japan. She did it without Communism, with fewer natural resources, and with no legacy of industrial pioneering from preceding generations. Just what Russia could have accomplished under other regimes is a tantalizing question.

Certainly the Soviet regime during the plans of the 1930's became increasingly rigid. What the party decided was best for the people they must do, willingly if possible, if not, then under duress. Purges designed to secure that automatic obedience deemed necessary for success rocked Soviet society to its roots. In a series of propaganda trials, generals, administra-

tors, technicians, and world-famous Communists were condemned to death after confessing to sabotage and treason, including involvement in fantastic conspiracies with Nazis, Japanese, Trotskyites, and capitalists. Others who presumably would not confess simply disappeared. After the revolution had devoured its children, Stalin was virtually the only old Bolshevik left. Terror did not stop there. Feeding on itself, on rumor, on suspicion, on grudges, it spread in ever-widening circles. No one, no matter how great or how insignificant, was safe. One source estimates that five per cent of the population (about 8,000,000 people) passed through the pretrial prisons of the secret police between 1936 and 1938.

By the latter year, all criticism of Stalin was stifled and certain interesting trends were observable in Soviet society. The higher ranks of party and state were filled increasingly, not from the working classes, but from the ranks of the new educated class of managers and technicians. Intellectuals, against whom Stalin seems to have held a particular grudge, were suspect and their activities circumscribed. Trade unions became mere government bureaus to increase production. History was rewritten to underline Stalin's intimacy with Lenin, his infallibility, and the unimportance of his earlier rivals. To bolster the now fashionable theory of "democratic centralism," Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and other outstanding leaders from Russia's past were rehabilitated. Patriotism, not just loyalty to a class, was once again fostered. Divorce laws were tightened as the family received more emphasis. In the army, saluting, distinctions in rank, and other disciplines and traditions were reintroduced. Decorations and financial rewards were given to men distinguishing themselves in useful fields of activity.

Like the restoration of certain features of pre-Soviet society, the new constitution of 1936 was an effort to counter-balance terror. Moreover, it provided good propaganda at a time when the regime, alarmed at the rise of Japan and Nazi Germany, was trying to form a common front with democratic states. The new constitution made certain modifications in the structure of the central government, but its most significant changes were those purporting to increase popular participation in the regime. The Soviet Union was declared to be "a socialist state of workers and peasants;" officially, socialism was an accomplished fact. The forms of mass participation in government were emphasized. There was a code of rights: to work, leisure, education, unite in public organizations, speak freely, and so forth. Equality of rights without regard to race or nationality was guaranteed. There was also a list of civic duties, such as work, military service, and protection of socialist property. Voting was open to all not deprived of the franchise by court order. The secret ballot and territorial constituencies were introduced. Elections were made direct. The predominance of urban voters was reduced. Although the new constitution may well have encouraged many Soviet citizens to feel closer to the regime, it specifically reaffirmed the

monopoly position of the Communist party. Indeed, during the 1930's the party further tightened its hold on the state, while Stalin's machine more narrowly regimented the party.

There has been some discussion whether Lenin would have approved of the Stalin regime. Lenin had recognized the tactical necessity of certain democratic forms in party and state, but he had no confidence in the political capacity of the masses. They were to be induced to lend their weight in support of the party, but they were not to participate in decision making. Democratic forms were to be counterbalanced by totalitarianian controls. Decisions were made in the Central Committee in which he had played the role of only first among equals. Yet he undoubtedly had created a regime that was to make Stalin's personal dictatorship possible.

The drive to industrialize, the purges, and the so-called Stalin constitution were all related to increasing tension in international relations in the 1930's. In 1941, Germany invaded the U. S. S. R., precipitating what the Soviets call the Great Patriotic War or the Second Great Fatherland War. Soviet propaganda put renewed emphasis on such patriotic themes as the defeat of Napoleon's invasion in 1812, the First Great Fatherland War. It depicted Russia as a member of a common democratic front against tyranny. The party eased its admissions standards. The Orthodox church received limited approval as a reward for its patriotism. As Stalin assumed direction of the war effort, more and more was heard about "the leader."

These and other propaganda themes helped steel the Soviet people for the grueling demands of war. Roughly one-third of the male population of working age joined the armed forces. Half of European Russia was a battlefield, where some of the Union's richest agricultural land and much of its industrial plant were destroyed.

War also revealed that popular support of the regime was not universal. Particularly in non-Russian territories, the German armies were often greeted as liberators. They even raised a small anti-Soviet army in the invaded areas. The nature of this anti-Soviet feeling was varied: anti-Russian nationalism, opposition to collectivization, opportunism, and Communist criticism of Soviet bureaucracy. However, pride in Soviet victories and the incredible brutality of the Nazi occupation forces soon deprived the invaders of most local support.

Victory in 1945 found the Soviet regime and its subjects filled with a new self-confidence. They had come through a terrible ordeal together. They had reconquered most of the territory lost in 1918, plus other lands. Soviet influence was dominant in Eastern Europe and rising in Asia. Thanks to skillful propaganda, the people knew little of the sacrifices and contributions of Russia's allies. Stalin hastened to warn the citizens that they would have to tighten their belts during a long period of reconstruction. Wartime relaxation of certain



aspects of party and state was abandoned. Ex-servicemen who had seen capitalist Europe were carefully watched by the police,

Then, in 1953, Stalin died, leaving no obvious successor. To protect the regime in this crisis, the party magnates closed ranks and presented a united front to the outside world. Stalin was condemned posthumously for encouraging a non-Marxist "cult of personality." In its place the regime propounded the theory of "collective leadership." There was a mild "thaw" in the monolithic control of life, permitting more independence than hitherto. The extent to which growth of a managerial class made this essential is much debated this side of the "iron curtain." Meanwhile, in the inner party circle, the magnates jockeyed for position. Some were purged, although there was no general purge comparable to that of the 1930's. At the time of this writing, the star of Nikita Khrushchev (1894- ) was clearly in the ascendancy. There were no signs that the party was as yet persuaded that the people were prepared to do voluntarily what the party thought they should do, that, in other words, the state might wither away.

To illustrate more fully some aspects of the ideology and practice of the Soviet system, two documents are presented below, one narrowly political, the other touching on what in the non-Communist world would be considered of only remote political interest. Here the reader can find material relevant to the question posed earlier: in what proportions is the Soviet regime Marxist, or Russian, or totalitarian? The first document consists of selections from a speech on the Soviet constitution delivered by Stalin to the Extraordinary Eighth Congress of Soviets in 1936:

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