The Russian Revolution was one of the most important events of the 20th century. It had a massive impact on the world and revolutionary movements, especially in the period after world war two when many groups seeking to imitate the Bolshevik triumph in Russia came to power. The revolution itself shows two main things. Firstly, the revolution validates anarchist critiques of the "workers state" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" advocated by Marxists and other authoritarian socialists. Second, the early phases of the revolution provide an example of how society might be run in an anarchistic manner without capitalism, the state or other authoritarian systems ★

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# RUSSIA: Revolution, Counter-Revolution

## An Anarchist-Communist Analysis of the Russian Revolution

by Joe Licentia

31. *Kronstadt Izvestia*, no. 14
32. Guerin, *No Gods, No Masters*, p. 189
33. Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russian*, Ch. 27
34. For more detailed refutation of these Bolshevik lies see Getzler, *Kronstadt*; Mett, *Kronstadt*; Avrich, *Kronstadt*; *An Anarchist FAQ*, section H.5, Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment in Russian*, Ch. 6; Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth*, Ch. 38; Farber p. 189-195
35. Avrich, *Kronstadt*, p. 211
36. Farber, p. 173-174
37. Farber, p. 174-175
38. Quoted on Farber, p. 209
39. Lenin, 10th Party Congress, section 3
40. Farber, p. 175-176
41. quoted on Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 204
42. Farber, 28, 99-104, 113-143; Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 144-241
43. Avrich, *Bolshevik Opposition to Lenin*
44. Farber, 199
45. Trotsky, *Platform of the Opposition*, Ch. 7
46. Viola, p. vii
47. Medvedev, p. 154
48. Medvedev, p. 167
49. Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, p. 227
50. Medvedev, p. 210
51. Medvedev, p. 234

### Notes to Part 8:

1. Aves, 124-126; Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 610; *An Anarchist FAQ*, section H.7.5

### Notes to Part 9:

1. quoted in Guerin, *Anarchism*, p. 22
2. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, p. 177-182
3. Guerin, *No Gods, No Masters*, p. 39
4. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p. 143

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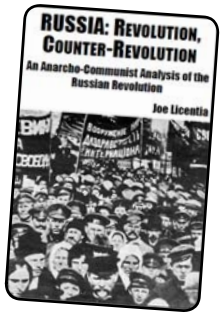




31. Palij, p. 231-241
32. Quoted on Palij, p. 238
33. Arshinov, p. 207
34. Footman, *Civil War*, p. 292
35. Flood, *Anarchist Army*
36. Palij, ix

## Notes to Part 7:

1. Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism*, Ch. 7
2. quoted in Anweiller, p. 239-240
3. Lenin, Speech at the Congress of Workers in Education and Socialist Culture
4. Lenin, *The Trade Unions*, *The Present Situation* and *Trotsky's Mistakes*
5. Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism*, Ch. 5
6. Lenin, 10th Party Congress, section 3
7. Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism*, ch. 7
8. Breitman, p. 514
9. Trotsky, *Stalinism and Bolshevism*
10. Bakunin, *Power Corrupts*
11. Kollontai, section one, part 6
12. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 683-684
13. Quoted on Palij, p. 27
14. Lincoln, p. 450-461; Carr vol. 1, p. 286-409
15. Farber, p. 203-204
16. Lincoln, p. 460-461; Carr vol. 1 p. 339-350
17. Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 171
18. Read, p. 266
19. Carr, vol. 1 p. 348
20. Avrich, *Kronstadt*, p. 14
21. Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 177
22. Read, p. 271
23. Aves, p. 116
24. Aves, p. 112-155
25. Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth*, ch. 38
26. *Kronstadt Izvestia*, no. 5
27. *Kronstadt Izvestia*, no. 8
28. *Kronstadt Izvestia*, no. 4
29. *Kronstadt Izvestia*, no. 14
30. *Kronstadt Izvestia*, no. 6

43. Bradly
44. Voline, p. 429
45. Lincoln, p. 224
46. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 658-659; Lincoln p. 266-269

## Notes to Part 6:

1. Arshinov, p. 47-51
2. Arshinov, p. 19
3. Palij, p. 58
4. Malet, p. 91
5. Malet, p. 85
6. Arshinov, p. 82
7. Arshinov, p. 61
8. Read, p. 260
9. Arshinov, p. 84
10. Arshinov, p. 57; Footman, *Civil War*, p. 293; *An Anarchist FAQ*, H.6.4
11. Arshinov, p. 141-145
12. Serge, *Memoirs*, p. 121
13. Arshinov, p. 209-220
14. Arshinov, p. 109-118, 134-137; Malet p. 138-140; Palij p. 160-174
15. quoted by Voline, p. 699
16. Read, p. 260
17. Arshinov, p. 148
18. Palij, p. 59
19. Malet, p. 175
20. Malet, p. 179-180
21. Malet, 107-113; Arshinov, 81-82, 90-91
22. Malet, 117-125; Arshinov, 86-87; *An Anarchist FAQ*, H.6.7
23. Malet, 121
24. Guerin, *Anarchism*, p. 100
25. Guerin, *Anarchism*, p. 101
26. Malet, p. 126-137; Palij, p. 148-159, 175-177, 209-241
27. Palij, p. 227
28. Quoted on Malet, p. 140
29. For detailed refutations of these slanders see: Malet p. 117-125, 168-174, 140-142; Arshinov, p. 209-220; Voline, p. 695-700; *An Anarchist FAQ*, Sections H.6.8 through H.6.12
30. Palij, p. 231; Arshinov p. 159-172



The Russian Revolution was one of the most important events of the 20th century. It had a massive impact on the world and revolutionary movements, especially in the period after world war two when many groups seeking to imitate the Bolshevik triumph in Russia came to power. The revolution itself shows two main things. Firstly, the revolution validates anarchist critiques of the "workers state" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" advocated by Marxists and other authoritarian socialists. Anarchists have long predicted that these schemes would inevitably result in the creation of a new bureaucratic ruling class that dominated and exploited the proletariat, a prediction that was proven correct in Russia and subsequent state socialist revolutions. Second, the early phases of the revolution provide an example of how society might be run in an anarchistic manner without capitalism, the state or other authoritarian systems. This period saw the creation of non-hierarchical organisations on a mass scale very similar to those advocated by anarchists. These organs of self-management can be compared to the systems set up by anarchists during the 1936 Spanish Revolution.

The 1917 revolution was preceded by the 1905 revolution, the "dress rehearsal" for the 1917 revolution. As a result of Russia's loss in the war with Japan mass rebellions broke out against the king of Russia, Tsar Nicholas Romanov the second. The Tsar quickly made peace with Japan and granted a few concessions including changing Russia to a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament, the Duma, limiting his power. This, combined with a good deal of repression, succeeded in ending the rebellions and saving the monarchy. After the revolution was defeated most of the concessions the Tsar made were undone and the Duma lost most of its power.

In 1914 Russia joined the First World War on the side of the entente. As in the Russo-Japanese war Russia took heavy loses and was severely strained by the war. Unlike the Russo-Japanese war the Tsar could not simply end the war when it threatened to topple his kingdom. The stress was too much and the Tsar was overthrown in February 1917, thus beginning the Great Russian Revolution. In the Tsar's place a provisional government was set up which was to hold elections to create a Russian Republic. In October 1917 another revolution occurred which overthrew the Provisional government and brought

revolutionary socialists to power. The Bolshevik party led by Vladimir Illyich Lenin and Leon Trotsky played a leading role in the October revolution, but did not do it alone. Although initially democratic the new government quickly evolved into a totalitarian state under the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party. This was followed by a civil war from May 1918 until November 1920 and the solidification of the state bureaucracy into a new ruling class.

3. Trotsky, *Work, Discipline, Order*
4. Schapiro, p. 124
5. Read, p. 207
6. Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 79
7. Lincoln, 240-248
8. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 599-600
9. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 321
10. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 596
11. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 348
12. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 322-323
13. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 330
14. Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 79
15. Read, p. 206
16. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 657-658
17. Lincoln, p. 264-265; Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 658
18. Linclon, p. 254
19. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 665
20. Rosenburg, 235-238
21. quoted on Serge, *Year One*, p. 9
22. Brovkin, *Workers' Unrest*
23. Aves, p. 39-80
24. Schapiro, p. 126
25. Anweiler, p. 235
26. Anweiler, p. 243
27. Anweiler, p. 234-235
28. Figes, p. 610
29. Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism*, ch. 8
30. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 657
31. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 659
32. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 665
33. Lincoln, p. 86
34. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 676
35. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 677-679
36. Arshinov, p. 134
37. See Viola and Figes, *Peasant Russia* for more on this
38. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 321-322
39. Farber, p. 45
40. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 124
41. Footman, *Civil War*, p. 167-210
42. Voline, p. 431

8. *Essential Works*, p. 307, "State & Revolution", Ch. 3, section 3
9. *Essential Works*, p. 307-308, "State & Revolution", Ch. 3, section 3
10. Lenin, *Tasks of the Revolution*
11. *Essential Works*, p. 337, "State & Revolution", Ch. 5, section 2
12. Farber, p. 43
13. Skocpol, p. 213
14. Lenin, "Speech in the Moscow Soviet"
15. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 685
16. Farber, 56-57
17. Lenin, *Theses On The Constituent Assembly*
18. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 518
19. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 576

### Notes to Part 4:

1. Brinton, 1917; Lenin, *Draft Decree on Workers' Control*
2. Brinton, 1918
3. Farber, p. 66-69
4. Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism*, ch. 8
5. Lenin, *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*
6. Marx, *Capital*, p. 694
7. Lenin, *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*
8. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 251
9. quoted on Avrich, *Kronstadt*, p. 9
10. Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work*, p. 48-58; Farber, p. 114-115
11. Rosenburg, *Russian Labour*
12. quoted in Rosenburg, p. 230
13. quoted in Rosenburg, p. 231
14. Brovkin, *Menshevik Comeback*; Farber, p. 22-27
15. Rosenburg, p. 232
16. Rosenburg, p. 237
17. Maximoff, *Guillotine*, p. 57; Guerin, *Anarchism*, p. 96; Farber, p. 126-127; Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*, p. 307-309; Serge, *Year One*, p. 212-216
18. Brinton, 1918

### Notes to Part 5:

1. Lincoln, p. 235
2. Figes, *People's Tragedy*, p. 596



# **Part 1:** Revolution in the Cities

The February Revolution began on February 23rd, International Women's Day. In the capital, Petrograd, spontaneous demonstrations, strikes and battles with the police erupted. Their main slogan was a demand for bread, other ones included "down with the autocracy" and "down with the war." Over the next several days the rebellion spread and became bigger, by the 25th it had turned into a general strike. *"The workers come to the factories in the morning; instead of going to work they hold meetings; then"* [1] demonstrations. Troops were called in to suppress the insurrection; on the 27th they mutinied en masse. The government lost control of the capital and on March 2nd the Tsar abdicated. The Provisional Committee of the Duma created the provisional government. This group of politicians (who were not elected to these posts) was to run the government until they could hold elections for a constituent assembly that would write a new republican constitution for Russia.

During and after the February revolution mass meetings were held by ordinary people to discuss the situation and organise themselves. In workplaces workers held worker assemblies, in villages peasants held peasant assemblies, soldiers had soldier assemblies. These operated on principles of direct democracy and served to organise revolutionary action by the masses. These popular assemblies have appeared in many revolutions – the French had the Sans-Culottes sectional assemblies, the Mexican had peasant assemblies, the Portuguese had worker and neighbourhood assemblies and the Spanish had worker and peasant assemblies. They have also been formed in recent rebellions in Argentina and Algeria. Many anarchists see an anarchist society as being organised by popular assemblies such as the ones formed in these revolutions.

The wake of the February revolution also saw the creation of another anarchic institution – the soviets. These were decentralised directly democratic institutions created by the workers to co-ordinate their struggle. *"The Russian Soviets fulfilled a double function: during great events they served as rallying points for the direct initiative of the masses, throwing into the scale their enthusiasm,*

*their blood and lives. In periods of relative stability they were organs of popular"* [2] self-management. As the struggle intensified they took on more power and threatened the power of the state and ruling class, acting as an alternative way to organise society. Workers in each workplace would elect a number of delegates to the soviet based on the number of people who worked there. Delegates were not only recallable but also mandated. Most cities had soviets and there were eventually soldier and peasant soviets set up. Large cities also had local borough soviets for different parts of the city.

As historian Oscar Anweiler pointed out in his definitive history of the Russian soviets, they came quite close to ideas advocated by many anarchist thinkers, including Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin:

> *"Proudhon's views are often directly associated with the Russian councils, and sometimes even held decisive for their establishment. Bakunin... much more than Proudhon, linked anarchist principles directly to revolutionary action, thus arriving at remarkable insights into the revolutionary process that contribute to an understanding of later events in Russia.*
>
> *In 1863 Proudhon declared... 'All my economic ideas as developed over twenty-five years can be summed up in the words: agricultural-industrial federation. All my political ideas boil down to a similar formula: political federation or decentralisation.'...*
>
> *Proudhon's conception of a self-governing [society]... founded on producers' corporations [i.e. federations of co-operatives], is certainly related to the idea of 'a democracy of producers' which emerged in the factory soviets. To this extent Proudhon can be regarded as an ideological precursor of the councils. But his direct influence on the establishment of the soviets cannot be proved....*
>
> *Bakunin… suggested the formation of revolutionary committees with representatives from the barricades, the streets, and the city districts, who would be given binding mandates, held accountable to the masses, and subject to recall.... Bakunin proposed the... organisation of society 'through free federation from the bottom upward, the association of workers in industry and agriculture – first in the communities, then through federation of communities into districts, districts into nations, and nations into international brotherhood.' These proposals are indeed strikingly similar to the structure of the subsequent Russian system of councils...*
>
> *Bakunin's ideas about spontaneous development of the revolution and the masses' capacity for elementary organisation undoubtedly were echoed*



# Footnotes:

## Notes to Part 1:

1. Trotsky, *Russian Revolution*, p. 123
2. Chernov, 103-4
3. Anweiler, p. 8-11
4. Rachleff
5. Flood, *Russian Revolution*
6. Anweiler, p. 235
7. Anweiler, p. 174
8. Farber, p. 62-80

## Notes to Part 2:

1. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 32
2. Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 40
3. Ibid, p. 33
4. Ibid, p. 52
5. Ibid, p. 111
6. Ibid, p. 101-102
7. Ibid, p. 132
8. Ibid, p. 144
9. Archinov, *Two Octobers*

## Notes to Part 3:

1. *Essential Works*, p. 74-75, "What is to be Done", section II, A
2. *Essential Works*, p. 112, "What is to be Done", section III, E
3. Chernov, p. 418
4. *Essential Works*, p. 346, "State & Revolution", Ch. 5, section 4
5. Lenin, *Impending Catastrophe*, part 11
6. *Essential Works*, p. 343, "State & Revolution", Ch. 5, section 4
7. See my essay "Authoritarian Socialism: A Geriatric Disorder" for a longer explanation of why "workers states" always become forms of elite rule and my essay "Death to Leviathan" for a further elaboration on the analysis of the state contained here. [http://question-everything.mahost.org]

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> *in part by the subsequent soviet movement.... Because Bakunin – unlike Marx – was always very close to the reality of social struggle, he was able to foresee concrete aspects of the revolution. The council movement during the Russian Revolution, though not a result of Bakunin's theories, often corresponded in form and progress to his revolutionary concepts and predictions."* [3]

In classical anarchist theory popular assemblies (or other local groups) would co-ordinate their activities through the use of mandated and recallable delegates (also called spokes or contact people). Delegates are mandated, meaning they must represent the position the group (assemblies, etc.) they come from has decided. They are instructed by the group(s) they come from, at every level, on how to deal with any issue. These instructions will be binding, committing delegates to a framework of policies within which they must act and providing for their recall and the nullification of their decisions if they fail to carry out their mandates. Decision-making power stays with the assemblies (or other local groups), delegates simply implement and communicate them to delegates from other assemblies. This differs from representative institutions in that decision making power stays in the assemblies whereas representatives can make whatever decisions they want and have authority over others. With this system assemblies (or other groups) can co-ordinate their actions with each other without authority, organising things from the bottom up instead of centralising power. Rather than top-down organisations, there are decentralised confederations and networks. Contemporary North American anarchists often call these spokescouncils; sometimes they are called workers' councils.

Initially the soviets came very close to this system, but they did not match exactly. The first soviets, which were born in the 1905 revolution (and suppressed along with the defeat of the revolution), appear to have come closer to the anarchist ideal. *"This was the first experience of direct democracy for most of those involved. The Soviets were created from below, by the workers, peasants, and soldiers, and reflected their desires--which were expressed in non-sectarian resolutions. No political party dominated the Soviets, and many workers were opposed to allowing representation for political parties."* [4] Anarchists raised the slogan "all power to the soviets" in this revolution.[5]

After the February revolution the soviets were created once again. In 1905 the soviets were just a working class phenomenon; in 1917 soldiers set up soviets and eventually so did peasants. In some cases the worker, soldier and/or peasant soviets would merge together to form joint soviets. Regional federations of soviets were set up and on June 3rd an all-Russian congress of

soviets was held. That soviet congress agreed to hold another soviet congress every three months.

Like the 1905 soviets, these soviets initially were very close to the anarchist system of mandated and recallable delegates. However, there were small differences that appeared. In the 1917 soviets political parties eventually came to play a more important role and began to dominate them. Mandates were not always strictly followed. Soviets tended to go from being made up of mandated delegates to being representative bodies, where delegates followed the party agenda instead of the decisions of the workplace that elected them. Party discipline over any party member that became a delegate interfered with the directly democratic nature of the soviets. In addition, political parties were often allowed to send their own delegates regardless of their popular support, giving them disproportionate influence. The higher-level soviets tended more to become representative institutions, while the borough and local soviets stayed closer to the masses. The transformation of soviets into representative, instead of mandated delegate, bodies was rapidly accelerated by the October revolution but their tendency to act as representative instead of delegate bodies already existed prior to October. *"Even before the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917, actual political authority had been shifted to the Executive Committee while the soviet plenum was left with only approval or rejection of ready-made resolutions and with decisions on basic questions."* [6]

Since anarchists constituted only a small minority of those who participated in the soviets it is not surprising that they deviated from the anarchist ideal. The Tsar had only recently been overthrown and so most were not as familiar with the dangers of representative democracy. Mandates weren't strictly followed and the attempts of political parties to take them over were not resisted as much as they should have been. What is remarkable is that the soviets (and other organisations) were very close to what most anarchists had advocated for decades even though most were not only non-anarchists but knew very little of anarchist theory.

The February revolution began with the mutiny of the military and the collapse of military discipline. Within the military participatory democratic structures were created by rank-and-file soldiers that had the effect of undermining the power of the government and military command. Soldiers (most of whom were peasant conscripts) set up their own soldiers' soviets similar to the workers' soviets. In some cases they merged with worker soviets and in some with both worker and peasant soviets. Officers and soldier committees were elected and subject to recall by soldier assemblies. This kind of military democracy has appeared in many revolutions – the soldiers' councils among the Levellers in the



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English revolution, the minutemen in the American Revolution, the anarchist militias in the Spanish revolution and other popular revolutions.

Another anarchic institution that appeared after the February revolution was the factory committees. These were initially set up to co-ordinate the workers' struggle against their bosses and limit the power of management. *"Because the committees represented the worker right at his place of work, their revolutionary role grew proportionately as the soviet consolidated into a permanent institution and lost touch with the masses."* [7] Many committees ended up taking over the factories. Factory takeovers began first as a response to the closing down of factories by their owners (usually due to un-profitability), the workers took them over and were usually able to run them where capitalists had failed. Eventually the expropriations spread to factories not abandoned by their owners, accelerating with the October revolution.[8]

Many historians have noted the similarity of these factory committees to the worker self-management advocated by anarcho-syndicalists (and other anarchists). In anarcho-syndicalist theory, the workers using worker assemblies would run their own workplaces. Factory committees would be created to carry out co-ordination and administrative tasks. They would be elected, mandated and subject to recall. Decision making power would stay with the workers in their assemblies. The committees would simply implement the decisions made by the workers in their assemblies and would not have authority over workers.

This is what was implemented in the Spanish revolution; the factory committees in the Russian Revolution were virtually identical. There were two differences. The first was that, whereas the takeover of industry in the Spanish revolution was done rapidly in the space of a few weeks, the takeover of industry in Russia was comparatively slow, taking the better part of a year. The second was that the self-managed factories in Russia sold their products on the market, producing largely the same thing and for the same customers. The majority of anarcho-syndicalists are opposed not only to capitalism but also to markets and so in Spain eventually set up non-hierarchical forms of co-ordination between workplaces. Industry in Spain was reorganised to be more effective and adapt to changing circumstances brought on by civil war.

# **Part 2:** Agrarian Revolution

Prior to the revolution most Russian peasants were organised into repartitional communes called the Mir. Each household in the Mir was assigned land, which they farmed themselves and kept the product of for themselves (minus taxes, rent, etc.). A village assembly consisting of all the household heads called the skhod ran the commune. Except in times of rebellion or revolution, male elders dominated the skhod. It was patriarchal and ageist; women and the young were excluded. The land assigned to each household would be periodically repartitioned by the skhod, the intention being to maintain an egalitarian village as much as possible. Peasant villages were rather egalitarian, but there was some stratification between poor peasants, middle peasants and Kulaks on the top. A disproportionate amount of the land was owned by a landlord aristocracy, which had descended from the feudal nobility. The landlords exploited the peasants through rent or other means.

Many revolutionaries, including the populists, social revolutionaries (SRs) and many Russian anarchists, believed the Mir could play an important role in overthrowing the Tsar and, if democratized, in building a socialist society. They were right. During both the 1905 and 1917 revolutions the communes played a major role, serving as a ready-made organisation through which the peasants rebelled against the landlords and the state. After the 1905 revolution reforms were implemented with the intention of staving off another revolution, including an attempt to undermine the Mir. Petr Arkadevich Stolypin, prime minister of Russia from 1906 until his assassination in 1911, in addition to using state terror to suppress all opposition to the Tsar implemented land reforms designed to weaken and destroy the Mir. He attempted to convert the peasantry into small holding farmers, each owning his own plot of land instead of living in the communes. It was hoped that doing this would generate a conservative class of farmers (as had arisen in many West European countries) and make it more difficult for peasants to organise against the regime. The Stolypin land reforms failed to achieve its goal. Only a



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tiny percentage of peasants became small holding farmers; the vast majority stayed in the Mir.

In 1917 the communes played a major role in the overthrow of the old order. The Volga region is not unusual in this regard. *"During the second half of March 1917 news of the February revolution in Petrograd and the abdication of the Tsar filtered down to the villages ... During the following weeks open assemblies were held in almost every village to discuss the current situation and to formulate resolutions on a broad range of local and national issues."* [1] These assemblies acted as a counter-power against the landlords and state in the villages and were used to organise against them. *"The district and provincial peasant assemblies of 1917 served as an important focus for the articulation of peasant grievances and aspirations. ... As the power of the state collapsed in the provinces during 1917, the political initiative passed to these district and provincial assemblies."* [2]

These assemblies were not the same ageist and patriarchal assemblies that had previously run the communes. The revolution transformed not only the relationship of the commune to landlords and the state, but transformed relations within the communes as well:

*"The village assemblies which met during the spring of 1917 marked a process of democratization within the peasant community. Whereas village politics before 1914 had been dominated by the communal gathering of peasant household elders, the village assemblies which came to dominate politics during 1917 comprised all the village inhabitants and were sometimes attended by several hundred people. The patriarchical domination of the peasant household elders was thus challenged by junior members of the peasant households (including the female members), landless labourers and craftsmen ... [and others] who had formerly been excluded from the communal gathering."* [3]

After the February revolution the communes began expropriating the landlord's land and incorporating it into the communes. *"It was very rare indeed for the [landlord] himself to be harmed during these proceedings."* [4] The peasants aimed to re-divide the land to give everyone a fair share. The landlord's land was added to the commune's land and then the land repartitioned, with each household assigned it's own plot of land by the (newly democratized) peasant assemblies. *"The meadows and the pasture were usually left in communal use (i.e. were not partitioned), in accordance with traditional custom."* [5] The peasants' aim was:

> *"to restore the idealized 'good life' of the village commune, a life which had been irrevocably lost in the modern world. They appealed to the ancient peasant ideals of truth and justice which, since the Middle Ages, had*

*been inextricably connected in the dreams of the peasants with land and freedom. The village commune ... provided the organisational structure and the ideological basis of the peasant revolution... Every family household, including those of the former landowners, was given the right to cultivate with its own labour a share of the land."* [6]

Most landlords who did not flee after the expropriations began were incorporated within the communes as equal peasants. They were usually given a portion of their former land to farm themselves, but no more than any other peasant and only an amount they could farm themselves (without hired labour). *"Most of the peasant communities… recognized the right of the ex-landowner to farm a share of his former land with the labour of his family.... A survey in Moscow province on the eve of the October revolution showed that 79% of the peasantry believed the landowners and their families should be allowed to farm a share of the land."* [7]

Returning peasant conscripts from the soldiers often played an important role in radicalising the village and leading the revolution. *"The return of the peasant-soldiers from the army during the winter and spring of 1917-18 had a profound effect on the course of the revolution. These young men presented themselves as the natural leaders of the revolution in the villages.... The mood of the soldiers on their return from the army was radical and volatile."* [8] Peasant conscripts who otherwise may never have left their village were placed in a situation (the army) very different from the villages where they learned about large-scale organisation and came in contact with radical ideas.

The expropriation and repartitioning of land accelerated with the October revolution. Without the peasant rebellions bringing down the old order the insurrections in the cities would never have succeeded. For a while after the October revolution Bolshevik power was very weak and most villages were largely left to themselves. A kind of semi-anarchy prevailed in many villages, with the landlords expropriated and the Bolsheviks not yet imposing their authority on the village. The peasant assemblies and communes that prevailed in this period are quite similar to many of the institutions advocated by many anarchists but, as with the soviets, there were some small differences.

The democratized village assemblies are quite similar to the community assemblies (or "free communes") advocated by many anarchists since the early 19th century. However, while anarchists envision their community assemblies as being purely voluntary bodies that would respect the individual freedom of its members (and this was the case with the village assemblies during the Spanish revolution) in some cases the Russian village assemblies turned into a "tyranny of the majority." In Spain those who did not want to participate in the



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collectives were not coerced into doing so and were given some land but only as much as they could work themselves (without hired labour). In Russia there were instances of small holding farmers who had separated from the commune as a result of the Stolypin land reforms being forced to rejoin the commune, sometimes violently. Peasant assemblies were sometimes hostile towards people from outside the village, especially if they had no previous connection to the village.

Unlike Russia's repartitioned communes, peasants in agrarian collectives during the Spanish revolution generally cultivated the land in common rather than assigning each household it's own plot. What was produced was shared as well. In some cases money was abolished and things distributed on the basis of need. The Russian peasant's repartitional commune did not cultivate all land in common or share what was produced. Although quite different from the collectives advocated by anarchist-communists and anarcho-syndicalists (and set up during the Spanish revolution) these repartitional communes were similar to systems advocated by mutualist anarchists like Joseph Proudhon. In many mutualist schemes the land would be farmed by peasants who would work their own land (without wage-labour or collectives) and trade any surplus on the market with other peasants, self-employed artisans and/or co-operatives. This is quite similar to what prevailed in rural Russia during the high point of the revolution.

Villages often suffered from excessive parochialism and sometimes came into conflict with each other. Unlike in revolutionary Spain there was no confederations set up between communes to co-ordinate their actions or equalize the wealth of different communes. The closest thing was the peasant soviets, however these did not play as big a role in the countryside as they did in the cities and soon transformed into a hierarchical power over the villages.

As in the cities, the majority of peasants were not anarchists and so it should not be surprising that these revolutionary agrarian structures did not completely match the anarchist ideal. Despite this they came very close. The embryo of an anarchist society was created before and for a short while after October.

> *All of revolutionary Russia was covered with a vast network of workers' and peasant soviets, which began to function as organs of self-management. They developed, prolonged, and defended the Revolution…. a vast system of social and economic workers' self-management was being created… This regime of soviets and factory committees, by the very fact of its appearance, menaced the state system with death.* [9]

# **Part 3:** Rise of the Bolsheviks

The February revolution was a spontaneous and leaderless revolution. It left all the political parties behind, including the revolutionary ones. This contrasts with Lenin's vanguardist conception of the revolution. In his book *What is to be Done?*, published in 1902, Lenin said that:

> *"The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia."* [1]

By Social Democracy Lenin meant revolutionary Marxism, this was written before Social Democracy became a synonym for the welfare state. Lenin argued that *"Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers."* [2] Only intellectuals ("educated representatives of the propertied classes") could develop revolutionary socialism, not workers on their own. The task of these revolutionary intellectuals was to form a vanguard party run by professional revolutionaries that would spread socialist ideology among the workers and lead them to make a revolution. The party would be organised hierarchically, with a powerful central committee at the top, based on a highly centralised version of representative democracy called "Democratic



**Voline:** Russian anarcho-syndicalist

**Volost:** The smallest administrative unit in Russia

**Volynka:** Russian for 'go slow.' Used to refer to the post-civil war wave of anti-Bolshevik strikes and worker unrest.

**War Communism:** The economic system in Bolshevik Russia from summer 1918 until 1921

**Wrangel:** Tsarist general, leader of the White forces in the south after Denikin resigned

**Zemstvo:** Provincial and district level local government, dominated by the gentry

**Zinoviev:** Leader of the Bolshevik party. On the central committee during the October Revolution

**Plekhanov:** Father of Russian Marxism

**Pogrom:** Massacre of Jews

**Pravda:** Official Bolshevik newspaper

**Proletariat:** Working class

**Rada:** Ukrainian nationalist government

**Red Army:** Bolshevik army

**Red Guards:** Workers' militias, often loyal to the Bolsheviks

**Red Terror:** Massive repression launched by Bolsheviks after an attempted assassination of Lenin

**Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of the Ukraine:** Revolutionary partisans in Ukraine organised by the anarchist-communist Nestor Makhno

**Skhod:** Village assembly

**Socialism:** 1. A classless society 2. In Marxist theory, the stage after capitalism but before Communism in which the dictatorship of the proletariat rules and individuals are paid according to how much they work

**Soviet:** Russian for council. In this text the term is used to refer to either the councils of workers', soldiers' and/or peasants' deputies or to the Bolshevik state

**SRs:** Social Revolutionary Party, non-Marxist socialists. A peasant party, strong supporter of the Constituent Assembly. Two groups split off: the Maximalists after the 1905 revolution and the Left SRs during the 1917 revolution.

**Stalin, Joseph:** Bolshevik who became dictator over Russia in the late 20s

**Stalinism:** 1. The period in Russian history in which Stalin ruled the USSR 2. A philosophy based on the ideas of Joseph Stalin 3. Any form of Leninism which is not hostile to Joseph Stalin and does not thoroughly condemn his rule

**Tachanki:** Sprung carts used by the Makhnovists to move swiftly

**Tsar:** Russian King/Emperor

**Trotsky, Leon:** Major Marxist leader. Joined the Bolsheviks in 1917, helped lead the October Revolution. Head of the military during the civil war. Opponent of Stalin.

**Trotskyism:** Philosophy based on the ideas of Leon Trotsky



Centralism." This position caused a split in the Russian Marxist movement. One faction, the Bolsheviks, supported Lenin's advocacy of a vanguard party while the other faction, the Mensheviks, advocated a more traditional political party. These two factions later broke into two separate parties, with the Bolsheviks organising theirs along the vanguardist lines Lenin advocated.

Lenin's claim that socialist ideology cannot be developed by the workers' exclusively by their own effort but can only be brought to them from without is false. It may be true for Marxism, but it is not true for all forms of socialism. There have been many examples of workers' developing revolutionary anti-capitalist consciousness and going beyond "trade union consciousness" without the aid of intellectuals. The anarcho-syndicalist movement, which was once massive, is an excellent example. It was literally created by ordinary workers, not by intellectuals, and grew into a mass movement in many countries – even launching a revolution in Spain. In the 1905 Revolution Lenin's "vanguard" was left behind by the revolutionary workers; the Bolsheviks were initially suspicious of the Soviets and opposed them. In 1917 revolutionary workers again left behind the "vanguard", both in the February Revolution and again in the July days.

Even if Lenin was right and revolutionary ideology could only come from the intellectuals his vanguardism would not follow. The intellectuals could simply spread socialist ideology amongst the workers without attempting to impose their authority on the workers. Hierarchical organisation is not necessary; the intellectuals could spread socialist ideology to workers who would self-organise against capitalism. They can organise non-hierarchically, instead of using "Democratic Centralism." Just because one group persuades another that a certain philosophy is a good idea it does not follow that the persuading group has to have power over those they persuade.

After the February revolution the Bolsheviks took a position not that far from the Mensheviks. The Mensheviks claimed that the current revolution was a "bourgeois revolution" which would lead to the establishment of capitalism and the rule of the bourgeoisie. A working class socialist revolution would only be possible after a long period of industrial capitalism. The task of socialists was thus not to push for another revolution to overthrow the capitalists but to help consolidate the current revolution, build capitalism, prevent a counter-revolution and build a reformist workers movement. The so-called "vanguard of the revolution," the Bolshevik party, was initially not revolutionary at all!

This changed with Lenin's return to Russia. The provisional government decreed an amnesty for all persecuted dissidents, which resulted in hordes

of revolutionaries returning to Russia from exile in the months following the February revolution. The Germans granted Lenin safe passage through German territory to return to Russia, hoping that he would stir up unrest and possibly force Russia to withdraw from the war. Lenin arrived in April; shortly afterwards he presented his April Theses at a meeting of the Bolshevik party. In it he called for an end to the First World War, another revolution to overthrow the provisional government, establishing a "workers' and peasants' state" based on the Soviets, "Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy," and "a state of which the Paris Commune was the prototype." Initially most Bolsheviks reacted very negatively to his position. One Bolshevik, *"Bogdanov (Malinovksy), beside himself, shouted that Lenin's speech was the raving of a madman; pale with rage and contempt, he showered blame on those who had applauded: 'One should be ashamed to applaud this rubbish, you cover yourselves with shame! And you are Marxists!'"* The old Bolshevik Goldenberg declared that *"Lenin has presented his candidacy for a throne in Europe vacant these thirty years: Bakunin's throne. Lenin's new words tell the same old story of primitive anarchism. Lenin the Social Democrat, Lenin the Marxist, Lenin the leader of our militant Social Democracy is no more!"* **3** Only one senior Bolshevik leader, Alexandra Kollontai, supported Lenin's April Theses from the start. Despite this, Lenin was able to persuade the Bolshevik party to adopt his revolutionary stance, overcoming major resistance.

In the April Theses, his book *The State and Revolution* (probably his most libertarian work), and other writings Lenin put forth an ultra-democratic and libertarian vision of society. He believed in a "dictatorship of the proletariat," also called a "workers' state," which would be the "proletariat organised as ruling class." Under this "workers' state" the "police, the army and the bureaucracy" would all be abolished and "the standing army [was] to be replaced by the arming of the whole people." Every government official would be elected, recallable and paid a workman's wage. It was to be a truly democratic state, controlled by the majority. The working class would use this state to oppress the capitalists (a minority of the population) and put down their resistance to the new order. He said that *"for a certain time… the bourgeois state remains under communism, without the bourgeoisie!"* **4** After the revolution society would pass through two phases, first socialism and then communism. Under socialism individuals would be paid based on how much they worked, communism would be a classless society without following the principle "from each according to ability, to each according to need." The ultimate aim of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was to bring about the end of the state, as it abolished classes and brought about communism the state would begin to "wither away" and eventually disappear completely. He claimed that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was needed only temporarily to suppress the capitalists and build the new order, as communism



**Kulak:** 1. A relatively wealthy peasant 2. A derogatory term for any peasant opposed to the Bolsheviks

**Left SRs:** Faction that broke away from the SRs shortly after the October Revolution. Advocated Soviet Democracy. A peasant party.

**Lenin, Vladmir:** Russian Marxist, leader and founder of the Bolshevik party

**Leninism:** Philosophy based on the ideas of Vladmir Lenin.

**Libertarian Communism:** 1. Anarchism 2. Anarchist-Communism 3. Libertarian Marxism

**Libertarian Socialism:** Anarchism

**Makhno, Nestor:** Ukrainian Anarchist-Communist

**Makhnovists:** Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of the Ukraine

**Makhnovshchina:** Makhno Movement

**Martov:** Menshevik leader

**Marxism:** A philosophy based on the ideas of Karl Marx. Includes historical materialism, the labour theory of value, dialectical materialism and advocacy of a "dictatorship of the proletariat."

**Maximalists:** Also called SR-Maximalists. Faction that broke off from the SRs as a result of the 1905 revolution. Their politics were between the anarchist and Left SRs.

**Maximoff:** Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist

**Mensheviks:** Marxist party. Believed that Russia's revolution had to be capitalist and democratic, opposed the October revolution. The more conservative of the two Marxist parties.

**Mir:** Peasant commune

**NEP:** New Economic Policy (1921-28), allowed a limited degree of private enterprise and a regulated market

**Octobrists:** Constitutional Monarchists

**Oshchina:** Village land commune (Mir)

**Petty Bourgeoisie:** 1. Small business owner 2. peasants or artisans 3. Lower middle class 4. a derogatory term for someone who disagrees with Marxism or a specific brand of Marxism

coming after socialism when the state has "withered away" and society is run according to the principle "from each according to ability, to each according to need" 3. Leninism 4. Marxism

**Constituent Assembly:** A legislature elected to write a constitution

**Denikin:** Tsarist general, commanded White army in South Russia.

**Dictatorship of the Proletariat:** Also called a "workers' state." In Marxist theory, a state controlled by the workers and used to suppress the bourgeoisie. This will "wither away" during the transition from socialist to communism

**Duma:** Russian parliament or city council

**Entente:** France, Britain and allies during the First World War

**Free Battallions:** Makhnovist volunteer fighters against the Rada and Austro-German imperialists

**Greens:** Peasant rebels who fought against both the Reds & Whites during the civil war. Defended the local peasant revolution.

**Kadets:** Constitutional Democrats, advocates of a liberal capitalist republic

**Kamenev:** Bolshevik leader

**Kerensky:** Head of the provisional government after July. Member of the SR party, in its right wing.

**Kolchak:** Tsarist admiral. Leader of the Whites between November 1918 and his execution in 1920

**Kollontai, Allexandra:** Bolshevik leader, leader of the Workers' Opposition. Member of the central committee during the October revolution.

**Komuch:** SR-dominated government established in Samara after the revolt of the Czech legion

**Kornilov:** Russian general. Allegedly launched a coup against the provisional government in august 1917 to impose a military dictatorship.

**Kronstadt:** Naval base about 20 miles west of Petrograd. A centre of radicalism and big supporters of the October Revolution. In 1921 they rebelled against the Bolsheviks, called for Soviet Democracy and accused them of betraying the revolution.

**Kropotkin, Peter:** Major Russian anarchist theorist



comes about it about it was supposed to disappear. Since Russia had a peasant majority in Russia the "workers' state" would be a "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" – a joint workers' and peasants' state controlled by the majority. The revolution in Russia was to be the opening shot in a world revolution that would topple capitalism around the globe.

The allegations made by some Bolsheviks that Lenin had gone over to anarchism, though incorrect, are not without merit. Lenin's views between the February and October revolutions incorporated a considerable degree of libertarian rhetoric and ideas. Anarchists have long advocated the arming of the people and called for the abolition of the police, standing army and bureaucracy along with the state in general. Anarchists had already begun pushing for another revolution to overthrow the Provisional government and criticizing the Mensheviks and SRs for co-operating with it. The Bolsheviks took up many slogans the anarchists had already raised, including "All Power to the Soviets" and "the factory to the worker, the land to the peasant" but meant very different things by them. By "All Power to the Soviets" the Bolsheviks meant that the Soviets would run the new "proletarian" state, they would assume state power. The anarchists meant that the state should be abolished and society instead organised by voluntary non-hierarchical associations such as the Soviets. By "the factory to the worker, the land to the peasant" the Bolsheviks meant putting these under state control. Because the state would supposedly be controlled by the workers and peasants this would, they claimed, be equivalent to putting the factories and land under the control of the workers' and peasants. Lenin claimed that, *"socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly which is made to serve the interests of the whole people."* [5] The anarchists meant the slogan literally – the workers in the factory should directly control it themselves and the peasants who work the land should control the land themselves. Lenin even declared that *"While the state exists there is no freedom. When freedom exists, there will be no state."* [6] It is likely that the libertarian influence on his thought at this time was more the result of the libertarian structures created by the Russian masses, the Soviets, factory committees, etc. rather than as a result of anarchist theory.

Party as a result of the Bolshevik's libertarian rhetoric the Russian anarchist movement allied with the Bolsheviks against the Provisional government. This alliance was broken after the October revolution. The Bolsheviks also allied with the Maximalists (who had a position between the Left SRs and the anarchists) and the left wing of the Social Revolutionary party, the Left SRs. The SRs were a peasant party, the oldest and largest party in Russia. The Left SRs were very critical of the right SRs for co-operating with the Provisional government, it's failure to pass land reform and it's capitalist policies. They advocated Soviet

Democracy, land reform and the overthrow of the provisional government. Shortly after the October revolution the Left SRs broke off and formed their own political party.

The vision of a hyper-democratic state outlined by Lenin in 1917 is not feasible and even if it could be implemented it would not be able to make the state an instrument of majority rule instead of minority rule. In order to enforce it's rule the state must have it's own armed bodies of people (police, military, etc.) with a top-down chain of command to make the population obey it's laws. Abolishing the police, military, etc. and arming the people would make it impossible for the state to enforce its' orders. These armed bodies of people have to have a top-down chain of command because if they are autonomous they won't necessarily do what the state wants. Theoretically it is possible to have a state without bureaucracy but all states create hierarchical organisations in order to implement their orders. In the modern state this comes in the form of bureaucracy. Non-hierarchical organisations cannot serve this role because a non-hierarchical organisation, by virtue of the fact that it is non-hierarchical, can choose not do what those in the top levels of the government hierarchy order it to do. If it has to follow the government's orders then it is hierarchical. Theoretically there are pre-modern forms the state could use instead of bureaucracy (such as a system of vassals) but these are based on personal authority rather than impersonal rules and so it would be impossible to portray them as a implementing the decrees of a "proletarian democracy." Thus any "proletarian" state would have to be a bureaucratic state. The modern state has thousands upon thousands of government officials, as did most pre-modern states. Having every single one of them be elected is impossible; there are far too many positions to be able to choose candidates. At best everyone would spend all his or her time voting, and doing nothing else. In addition this would lead to paralysis within the state since only the electorate could fire officials, not their superiors, interfering with discipline. The different levels of the state would all come into conflict with each other and gridlock would ensue. These anti-authoritarian elements were infeasible and thus abandoned shortly after October.

The state is a hierarchical organisation, based on centralisation of power; that maintains a monopoly (or near-monopoly) on the legitimate use of violence. All states implement the rule of an elite over the majority and are never controlled by the majority because of this centralisation of power and monopoly of force. Decisions are not actually made by the majority but by those on the top of the hierarchy. Ordinary people have no real control over elected politicians after winning power. Once in power elected representatives are isolated from the general population but subjected to great pressure from state bureaucracies,



## **Appendix D:** Glossary

**Anarchism:** A philosophy advocating the abolition of all forms of hierarchical authority, including capitalism and the state

**Anarchist-Communism:** A form of anarchism advocating the abolition of money and markets and the organising of the economy along the lines of "from each according to ability, to each according to need"

**Anarcho-Syndicalism:** Anarchism oriented towards unions and the labour movement

**Authoritarian Socialism:** Any form of socialism which relies on the state to bring about socialism

**Bakunin, Mikhail:** Major 19th century Russian anarchist. Marx's nemesis in the 1st international

**Batko:** Ukrainian for 'little father.'

**Black Hundreds:** Extreme right absolute Monarchists

**Bolsheviks:** Revolutionary Marxist party. Renamed the Communist Party in March 1918

**Bourgeoisie:** Capitalist class

**Black Guard:** Russian Anarchist militia

**Blues:** Local Nationalist troops in the civil war

**Bukharin:** Major Bolshevik theoretician and leader. Member of the Bolshevik party during the October Revolution. Killed during the Great Terror.

**Bund:** Jewish Socialist organisation

**Central Powers:** Germany, Austria, and their allies during the First World War
**Cheka:** "Soviet" secret police

**Chernov, Victor:** Leader of the SRs, in it's centrist wing

**Comintern:** Communist International of Leninist parties and unions, also called 3rd international

**Commissar:** Government official

**Communism:** 1. Any philosophy advocating a classless society without money or markets organised according to the principle "from each according to ability, to each according to need" 2. In Marxist theory, the stage of history

**April:** Border war between Russia and Poland begins. Denikin resigns and hands power over to Wrangel
**June:** Wrangel launches new offensive
**August:** Martial law on railways declared, railway labour militarized. Major Green uprising in Tambov begins.
**October:** Bolsheviks and Poland make peace
**November**
14th: General Wrangel flees the Crimea. End of the civil war
26th: Final Bolshevik assault on Makhonvshchina begins
**Late 1920:** Peasant uprisings against the Bolsheviks intensify.
**December:** Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets

**1921**
**February – March:** Height of the post-Civil War unrest.
**February:** Large strikes in Moscow, Petrograd and many other cities. Numerous peasant uprisings
**March:**
1st-17th: Kronstadt rebellion
8th-16th: Tenth Party Congress. Workers' Opposition and Democratic Centralists defeated. Ban on factions. Beginning of the New Economic Policy (NEP).
**June:** Peasant rebellion in Tambov defeated
**August:** Makhno flees to Romania. Ukrainian anarchists defeated.

**1922**
**December 30th:** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics formed.

**1923:** Lenin retires from political activity after a series of strokes. First "scissors crisis."
**1924** January 24th: Lenin dies
Triumvirate of Stalin, Kamenev and Zionviev defeats Trotsky
**1927:** Expulsion of Trotsky, consolidation of Stalin's dictatorship
**1928:** Beginning of five-year plans
**1934-38:** The Great Terror



political parties and (in bourgeois democracies) big business. Elected politicians are in power temporarily, whereas the bureaucracy is there permanently. Thus the bureaucracy tends to gain more power than the representatives. In addition the bureaucracy can use black ops, disinformation, bureaucratic slowdowns, media manipulation, coups, brute force and other means to force representatives to go along with their wishes. They can rig elections and repress parties with platforms they do not like to insure that elections are won by parties with platforms they approve of. The right of recall does not give the majority control over the state since officials can use their monopoly of force to disregard or otherwise subvert recall attempts (which is exactly what happened to Russia in the spring of 1918) and even ignoring that actual decision making power still lies with the elected officials. The majority doesn't actually make the decisions itself. In *State and Revolution* Lenin focuses on administration and accounting but says little about actual decision-making. Once in power elected officials can not only use their authority to subvert elections and recall (insuring that the same elite stays in power regardless of who wins the election) but they can use it to pay themselves higher salaries than the average workman as they do in every state. They will not give up power and "wither away" but actually form a new ruling class over the proletariat. Even if Lenin's program could be implemented it would not result in a state controlled by the majority. [7]

In *State and Revolution* Lenin said, *"We want the socialist revolution with human nature as it is now, with human nature that cannot dispense with subordination, control and 'managers.'"* [8] "Human nature" is an ancient excuse used to justify tyranny for aeons. If human nature is such that humans are inherently evil then hierarchy should be abolished because those on the top will abuse their power. If human nature is good then there is no need for hierarchy. Either way, hierarchy should be abolished. If people are too evil (or stupid) to rule themselves then they are far too evil (or stupid) to rule others. The whole point of a social revolution is to change human behaviour. Present human behaviour is also based on private property, markets and imperialism yet that did not prevent Lenin from calling for the revolution to abolish them "overnight." The workers and peasants in the Russian revolution were already beginning to abolish subordination and managers, creating alternative non-hierarchical forms of organisation. Doing away with subordination/hierarchy was not only possible; it was already starting to be implemented.

In *State and Revolution* Lenin also claimed that *"the post office [is] an example of the socialist system.... Our immediate task is to organise the whole of national economy on the lines of the postal system."*[9] The post office is a highly bureaucratic and authoritarian organisation. It is based on a bureaucratic hierarchy, with

those on the top giving orders to those on the bottom. It is no surprise that a society organised along the lines of the post office would end up being highly bureaucratic and authoritarian.

Lenin argued that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was necessary to prevent the capitalists from using armed force to launch a counter-revolution, to defeat them in civil war. He misrepresented anarchist theory by claiming that anarchists think the working class should lie down its' arms after the revolution and not defend it from armed counter-revolutionaries. He then attacked this misrepresentation of anarchism. Revolutionary anarchists, excluding anarcho-pacifists, do believe that the workers should defend the revolution from violent counter-revolutionaries, with force if necessary. A "proletarian" state is not the only way to defend the revolution. If necessary the population can be armed and democratic militias formed to wage a guerilla war against counter-revolutionary armies. Anarchists have done this repeatedly in Ukraine, Manchuria, Nicaragua and Spain. A communal militia system, rather than a state, should be used to defend the revolution.

The Marxist theory of the state claims that the state is an instrument of whichever class happens to be dominant. Under feudalism the state is the instrument of the aristocracy, under capitalism it is the instrument of the capitalists, under socialism it is the instrument of the workers, etc. This theory is incorrect. The state is not merely an instrument through which the dominant class suppresses other classes; it is a means through which a small elite dominates and exploits the majority. Because it is a hierarchical, centralised organisation the state always develops a small elite on the top – those in the upper levels of the hierarchy. The "state elite." This elite dominates and exploits the population. Sometimes it does this directly, as would happen in the USSR and Maoist China. Other times it is more effective for this elite to defend the interests of a separate economic elite – such as a corporate elite or a landlord elite. The economic elite and state elite have very similar interests and so it often appears as if the state is merely the instrument of the state elite. Both seek to keep the subordinate classes subordinate, in order to maintain their authority and keep the extraction of surplus going. The state elite benefits from the economic elite's exploitation in many ways – it can leach off the surplus (taxes, bribery, etc.), it can use the surplus to mobilize for war or other goals, etc.

The state elite and economic elite (dominant class), although they have broadly similar interests, do not always see eye to eye and sometimes conflict. An example is Russia in the 1860s. Russia lost the Crimean war because it was behind the times – hadn't industrialized, had a backwards system. The Russian bourgeoisie didn't really exist yet. The loss of this war threatened the power



undemocratic "soviets" with a Bolshevik majority. Effective end of the Soviet system, beginning of party dictatorship
**April:** Worker unrest against Bolsheviks increases. Cheka raids anarchists. Beginning of the suppression of the Russian Anarchist movement.
**May:** Burevestnik, Anarkhia, Golos Truda and other major anarchist papers suppressed.
9th: Grain monopoly decreed. Bolsheviks fire on a working class protest in Kolpino, touching off a wave of anti-Bolshevik proletarian unrest.
25th: Revolt of the Czech legion. SRs form anti-Bolshevik government in Samara. Beginning of the civil war.
Right-wing rebellions in Siberia and South-eastern Russia
**June 28th** Sovnarkom issues decree nationalising almost all remaining privately owned businesses. Start of 'War Communism'
**July:** Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, Soviet Constitution approved 'July Uprising' of Left SRs against Bolsheviks
**August:** High point of Volga offensive by SRs. Attempted assassination of Lenin by SRs. Start of the Red Terror.
**September:** Anti-Bolshevik governments merge, form 5 person directory to run the new state. Thee of the five are SRs, who make up the left-wing of the government.
**November:** Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Kolchak's Coup against the directory. Closet Monarchists come to power in anti-Bolshevik Russia, White military dictatorship implemented.
**December:** Hetman, Austro-German puppet government, driven out of the Ukraine

**1919**
Height of the Civil War
In the first months of 1919 the Bolsheviks loosen repression for a few months, but then put it back to its previous level.
**March:** First Congress of 3rd International
**April:** Kolchak's offensive in the East stopped. 'War of the Chapany' - Green uprising against Bolsheviks in the Volga.
**September:** Battle of Peregonovka Anarchist partisans in the Ukraine route General Denikin's forces, launch counter-offensive
**October:** Denikin's offensive in the south stopped.
**December:** Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets

**1920**
**January:** Collapse of eastern Whites, Kolchak shot. Blockade lifted by Britain and France.

**1917**

**February and March:** February revolution. Uprising forces Tsar to abdicate, provisional government created. Soviets, factory committees and popular assemblies formed. Peasants begin expropriating land.

**April:** Lenin and other revolutionaries return to Russia. Lenin publishes April Theses. "April days."

**May:** Trotsky returns to Russia from America.

**June:** First all-Russian congress of soviets. Major offensive launched against Central Powers.

**July:** "July Days." Defeat of Russia's offensive. Kerensky made President of the provisional government.

**August:** Kornilov affair/coup. Population radicalised.

**September/early October:** Bolsheviks and other revolutionaries win majority in the Soviets.

**October**

25th: October Revolution. Provisional Government overthrown

26th-27th: Second All-Russian Congress. October Revolution overwhelmingly approved, Menshevik and right SR delegates walk out. Soviet government proclaimed, Council of People's Commissars created. Decrees on peace and land passed.

Worker take-over of factories and peasant expropriation of land rapidly accelerates.

Soviet government makes temporary armistice with Central Powers.

**November:** Elections for the Constituent Assembly. Decree on Workers' Control legalizes factory committee movement, but places the factory committees under the control of a system of state councils. Beginning of the centrally planned economy.

**December:** Kadets outlawed. Supreme economic council set up to run the economy, central planning takes another leap forward.

**1918**

**January:** Constituent Assembly dissolved. Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

**February:** Switch from old calendar to new calendar.

**March:** Brest-Litovsk treaty signed. Left SRs resign from the Sovnarkom as protest against the treaty. Bolsheviks begin disbanding factory committees. Trotsky appointed Commissar of Military Affairs (head of the military). Fourth All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Anti-Bolshevik worker unrest, including the conference movement, pick up.

**Spring and Summer:** Bolsheviks lose elections in soviet after soviet. They forcibly disperse soviets that do not have Bolshevik majorities and create



of the state (it could be conquered) and so the state implemented a bunch of reforms designed to modernize the country. Part of this was the abolition of serfdom – which the feudal landlords were overwhelmingly opposed to. The state threw the dominant class overboard in order to save itself. Of course, the manner in which the end of serfdom was implemented allowed the landlords to maintain a position higher over the peasantry – by owning more land - but it was still a major blow to their position, opposed by most landlords. Thus, the state is not automatically the instrument of whichever class happens to be dominant – although the state and economic elites do usually share very similar interests, and often tend to intermingle. Other examples of the state not doing what the economic elite wants are France under Napoleon the third, Peru's revolutionary military dictatorship in the late sixties and early seventies, Peron's regime in Argentina, and the later period of Nazi Germany.

The most common attempt by Marxists to explain these instances of the state conflicting with the dominant class is the theory of Bonapartism. When the classes are evenly powerful there is no dominant class and so the state gains a certain degree of independence. Lenin claimed that both of France's Bonapartist regimes, Bismarck's Germany and Europe's absolute monarchies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were all examples of Bonapartism. This theory fails for empirical reasons. There have been many cases of states conflicting with economic elites when different classes clearly were not equally powerful. Tsarist Russia in the 1860s (when the Russian capitalist didn't really exist) and Nazi Germany provide two clear examples where the ruling class and the subordinate classes were most definitely not equally balanced yet they did not see eye to eye with the economic elite. There have been several cases where the workers and capitalists were equally powerful yet Bonapartism did not develop, such as Italy in the early twenties. And even in the case of Bonapartist France it is debatable whether the workers and capitalists actually were equally powerful.

Even if the theory of Bonapartism were correct it would effectively refute the Marxist advocacy of a "proletarian" state. In the process of going from a situation where the capitalists are more powerful than the workers to a situation where the workers are more powerful than the capitalists there is a high probability that they will pass through the point where the workers and capitalists are equally powerful. In the course of the revolution(s) and attempted counter-revolutions that will characterize the transition from capitalism to socialism it is almost inevitable the workers and capitalists will be equally powerful for a time, perhaps repeatedly. Bonapartism is thus almost inevitable during the transition from capitalism to socialism. Hence, the workers' cannot rely on the

state to defeat the bourgeoisie because when the class struggle is most intense, when the capitalists and workers' are equally powerful, Bonapartism will come about and give the state a degree of independence, making any "workers' state" completely unreliable. The only time the workers' would be able to rely on any state would be in the period when the bourgeoisie has been decisively defeated, but according to Lenin a "workers' state" is most needed when the bourgeoisie are resisting the strongest. When they have been decisively defeated the state is no longer needed by the workers and can begin to "wither away."

Some, including much of the right and some anarchists & contemporary social democrats, portray Lenin and the Bolsheviks as Machiavellian schemers who set out from day one to impose a totalitarian one party state on Russia. The Bolsheviks just wanted to seize power for themselves; the October revolution was just an elitist coup with no popular support. This view is false. Lenin and the other revolutionaries would not have risked their lives, spent countless years in jail and gone into exile if they only wanted power for themselves. They genuinely believed their actions would create a better society. Nor did Lenin's vision prior to seizing power explicitly call for the dictatorship of one party. In State and Revolution and other writings Lenin put forth a highly democratic vision of the state, not a one-party dictatorship. Just a few weeks before the October revolution Lenin said, *"By seizing full power, the Soviets could... ensure... peaceful elections of deputies by the people, and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the Soviets; they could test the programmes of the various parties in practice and power could pass peacefully from one party to another."* [10]

After Lenin came to power he eventually came out in favour of a one-party state (and not just for Russia), but prior to seizing power he held a highly democratic vision. There were statements that could be seen to imply a one-party state, such as his reference in *State and Revolution* to *"the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of crushing the oppressors"* [11] but this was not explicit, as it would become after seizing power. His theory, like the Marxist theory of the state in general, was internally contradictory – is it to be "the proletariat organised as ruling class" or "the vanguard of the proletariat organised as ruling class"? This contradiction was really just the Marxist version of a contradiction inherent in all democratic theories of the state – they all advocate a society run by the majority yet advocate an institution, the state, which is inherently a system whereby a small minority rules. Ordinary bourgeois democracy is also internally contradictory – is it to be "the people" who hold decision making power or elected representatives? That Lenin's vision of the state, one of the most democratic in history, could turn into



jailed including Voline, Maximoff, and others. Mirroring bourgeois propaganda, any anarchist who opposed the Bolsheviks was demonized as a "criminal" or "bandit." Bolshevik propaganda sometimes portrayed Makhno as a bandit. This Bolshevik propaganda was helped by the "soviet anarchists;" "anarchists" who supported the Bolshevik government, effectively abandoning anarchism in fact if not in name. The most famous of these "soviet anarchists" was Bill Shatov. A similar strategy of repression and propaganda against anarchists was used in during the revolution in Cuba, which had the largest anarchist movement in the world at the time. The anarchist movement was effectively destroyed in the post-Kronstadt repression. What little was left was annihilated in Stalin's gulags.

The Russian anarchist movement began to revive after Stalin's death. Khrushchev, Stalin's successor, increased civil liberties and ended the worst excesses of Stalinism. As a result a small underground anarchist movement was able to develop, although it was not very big until Gorbachev. Under Gorbachev and the greatly increased freedoms of the period anarchism grew rapidly. Anarchists were the first group in Moscow to take advantage of the greater civil liberties to hold a public demonstration against the government, marching under a banner reading "Freedom without Socialism is Privilege and Injustice, Socialism without Freedom is Slavery and Brutality" (a quote from Bakunin). For a while anarchism was a significant opposition movement, but after the coup and collapse of the USSR the Russian anarchist movement greatly shrank. In recent years it has begun growing again.

## **Appendix C:** Timeline

**1825:** Decembrist Revolt
**1861:** Abolition of serfdom in Russia
**1904:** Russo-Japanese war begins

**1905**
Mass rebellions caused by Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war culminate in the 1905 Revolution. First formation of Soviets
**January:** "Bloody Sunday" Troops fire on a defenceless march of workers led by Father Gapon. Mass strikes, mutinies and insurrections break out.
**October:** Height of the 1905 revolution. Tsar forced to proclaim "October Manifesto" turning Russia into a constitutional Monarchy. Huge strike and insurrection attempts to overthrow the government, fails.

**1907:** Height of the post-1905 reaction.
**1914:** First World War begins.

## **Appendix B:** The Russian Anarchist Movement

Russian socialism has always had a libertarian strain. One of the earliest socialist movements in Russia were the nihilists, a close cousin of anarchism. The nihilists were extreme skeptics who stressed rationalism, materialism, anti-clerical atheism and science while advocating revolution and individual freedom. Many used individualistic acts of violence, such as assassinations and arson, against the monarchy. Nihilists participated in the December revolt and assassinated Tsar Alexander the second.

The famous anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin, Marx's nemesis in the first international, was from Russia although he became an anarchist in exile. He was born into nobility, but lost his privileges (and spent many years in prisons) due to his opposition to the revolutionary activity. Bakunin participated in the 1848 revolutions and was a republican and nationalists for many years; it was not until the later years of his life when he became an anarchist. Some of Bakunin's writings influenced the "to the people" (populist) movement of the 1870s, although it was not explicitly anarchist. The Social Revolutionary party eventually evolved out of the populist movement.

Another famous anarchist was Peter Kropotkin. His story was similar to Bakunin's. He was born a noble, lost his privileges (and spent years in jail) as a result of his revolutionary activity and became an anarchist in exile. Kropotkin was a scientist and developed anarchist theory in more depth than Bakunin, as well as advocating anarchist-communism (Bakunin was an anarcho-collectivist). Kropotkin was able to return to his native Russia after the February revolution, where he died in 1921. His funeral, held just a few weeks before the Kronstadt rebellion, was effectively also a large anarchist rally against the Bolshevik dictatorship. Black flags and banners were displayed, one proclaiming "where there is authority, there is no freedom." This was the last public anarchist gathering allowed in Russia by the state until Gorbachev.

Anarchists participated in the Russian Revolution and played a major role in the Ukraine. The anarchists allied with the Bolsheviks against the provisional government and participated in the October revolution. After October the anarchists broke with the Bolsheviks and advocated a "third revolution" to overthrow the Bolsheviks. Starting in April 1918 the Bolsheviks began repressing the anarchist movement, eventually eliminating it all together. Bolshevik propaganda claimed that they did not repress "ideological anarchists" but only "bandits" and "criminals" who used the anarchist label as cover for criminal activity. This was a lie concocted to justify totalitarianism and convert foreign anarchists to their cause. There were many "ideological anarchists" who were a totalitarian dictatorship is an indictment not only of Marxism but also of all democratic theories of the state.

In early July dissatisfied Petrograd workers and soldiers (including sailors from the nearby Kronstadt Naval base, a stronghold of radicalism) staged demonstrations against the provisional government. They marched under revolutionary slogans including "all power to the soviets," beginning what would be known as the "July days." This turned into a semi-insurrection against the provisional government. Once again, the so-called "vanguard" was left behind by the workers. The Bolsheviks initially opposed the rebellion and attempted to prevent it but, as it got under way, subsequently decided to support it. The July days failed to overthrow the provisional government and were defeated. The leadership of the provisional government was changed as a result of the July days, making Kerensky head of the government. Kerensky was one of the best-known socialists in the country, a member of the SR party, but a right-wing very conservative "socialist," basically a sell-out to the capitalists. A period of reaction followed the defeat of the July days. Kerensky persecuted revolutionary groups, including the Bolsheviks. Lenin and several other leaders of the party had to go underground and flee the country. Prospects for revolution looked increasingly dim as the right advanced.

What changed this and radicalised the population was the Kornilov affair. The most common account of this is that General Lavr Kornilov launched an attempted coup against the provisional government, intent on imposing a right-wing military dictatorship. This was Kerensky's story. What actually happened is less clear and the details remain murky. There are many conflicting accounts of this story, some say Kerensky tricked Kornilov into revolting, others that there was a miscommunication between Kerensky and Kornilov and still others say Kerensky was trying to play Kornilov and the Bolsheviks against each other. In *A People's Tragedy* Orlando Figes claims that Kerensky received a miscommunication from Kornilov that he intentionally misinterpreted as implying that Kornilov was about to launch a counter-revolutionary coup. Kerensky used this for his own advantage, warning that Kornilov was about to launch a counter-revolutionary coup and setting himself up as a great hero fighting against Kornilov's coup, causing Kornilov to revolt against the government. This is a plausible account, though not necessarily correct. Whatever actually happened between Kornilov and Kerensky, the effect was to cause Kornilov to rebel against the provisional government and march on Petrograd. The Bolsheviks played a major role in defeating his march on the capitol, giving them more popularity. The attempted "coup" was seen as confirmation that the provisional government could not defend itself from the forces of counter-revolution, as the Bolsheviks claimed.

It radicalised many people, initiating a mass movement that would culminate in the October revolution. The revolutionaries, mainly Bolsheviks but also Left SRs and anarchists, won majorities in the Soviets.

The revolutionary movement built up over the next two months, eventually coming to comprise the majority of the population. The provisional government got weaker and weaker, until the October revolution finally overthrew it. The insurrection began on October 25th, not long before the opening of the second soviet congress. Paramilitary forces and revolutionary soldiers, including sailors from Kronstadt, stormed the government buildings. Though the Bolsheviks played a major role in the insurrection, it was not purely a Bolshevik affair. Other revolutionaries, including anarchists, Maximalists and Left SRs, participated as well. *"The October Revolution was not a mere coup, but the culmination of an authentic mass movement, notwithstanding the ideology and scholarship inspired by the cold war."* [12] The October revolution *"was but the moment when the Provisional Government, whose power and authority had been completely undermined by popular revolts, was finally officially pushed aside."* [13] Worker and peasant rebellions, the takeover of land and factories, accelerated with the October revolution (had it not the case for viewing it as a mere coup would be much stronger). By the time the provisional government was destroyed the soviets, factory committees and popular assemblies had already shattered most of its power. It is true that the October revolution was not the leaderless spontaneous event that the February revolution was, but just because a revolution has leaders and some amount of planning does not change it into a coup. Many non-Bolsheviks participated in the insurrection and, as shown by the revolutionaries' victories in the Soviets, most of the population supported the overthrow of the provisional government (although they did not support the one-party dictatorship that would later evolve).

Most Mensheviks and right-wing SRs walked out of the second congress of soviets in protest of the October revolution. They formed "committees to defend the revolution" and attempted to stop the revolution. The insurrection in Petrograd was followed by a brief miniature "civil war" in which soviets seized power throughout the country. Local governments were toppled and replaced with Soviet governments. Over the next several months rightists attempted to form armies in order to launch a counter-revolution, but they were defeated and frequently saw their troops mutiny or desert. In April 1918 Lenin declared:

> *"We can say with confidence that in the main the civil war is at an end. There will be some skirmishes, of course, and in some towns street fighting will flare up here or there, due to isolated attempts by the reactionaries to*



Leninism, since the starvation was cause by the Leninist system it would not matter if Stalin was a perfect saint – such atrocities would still occur. This needs to be applied consistently, though. Global capitalism causes thousands of people to starve to death every day, even though enough food is produced to feed everyone, yet none of these right-wing critiques that complain of starvation in Leninist states condemn global capitalism because of this. Market capitalist countries have a long history of mass famine throughout the globe just as bad as the Leninist states, yet death by famine is not usually added to the body count if these market capitalist countries. Adding death by starvation to the body count of Leninist states is legitimate, but it should also be added to the body count of market capitalist states, which the right does not do.

Counting the number of people directly killed through execution, death camps, etc. is obviously legitimate. Using high-end estimates is some times correct, some times not – it depends on the evidence supporting it. In some cases it is definitely not justified. For example, some right-wing accounts use Taiwanese propaganda as a source for the number of people killed by Mao, which would be like using Stalinist propaganda as a source for the number of people the US killed. It's obviously not credible. The "soviet" state was probably responsible for the deaths of 10-15 million people between 1917 and Stalin's death.

Capitalist condemnation of the millions killed by Leninism is thoroughly hypocritical. Capitalism has a long history of slaughtering millions, from the Atlantic Slave Trade, to the extermination of the Native Americans, to colonialism, to classical fascism and many more. Belgium's colonialism in Congo alone killed at least 10 million and the extermination of the Native Americans killed more than 100 million. Liberal capitalism brought about famine after famine in Ireland, India, Africa and many other parts of the globe. Thousands starve to death every day because of global capitalism. Non-Marxist forms of capitalism have killed more than Marxist-Leninism (state monopoly capitalism). Yet the massive deaths caused by most of these capitalist states are never given as much attention and is usually ignored. If we applied the methodology used by the right to estimate deaths due to "Communism" to the west we would find the numbers killed are even worse than the Leninists. That this methodology is only applied to Leninist states is a double standard and exposes their methodology as nothing more than a dishonest propaganda tool. To condemn Leninism for killing millions while supporting market capitalism (or vice versa) is the height of hypocrisy.

# Appendices:

## **Appendix A:** On Right-Wing Estimates of The Number Killed by Marxist-Leninism

Although there can be little doubt that Stalinism in particular and Leninism in general slaughtered millions, many right-wing historians, political scientists and commentators overly exaggerate the number killed using dishonest methods. These methods are only applied to official enemies (primarily Leninist states), never to western countries. If they were applied to western countries one would find that they have killed an even greater number than the states they are criticizing.

The standard methodology for calculating the number killed by Leninism (often incorrectly called "Communism") is to take the highest estimate of the number directly, intentionally killed (executions, etc.), add in the number of people who starved to death, and then add in the number of people who would have been born if previous population trends continued. This is the methodology used by Pipes in his histories of the Revolution, by *The Black Book of Communism* and others on the hardcore right.

This methodology is flawed for a number of reasons. Claiming that a change in population trends is equivalent to killing people is ridiculous. In order to be killed you first have to be born. Just because the birth rate goes down does not mean that mass murder is being committed. If this were applied to Western Europe it would find that the last fifty years was a time of massive death – but nothing of the sort is true. Western Europe's birth rate has just declined greatly and there is a big difference between a declining birth rate (or even a declining life expectancy) and actively killing people – a fact that is ignored by many rightists when it is convenient for propaganda purposes.

Counting death by starvation is probably fair, so long as it is done consistently and put in context. In most cases death by starvation is not intentional in the same way that executions are. In most cases, including Russia, leaders do not sit down and decide, "I want this many people to starve to death." Death by starvation is usually the result of systemic causes and is not intentional. The mass famine that occurred under Stalin (and, to a lesser extend, under Lenin) was the result of the Leninist system, which was incapable of feeding people, not the ill will of any particular leaders. This fact leads to a deeper critique of



> *overthrow the strength of the revolution — the Soviet system — but there is no doubt that on the internal front reaction has been irretrievably smashed by the efforts of the insurgent people."* [14]

Of course, the "civil war" he was referring to here was merely the initial resistance to October and an assortment of failed counter-revolutionary plots and skirmishes. The real civil war would not start until late May of 1918.

The October revolution created a soviet state; the soviets became the government. The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic was declared. The second congress of soviets created the Council of People's Commissars or Sovnarkom that ran the state, many local soviets set up local Sovnarkoms to run local governments. The Bolsheviks formed a coalition government with the Left SRs and passed a number of decrees and reforms. They embarrassed the entente by publishing secret imperialist deals the old regime had made with its entente allies. They legalized the peasant seizure of lands, decreed separation of church and state, legalized abortion, decreed equality of the sexes, and made divorce easier. A women's section of the Bolshevik party was eventually created to fight for women's equality and help the party control the female population. On February 1st/14th Russia switched it's calendar to the Gregorian calendar, putting it in sync with Western Europe. In March 1918 the Bolshevik party renamed itself the Communist party. Initially the power of the central government was extremely weak, local soviets and party organs were relatively decentralised. Some soviets even declared their own local republics and dictatorships that ignored the directives of the national government. Some parts of Russia were in near-anarchy. *"Kaluga Province became proverbial for its resistance to centralised authority in 1918. There was a Sovereign Soviet Republic of Autonomous Volosts in Kaluga. It was the closest Russia ever came to an anarchist structure of power."* [15] As the Bolsheviks consolidated their power things became more centralised as the national government asserted its' authority over the country. This process of centralisation was greatly accelerated after the civil war broke out but began prior to it.

Prior to the revolution the Bolsheviks had criticized the provisional government for its failure to hold elections for the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks hoped that electoral victory in the Constituent Assembly would solidify the power of the Soviet government and held elections to the Assembly on November 12th. The socialist parties won overwhelmingly, although the Bolsheviks did not gain a majority as they had hoped. The Bolsheviks received 24 percent of the vote, the SRs 38 percent, the Mensheviks 3 percent, and

the Ukrainian SRs 12 percent. The Kadets (liberal capitalists) received only 5 percent of the vote.

It was not an entirely fair election on account of the split in the SRs. The left SRs officially split from the SR party just after the election lists had been drawn up and were therefore unable to run their own slate. The right SRs also had a greater control over the party nominating mechanisms then their support warranted. As a result the right SRs were over-represented in the Constituent Assembly. Because the left SRs were pro-October and the right SRs were anti-October this was not a minor difference. Had the left SRs been able to run their own slate in the election there would probably have been more left SRs and less right SRs in it, especially if there had been enough time to conduct a lengthy electoral campaign against the right SRs. It is not unlikely that had the left SRs run their own slate the Bolsheviks could have formed a majority coalition with them, having the Constituent Assembly rubber-stamp the Soviet government and dissolve. [16]

Having failed to gain a majority in the Constituent Assembly, the Bolsheviks decided it should be disbanded. After losing the election, Lenin now argued that Soviet democracy represented a higher form of democracy than the parliamentary democracy of the Constituent Assembly. This argument was not without merit, since Soviet representatives could theoretically be recalled although bourgeoisie (and allied strata) could not vote in Soviet elections,[17] but if Soviet democracy were a better form of democracy then elections to the Constituent Assembly should have never been held in the first place. Armed forces dissolved the Constituent Assembly on January 6, the day after it met. The right-wing socialists whined about the closure of the Constituent Assembly, but most ordinary Russians weren't very bothered by it. *"There was no mass reaction to the closure of the Constituent Assembly."* [18] For most *"the constituent assembly was now a remote parliament. The peasants had greeted its closure by the Bolsheviks with a deafening silence."* [19]

Zhelezniakov, an anarchist sailor from Kronstadt, led the detachment that dispersed the Constituent Assembly. Unlike the Bolsheviks, anarchists had always opposed the constituent assembly – its purpose, after all, was to establish a state and consequently the rule of a small elite over the majority. The anarchists were opposed to even holding the elections for the Constituent Assembly, whereas the Bolsheviks only turned against the Constituent Assembly when it was clear that it wouldn't do what they wanted. Anarchists wanted to take this a step further, dissolving the Sovnarkom and abolishing the Soviet state. After October anarchists diverged from the Bolsheviks, their former allies. Many called for a



working class, which require the use of high levels of repression to keep them under control. The vanguard seizes power, making itself the new ruling class. It must use high levels of repression to keep itself in power because it comes to power on the back of a wave of class-conscious worker and peasant uprisings. It takes the form of a one-party state because that is the form it uses to seize power - the vanguard party. This necessitates further repression because it is more difficult for a party-state to convincingly present itself as a democratic state. After they've been in power a while, and have defeated the workers & peasants, the vanguard can decrease the level of repression (and sometimes do) because they no longer face a major threat from rebellious workers & peasants. The means you use will determine the ends you get. Using a centralised vanguard party to wage revolution will result in a society similar to it - a centralised party-state.

There have been over 30 "workers' states" implemented (including several that did not model themselves on Stalinist Russia); all of them have resulted in exactly what anarchists predicted. Are we really supposed to believe that each and every one of these was just a coincidence? Not repeated over thirty times. Even the few (non-Leninist) examples of "workers' states" which did not rely on state terror resulted in the rule of the red bureaucracy. The Marxist movement has followed exactly the path anarchists predicted: becoming either reformist or implementing the rule of a bureaucratic elite. This has happened over and over again, every time proving anarchist predictions correct. Predictions based on Marxist theory have proven incorrect, but predictions based on anarchist theory have proven correct. Marxists can invent all the ad hoc hypotheses in the world but that doesn't change this. As Marx himself said, what people do is as important as what they say. We need to look not only at the Marxists' manifesto, but also their record. Leninists have implemented one-party dictatorships every time they have come to power. Every "workers' state" has always been ruled by the red bureaucracy. It does not matter what rhetoric is used to justify it, these are the inevitable outcomes of Leninism and "workers' states." Albert Einstein is said to have defined insanity as "doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result." History shows what "workers states" leads to. If we try to do it again we will get the same bad results. It would be insanity to expect anything else.

capitalist economy. Under the NEP the Bolsheviks introduced a limited degree of private property, much greater than under War Communism, yet government repression increased in this period. The human race has been around tens of thousands of years; capitalism has been around for only a couple of centuries. It is absurd to argue that capitalism is "human nature" or that any alternative must always be a Bolshevik-style dungeon because most of human history was neither capitalist nor Bolshevik.

The second most important lesson to be learned from the revolution is from the libertarian forms of organisation created during the early period of the revolution – soviets, factory committees, village assemblies, etc. These show the broad outlines of an alternative to capitalist society (including Bolshevism): the beginnings of an anarchist society. They show that an anarchist society is possible and can work. For a time these anarchic institutions basically ran most of Russia; the factory committees were capable of running the factories and peasant communes were able to run the village. In the Ukraine they went all the way and were able to build a stateless and classless society. These were defeated and destroyed not because they "didn't work" or anything like that but because of the Bolshevik counter-revolution, which was a logical outcome of the creation of a "workers' state." Trying to put the Soviets in state form killed them.

The defeat of this revolution, and the Bolshevik's ability to outmanoeuvre the anarchists, also contains some organisational lessons for contemporary revolutionaries. One of the reasons the Bolsheviks were able to outmanoeuvre and defeat the anarchists was because the anarchists were very disorganised. The Russian Revolution shows the importance of anarchists organising and spreading our ideas both before and during the revolution. In the Ukraine the anarchists were more organised, although they probably could have done better, which is part of the reason anarchists there were more successful. Because it was a predominantly rural movement in Ukraine it encountered problems in the cities, showing the need for both urban and rural organisation. It also shows the treacherous nature of the Bolsheviks. It was a mistake for the anarchists to become as close allies with the Bolsheviks as they did (especially Makhno's final alliance with the Bolsheviks against Wrangel). The Bolsheviks literally shot them in the back.

All Leninist revolutions have historically resulted in repressive one-party dictatorships. This is a logical outcome of the way in which they come to power. A highly centralised vanguard party comes to power through a violent social revolution in which they encourage rebellion on the part of the oppressed classes and promise them a socialist society that will solve their problems and make their lives much better. This results in a highly combative peasantry and



"third revolution" to overthrow the "Soviet" government, establish a federation of free soviets and abolish the state.

In March 1918 the Soviet government signed a humiliating peace treaty, the Brest-Litovsk treaty, with the Central Powers, bringing Russia out of the First World War. Russia was not in a good position to negotiate and had to give up large amounts of territory. This treaty was very controversial within Russia. The left SRs and the left wing of the Communist party argued that they should not give in to the German imperialists and should instead wage a guerilla war against them. The coming world revolution would supposedly topple the German government within a short time, bringing them to victory. They were outvoted and Russia signed the treaty. The left SRs left the government in protest.

# **Part 4:** Counter-Revolution

There were really two October revolutions – the worker & peasant revolution, which expropriated land and industry, and the Bolshevik "revolution" which established a "dictatorship of the proletariat (and peasantry)." In the months and years after October the Bolshevik revolution would smash the worker & peasant revolution. Many anarchists in the 19th century predicted that if Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat" were ever implemented it would result in the creation of a new ruling class that would exploit the workers just as the old one did. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" inevitably becomes a "dictatorship over the proletariat." Mikhail Bakunin (and others) provided a materialist explanation for this. Few predictions in the social sciences have come true so dramatically. Not only in the USSR but also in every single instance where "workers' states" have been implemented (at one point they ruled a third of the world) this prediction has come true.

The state is a hierarchical organisation with a monopoly (or near-monopoly) on the legitimate use of violence. It is a centralised rule making body that bosses around everyone who lives in its territory. It uses various armed bodies of people (police, militaries) with a top-down hierarchical chain of command and coercive institutions (courts, prisons) to force its subjects to obey it. It has a pyramidal structure, with a chain of command and a few people on the top giving orders to those below them. Because of this pyramidal structure and monopoly of force the state is always the instrument by which a minority dominates the majority. It was precisely this kind of organisation that the Bolsheviks set up immediately following October. This led to the formation of a new, bureaucratic, elite ruling over the masses. The libertarian elements of Lenin's thought conflicted with the interests of this new elite (which he was a part of) and so were dropped one by one.

At the top of the state pyramid was the Council of People's Commissars or Sovnarkom; below it were several other bodies. It made laws and set up various hierarchical organisations to implement its' decrees. These were bureaucracies



the outcome of the implementation of the Marxist program, not of the Russian bourgeoisie seizing state power.

A non-Marxist explanation of the failure of the Russian Revolution is the cultural determinist theory. This states that Russia became totalitarian after the revolution because Russia had an authoritarian culture. Russia was extremely authoritarian prior to the revolution and so had to become extremely authoritarian after the revolution. The problem with cultural determinism is that there have been numerous cases of cultures undergoing major transformations, sometimes in a very short period of time. Many countries have successfully transferred from absolute monarchies or brutal dictatorships to very different, often less repressive, systems – England, France, the Philippines and numerous others. During the holocaust the Jews were passive and launched relatively few rebellions considering they were being exterminated. Many psychologists wrote about the Jews' passive mentality. Yet only a few years after this Zionist Jews managed to build a highly militaristic state in Israel – quite a big change compared to their lack of actions just a few years earlier. The early phase of the Russian Revolution saw radically libertarian forms of organisation spring up even though Russia had no real experience with democracy of any type. They were destroyed not by "Russian culture" (most Russians supported them) but by the Bolshevik counter-revolution. Cultural determinism amounts to arguing that major change is impossible, a non-democratic society is doomed to remain a non-democratic society. History shows that major change is possible and has happened repeatedly, even in relatively short periods of time.

Some right-wing capitalists claim that the descent of the Russian Revolution into totalitarianism was the result of their attack on private property. Supposedly, private property and civil liberties go hand in hand – destroy one and you destroy the other. Like the anarchist explanation, this theory has the virtue of having been created before the Russian Revolution – that revolution is seen as confirmation of its predictions. The problem with this theory is that there have also been a number of societies which did not conform to its predictions, which greatly reduced (or completely abolished) private property and did not turn into a totalitarian nightmare like Russia. The Iroquois and !Kung didn't practice private property, yet did not develop brutal totalitarian states. Swedish Social Democrats made significant restrictions on private property yet did not suffer a large drop in civil liberties. The Sandinistas in Nicaragua made major inroads on private property, far more than Russia under the NEP, yet had less repression compared to Bolshevik Russia (though they certainly were not devoid of abuses). Chile under Pinochet was a very brutal dictatorship that murdered thousands yet it had a high degree of private property and a very free market oriented

his business, he hires a member of the techno-managerial class to do so. Although both are parasites and unnecessary, it is much easier for peasants to see the landlord as a parasite than it is for the worker because the peasants are already running production – whereas the capitalist or manager directs production in industrial capitalism. It's possible to run production without bosses – Russia's factories provide one example of how to do it – but it is less obvious than farming without landlords. In addition, workers are much more interconnected with one another under capitalism and this often makes revolution more difficult. If the post office workers go on strike that can adversely affect other workers, disrupting solidarity and making co-ordinated rebellion more difficult. If a peasant village rebels, that doesn't usually bother other peasants the way a post-office strike can bother other workers. A successful worker revolution will require much greater co-ordination and planning because of this increased interconnectedness, whereas a successful peasant rebellion would not need as much co-ordination. A whole bunch of unco-ordinated local village uprisings are often sufficient to topple a regime, whereas workers usually have to co-ordinate across the entire country due to their increased interconnectedness. This is one reason why there tends to be greater unrest in peasant societies than industrial ones. Peasant societies will also have an easier time after the revolution, since a less complex economy is easier to manage and co-ordinate. It is not a coincidence that the rural revolution was more radical than the industrial one during the Spanish revolution.

Probably the strongest of these ad hoc hypotheses is the 'bourgeois revolution' theory. In Marxist theory a 'bourgeois revolution' is a revolution that results in the bourgeoisie seizing control of the state and implementing full-blown capitalism. Examples include the English, French, German and (arguably) American revolutions. Some Marxists claim that that the Russian Revolution was really a bourgeois revolution that used socialist ideology to legitimize the new state-capitalist order, but wasn't actually socialist. The theory of a bourgeois revolution is false in all cases because it is premised upon the Marxist view of states being instruments of whichever class is dominant. Although the interests of the economic elite and the state usually coincide, the state is not simply the tool of the dominant class. In addition, in Russia's case the bourgeoisie were literally destroyed. They had their wealth nationalised and were impoverished. Many were killed or put in forced labour camps. The individuals who seized power in the October Revolution were not members of the capitalist class; most came from the intelligentsia. It is true that the result of the Russian Revolution was eventually state monopoly capitalism but this does not mean that the revolution was a 'bourgeois revolution.' The triumph of state-capitalism was



because that was the most efficient way for its orders to be implemented and to run the country. In order to enforce the state's laws armed bodies of people with a top-down bureaucratic hierarchical chain of command were set up. The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Struggle against Counter-Revolution and Sabotage or Cheka (secret police) was created not long after October to enforce the rule of the state. Although at first they employed a relatively light amount of repression, the Cheka soon went out of control and used excessive force against anyone who did not agree with the state. The Soviets gained a near-monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and hierarchical authority over the population. This caused them to become isolated and detached from the masses, transforming into representative instead of directly democratic institutions.

During the course of the revolution the workers had taken over the workplaces and ran them themselves through their factory committees and factory assemblies. For a brief period a kind of "free market syndicalism" prevailed, with self-managed workplaces selling their products on the market. There were initial moves within the factory committees towards setting up non-hierarchical forms of co-ordination between workplaces without relying on the market, but the Bolsheviks defeated these proposals. On November 15th a decree on Worker's Control was passed that rubber-stamped the factory committee movement but undermined workers' self-management. The factory committees were legalized but required to obey the state planners rather then the workers in their factory. A system of central planning was set up, with a set of top-down authoritarian councils giving the committees orders. Workers lost control over the factories they had expropriated to the state. This effectively killed worker self-management in favor of centralised power. In December this process continued with the creation of the Supreme Economic Council to centrally manage the economy. The regime started nationalising industries, centralising the economy under the control of the Supreme Economic Council.[1]

Starting in March 1918 the regime began abolishing the factory committees (which had already been subordinated to the state) in favor of outright one-man management.[2] The dictatorship of the bosses was restored; capitalist relations in the workplace returned in the form of state planning. Over the next several years the factory committees would be eliminated in industry after industry until, by the early 20s, all workplaces were under one-man management.[3] In 1920 Trotsky claimed that, *"if the civil war had not plundered our economic organs of all that was strongest, most independent, most endowed with initiative, we should undoubtedly have entered the path of one-man management in the sphere of economic administration much sooner, and much less painfully."* [4]

In April Lenin was arguing that:

> *"We must raise the question of piece-work and apply and test it in practice; we must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system; we must make wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out, or to the amount of work done… The Soviet Republic must at all costs adopt all that is valuable in the achievements of science and technology in this field.… We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system."* [5]

As Marx said, piece-wages are the *"most fruitful source of reductions of wages, and of frauds committed by capitalists,"* [6] a way for capitalists to increase the exploitation of workers. Its usage by the state is increased exploitation by the state. Lenin continued this counter-revolutionary theme, arguing, *"that large-scale machine industry... calls for absolute and strict unity of will... But how can strict unity of will be ensured? By thousands subordinating their will to the will of one."* He now claimed that *"unquestioning subordination to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organised on the pattern of large-scale machine industry"* and that the *"revolution demands—precisely in the interests of its development and consolidation, precisely in the interests of socialism—that the people unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of labour."* In the same document he said:

> *"That in the history of revolutionary movements the dictatorship of individuals was very often the expression, the vehicle, the channel of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes has been shown by the irrefutable experience of history.... There is, therefore, absolutely no contradiction in principle between Soviet (that is, socialist) democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individuals."* [7]

The new regime exploited the peasants through grain requisitions, begun a few weeks before the start of the civil war. In early May a state monopoly on all grain was decreed. Any grain they produced in excess of what they needed for themselves was to be given to the state; peasants got little of value in return. The actual implementation of this was fraught with difficulty. Determining exactly how much a peasant needed for himself was not easy and telling whether a peasant was violating the grain monopoly by hoarding more grain than he needed for himself was, as a result, extremely difficult. *"The calculations of the [grain requisitions] made no allowance for the long-term production needs of the peasant farms. The consumption norms left the peasant farms without*



Another ad hoc hypothesis is the theory that the revolution failed because Russia was economically "backwards" – it was not very developed or industrialized. This theory basically amounts to the claim that the Mensheviks were right – socialism was impossible in Russia at the time. This theory can't really explain the early repression engaged in by the Bolsheviks (dispersing soviets, etc.) – there's no reason why the lack of industrialization should automatically result in these repressive acts. A Bolshevik style-revolution in an industrialized society would result in even greater disruption of the economy, as Lenin admitted. According to pre-1917 orthodox Marxism the Russian Revolution should have been impossible; the fact that it happened at all disproves it. There is no reason why the creation of a classless society absolutely requires industrialization. There have been many examples of agrarian socialist societies – the Iroquois, the !Kung and others. During the Russian Revolution anarchists were able to build a stateless and classless society in the Ukraine despite there being even less industrialization, further showing that the building of a classless society does not require industrialization.

Most peasant societies, including pre-Stalinist Russia, are organised into communes. Villages are run by village assemblies and many things are communally owned. Usually the feudal landlord expropriates the peasants by extracting rent, crops and other forms of unpaid labour. Although often patriarchal and ageist (except in times of rebellion), these communes come much closer to libertarian socialism than the representative democracy that prevails in most contemporary industrial societies. In most industrial capitalist societies there is nothing like these village assemblies and there is very little communalism. Almost everything is private property or state property. The domination of the bosses and the state is often much more rigid than the domination of the landlord. These peasant communes can serve as the embryo of the revolution, both serving as a springboard to organise rebellion and as the beginning of the organisation of society without classes. In Russia these communes were repartitional, but there have been examples of peasant revolutionaries organising more collective systems. In both the Ukrainian Revolution and (especially) the Spanish Revolution peasants organised collectives in which land was farmed in common and the produce shared on the basis of need.

Furthermore, the capitalist plays a much more intricate role in production than the landlord. The landlord doesn't really participate in production – he just extracts rent, unpaid labour, etc. The capitalist, however, often does participate in production (if only to enhance the exploitation of his workers) by managing the business(es). And if the capitalist doesn't manage

Some vulgar "Marxists" claim that the revolution went wrong because Lenin and the Bolsheviks didn't really implement what Marx wanted. They misinterpreted Marx and weren't "true Marxists." This theory conflicts with historical materialism, one of the cornerstones of Marxism. Any attempt to explain what went wrong in Russia solely as a result of the ideas held in the head of certain "Great Men" (Lenin, Trotsky, etc.), as a sole result of their alleged ideological differences with Marx, is historical idealism, not materialism. If this idealist theory were true it would disprove Marxism because it would disprove historical materialism. Those "Marxists" who put forth this theory don't really understand Marxism at all, or are disingenuous. Any materialist account of the revolution (Marxist or otherwise) should focus on the social structures created, how they evolved and the conditions they were in. In the case of Marxism this should focus on class struggle.

One ad hoc explanation invented by Marxists is the theory that the isolation of the "soviet" state, the fact that the world revolution failed, caused the revolution to degenerate and fail. This theory can't really explain the authoritarian actions taken by the "soviet" state in the early years of the revolution, such as the disbanding of Soviets after the Bolsheviks lost elections in spring 1918 and the suppression of left-wing opponents of the Bolsheviks. World revolution was still on the table and many countries were experiencing major unrest that could have resulted in imitations of the October revolution, yet Bolshevik Russia had already developed a new ruling class and begun suppressing workers and the opposition. There were eventually a number of other authoritarian socialist revolutions around the world ending Russia's isolation; at one point they ruled a third of the world. Yet all of these subsequent revolutions (which were not isolated) developed bureaucratic ruling classes and Russia's bureaucracy continued to rule even when no longer isolated. Some of these regimes were less oppressive than Bolshevik Russia, others were more oppressive (such as Pol Pot's genocidal reign) but all were run by bureaucratic elites even though they weren't isolated.

Some say that had Germany (or another country) imitated the October Revolution things could have gone differently by ending Russia's isolation, but this would have just established a second state-capitalist regime. In Hungary they managed to imitate October, establishing the Hungarian Soviet Republic. This Republic was only around for a few months before imperialist armies crushed it, yet even in that short time it managed to develop a party dictatorship, Red Terror and bureaucratic elite. The same would have happened in Germany had it imitated October.



*any grain reserves for collateral, or insurance against harvest failure."* [8] Lenin himself admitted that under the grain monopoly, *"we actually took from the peasant all his surpluses and sometimes not only the surpluses but part of the grain the peasant needed for food."* [9] This policy eventually led to famine. The state exploited the peasants by appropriating anything they produced in excess of what they personally needed to survive and sometimes more than that.

All this resulted in the creation of a new bureaucratic ruling class. Decisions in this immediate post-October period were not made by the working class but by the small group of commissars and bureaucrats who ran the state (a tiny minority of the population). Neither the workers nor the peasants were running the state at any point in time. The state did not later degenerate but was an instrument of minority rule from the moment it established its authority, as are all states. This is clearly shown by where decision making power lay: in the hands of the Sovnarkom and hierarchical, bureaucratic organisations subordinated to it. When the Sovnarkom makes the decisions the working class does not. If the majority of the population is unquestioningly subordinated to the "leaders of the labour process" then it is those leaders who rule, not the workers or peasants, and form a new ruling class over the workers and peasants. These authoritarian policies, combined with the disruption from war and revolution, caused Russia to sink deeper into economic crisis in the first months of Bolshevik rule.

The extreme degree of repression eventually employed by the "soviet" state arose out of this process of class formation and the class struggle between this new ruling class and the previously existing classes. Both the Russian working class and peasantry were highly combative and had just overthrown the previous ruling class. Subjugating them to a new ruling class was not easy and required massive amounts of repression, which is why all opposition was eventually suppressed. If this hadn't been done the new ruling class would have been overthrown. In doing this the Bolsheviks were not defending the working class (much of their repression was directed at the working class), they were defending their own dictatorship. The suppression of opposition groups (both left and right) could not have been caused by the civil war as many Leninists claim because it started prior to the start of the civil war.

At first government repression was relatively light and directed mainly at the right-wing socialists and supporters of the old ruling class. Although the actual dispersal of the constituent assembly was bloodless, a protest in support of it held after it's dissolution wasn't. Bolshevik troops opened fire on the demonstration. In December 1917 the Kadet party (constitutional democrats who advocated a liberal capitalist republic) was outlawed and some of its leaders arrested. On January 6th 1918 Kokoshkin and Shingarev, leaders of the Kadets,

were murdered by the regime. Many bourgeois papers were shut down, as were some anti-October socialist papers. A few right-wing socialist leaders were arrested and harassed. Compared to what would come later, this was a very light degree of repression. Most of the groups attacked were actively opposed the October revolution and/or were attempting to overthrow the new government. The Kadets, for example, were attempting to form counter-revolutionary armies to overthrow the government. This repression wasn't all that worse than the repression most governments, including western "democracies," employ against groups attempting to overthrow the government.[10]

Late winter and spring of 1918 saw rising working class opposition to the Bolshevik regime. Life for most workers had not significantly changed for the better and many began to organise against the new regime. In March there were a number of peaceful protests by workers against the Bolshevik regime and organising against the Bolsheviks by workers stepped up.[11] They did this in a manner similar to how they had struggled against the old bosses – they formed worker assemblies and conferences of worker delegates, which functioned similarly to the way the Soviets originally had – as organisations (similar to spokescouncils) designed to co-ordinate worker actions against the regime. The Soviets by this time had degenerated into weak parliaments controlled by the Bolshevik party and were denounced by the workers, who claimed they *"have ceased to be the political representatives of the proletariat and are little more than judicial or police institutions."* [12] They criticized the subordination of the factory committees and demanded that they *"out immediately to refuse to do the things that are not properly their real tasks, sever their links with the government, and become organs of the free will of the working class, organs of its struggle."* [13] In the spring of 1918 the Bolsheviks lost elections in Soviet after Soviet. The Mensheviks and SRs, the only other parties on the ballot, won by a large margin. Just a few months after coming to power, most workers were opposed to the continued rule of the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks reacted to this resistance with repression. Where they lost soviet elections they resorted to various forms of electoral fraud; usually they simply disbanded soviets after losing. In order to maintain their rule they destroyed the Soviets.[14] The right of recall, of even free elections, was destroyed and party dictatorship fully implemented. This resulted in a wave of worker and peasant protests and revolts, which the Bolsheviks put down with force. On May 9th armed guards shot at a group of workers in Kolpino protesting shortages of food and jobs. This touched off a wave of strikes and labour unrest that resulted in more arrests and attacks from the state.[15]



> *also be those who are ruled, there will be slaves.... They claim that only a dictatorship... can create popular freedom. We reply that no dictatorship can have any objective than to perpetuate itself, and that it can engender and nurture only slavery in the people who endure it. Liberty can be created only by liberty, by an insurrection of all the people and the voluntary organisation of the workers from below upward.... According to Marx's theory... the people not only must not destroy [the state], they must fortify it and strengthen it, and in this form place it at the complete disposal of their benefactors, guardians, and teachers - the leaders of the communist party... They will concentrate the reins of government in a strong hand... and will divide the people into two armies, one industrial and one agrarian, under the direct command of state engineers, who will form a new privileged scientific and political class."* [2]

History has proven him correct, on both counts. The revolution must not only abolish capitalism but most also abolish the state. If it does not the state will establish itself as a new ruling class over the proletariat. Any attempt to create a "workers' state" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" inevitably results in the "tyranny of the Red Bureaucracy."

Some tangential predictions have been shown to be correct as well. In 1919 Errico Malatesta claimed that Lenin and Trotsky

> *"are preparing the governmental structures which those who will come after them will utilize to exploit the Revolution and do it to death. They will be the first victims of their methods and I am afraid that the Revolution will go under with them. History repeats itself; mutatis mutandis, it was Robespierre's dictatorship that brought Robespierre to the guillotine and pave the way for Napoleon."* [3]

This too happened; we call it Stalinism. Nearly twenty years before the Russian Revolution Kropotkin claimed that *"Should an authoritarian Socialist society ever succeed in establishing itself, it could not last; general discontent would force it to break up, or to reorganise itself on principles of liberty."* [4] The fall of the USSR showed this to be correct as well.

Marxists, of course, do not admit that the failure of the revolution was the result of creating a "workers' state" but have instead invented all sorts of ad hoc hypotheses to explain its failure. They would have us believe that the remarkable accuracy of the anarchist critique of Marxism is nothing more than a coincidence.

# **Part 9:** Lessons of the Revolution

There are several lessons to be learned from the Russian Revolution. The most important is that the anarchist critique of state socialism is correct – implementing state socialism results in a bureaucratic ruling class over the workers (and peasants), not a classless society. The Russian Revolution and many other state socialist revolutions prove this.

Anarchists predicted the history of the state socialist (Marxist) movement in the 19th and early 20th century. Proudhon warned that implementing authoritarian socialist ideas would be *"apparently based on the dictatorship of the masses, but in which the masses have only the power to insure universal servitude... [and] the systemic destruction of all individual... thought believed to be subversive [and]... an inquisitorial police force."* [1] Stirner made similar criticisms. Probably the best-known anarchist critic of state socialism was Mikhail Bakunin, Marx's nemesis in the First International. He predicted that Authoritarian Socialist movements (such as Marxism) would take two possible routes. One was the path of becoming enmeshed in electoralism, which would result in them becoming reformist and helping to perpetuate the system instead of leading the revolution. The more power they would win through elections the more conservative they would become. This prediction was correct, with the Social Democrats being the first major example of a revolutionary movement using electoralism and, as a result, becoming reformist. The second was that they would not come to power through the ballot but instead come to power through revolution. This would result in the rule of the "Red Bureaucracy" which would exploit the proletariat just as the old ruling class had. He criticized Marx:

> *"What does it mean, "the proletariat raised to a governing class?" Will the entire proletariat head the government? The Germans number about 40 million. Will all 40 million be members of the government? The entire nation will rule, but no one will be ruled. Then there will be no government, there will be no state; but if there is a state, there will*



This early workers' movement against the Bolsheviks was largely reformist, with a high degree of Menshevik influence. Some workers' just wanted "good Bolsheviks." Most workers' and groups involved in the movement lacked *"a compelling explanation for the new disasters besetting Russian workers or a clear and convincing vision of a viable alternative social order."* [16] An exception to this was the anarchists, who had both an explanation of the problems in Bakunin's (and others') warnings about authoritarian socialism and their own ideas about how to organise society. So the anarchist movement had to be smashed. In early April Anarchist organisations were raided; many anarchists were killed and many more were arrested. This was the start of a major attack on the Russian anarchist movement that eventually wiped it out.[17] Continuing the crackdown on anarchism, in early May *Burevestnik*, *Anarkhia*, *Golos Truda* and other major anarchist papers were shut down by the state.[18] The "Communist" press put out all sorts of slanders against the anarchists – calling them bandits and other nonsense. Other opposition groups suffered similar fates – the Mensheviks, SRs, Left SRs and Maximalists all saw many of their activists arrested or killed and publications censored. All of this occurred prior to the start of the civil war.

# **Part 5:** Civil War

This pre-civil war terror played a role in the start of the civil war. The SRs, tired of being persecuted, let themselves be caught up in the Czechoslovak adventure. The Czech legion was a group of Czech P.O.W.s in Russia who had been organised by the Entente to fight against the Central Powers in exchange for the promise of Czech independence. After the Bolsheviks made peace with the Central Powers the Czech legion was stuck in Russia, and started making their way out of Russian territory via the East. Neither the Bolsheviks nor the Czechs really trusted each other so the Czechs revolted on May 25th and launched an attack against the Bolsheviks. The SRs took advantage of this to form a new government based in Samara. They created a coalition government very similar to the provisional government. The civil war began as a war between the Bolsheviks and one of the rival socialist groups they tried to suppress. The civil war did not cause the Bolshevik's suppression of rival trends, but rather the suppression of rival trends was a catalyst that helped started the civil war.

In the wake of this several more counter-revolutionary governments were set up against the Bolsheviks:

> *"Between the Volga and the Pacific, no less than nineteen governments... arose to oppose the Bolsheviks. Most prominent among the former, the government of Komuch in Samara [set up by the SRs] and the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia in Omsk, vied to establish their claims as the Constituent Assembly's legitimate heirs since both had been formed by men and women [from the constituent assembly] "* [1]

The politics of these anti-Bolshevik governments ranged from right-wing socialists, like the SRs, to the far right, including Monarchists. In September these governments united by forming a Directorate of five people, including both socialists and reactionaries. The Directory was in a precarious situation from the start. The right continued to demand the creation of a one-person



in which it is ever acceptable to implement a police state (or any other kind of state). A police state can never be used to defend workers' rule because all police states have a tiny minority ruling at the top over the proletariat. Implementing a police state guarantees that a classless and stateless society will not come about.

state-capitalist ruling class shortly after coming to power. Their dictatorship was defending one capitalist class against a different capitalist class (and the workers and peasants) - not the workers against the capitalists. All of the political parties represented different forms of capitalism, even if they called their version "socialism." The only real way to end bourgeois rule would have been the anarchist solution using partisan warfare along the lines of the Makhnovshchina. The triumph of any of the parties, including the Bolsheviks, meant the triumph of capitalist rule. It is contradictory to argue that Bolshevik authoritarianism was necessary to defend the gains of the revolution because Bolshevik authoritarianism destroyed the gains of the revolution by gerrymandering soviets, shutting down factory committees, repressing opposition socialists, etc. Bolshevik methods brought about the very thing they were allegedly supposed to stop.

Another defence of this is the claim that the Russian working class had become "declassed" or "atomised." Allegedly, the proletariat had effectively ceased to exist as a proletariat due to the depopulation of the cities brought about by the civil war and thus the party had no choice but to substitute it's own dictatorship for the rule of the proletariat. It is true that Russian cities underwent large-scale depopulation during the civil war due both to the civil war and the disastrous set of policies known as War Communism. Those who fled the cities tended to be those who had come to the cities more recently and still had ties to villages. The "hardcore proletarians" who had been born in the city and lived there for their whole life were less likely to leave. These "hardcore proletarians" were the ones who went on strike and rebelled against the Bolsheviks, culminating in the Volynka. The working class obviously had not ceased to exist or lost its ability to engage in collective action since it was quite capable of taking collective action, including strikes and other actions, against the Bolshevik dictatorship.[1]

The "it was necessary" defence of Lenin's dictatorship is the same as the defences offered by John Ashcroft, Henry Kissinger, the CIA and other apologists of American imperialism. They claim that repressive measures are necessary in order to "stop the terrorists" and other boogeymen. They too reject both "pure democracy" and "pure repression." The CIA only imposes police states on other countries when it is needed to maintain US imperialism. When it is not necessary they do not usually impose a police state. If it is necessary both Leninists and the CIA will use extreme terror to force their vision of how the world should be organised on the majority. Associating Leninism with brutal dictatorships is no different than associating the CIA with brutal dictatorships. There are no circumstances



dictatorship while the SRs advocated a moderate socialist republic. The rising landlord counter-revolution threatened the Directory and the SRs. The Directory, and the preceding anti-Bolshevik governments, instituted a traditional military hierarchy and began the building of their own army. Because most of the population did not support them, and thus would not volunteer to fight for them, they had to implement conscription.

The Bolsheviks were greatly hurt by the loss of popular support they had held in the wake of October. Most did not support either side of the conflict; some village communes passed resolutions calling on both sides to end the civil war through negotiation and even declared themselves 'neutral republics.' [2] However, the loss of popular support made the advance of anti-Bolshevik armies easier since few were willing volunteer to risk their lives defending the Bolsheviks.

The civil war greatly accelerated the centralising trends that were already present in Bolshevik-controlled Russia and helped give an upper hand to the more hard-line & repressive factions within the ruling class. Power gradually transferred from the Sovnarkom to the party to the Politburo. This process had already started prior to the civil war; the civil war merely accelerated it.

At the start of the civil war the Bolsheviks had a very small military. Most of it had disintegrated after October, as soldiers took the opportunity to leave and go home. What was left consisted of a few small units, some paramilitary groups and partisan units. Given their lack of popular support, these were completely incapable of halting the offensive by even the small Czech legion, let alone the large armies that were later used. Trotsky was made Commissar of War, head of the military, in March 1918. He reorganised the Red Army. Because most people opposed the Bolsheviks, and thus wouldn't volunteer to fight for them, conscription was instituted. The Bolsheviks claimed to support military democracy during the run up to October, but now that they were in power it was abolished in favor of a traditional military hierarchy. If military democracy were maintained while simultaneously conscripting huge numbers of people who didn't want to fight and who were opposed to the Bolsheviks it would result in the soldiers voting against the Bolsheviks, refusing to fight for them and possibly even overthrowing the Bolsheviks. Obviously they were not going to let that happen. Trotsky defended the abolition of military democracy:

> *"So long as power was in the hands of the enemy class and the commanders were an instrument in the hands of that class, we had to endeavor, by means of the principle of election, to break the class resistance of the commanding personnel. But now political power is in the hands of that same working class from whose ranks the Army is recruited. Given the present regime in*

*the Army... the principle of election is politically purposeless and technically inexpedient, and it has been, in practice, abolished by decree."* [3]

Former Tsarist officers were made officers in the Red army. In order to insure that the Tsarist officers obeyed the Red command, and didn't launch a coup, commissars were assigned to each unit to keep the officers in line. Both sides of the civil war suffered from massive desertion.

On August 31, 1918 SR assassins attempted to kill Lenin and nearly succeeded. In response *"the Communists inaugurated... mass arrests and executions, accompanied by the suppression of practically all the surviving non-Communist newspapers."* [4] The few civil liberties Russians had left were shredded. The Red Terror is usually dated to have begun with this heightened repression. *"Hundreds of Cheka prisoners are thought to have been summarily executed in the heightened paranoia that followed the assassination attempt... By the end of 1918 there had been 6,300 official executions,"* [5] and an unknown number of unofficial executions. *"There was hardly a single town where executions did not take place."* [6]

At this point the civil war was still a war between socialists, although the SRs were in a coalition with the right. In November 1918 a right-wing coup deposed the directory and installed a military dictatorship under Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak.**7** By allying with the far right the SRs helped launch a right-wing counter-revolution that suppressed the SRs and all other socialists. Two months after the Red Terror was fully launched, eight months after it was partially launched, the civil war was transformed from a war between socialists into a war between Bolsheviks and reactionaries, between Reds and Whites. The right-wing counter-revolution rose ascendant against the Bolshevik counter-revolution. The Whites reinstated private property, restored the rule of the landlords, and launched a White terror just as bad as the Red terror, arguably worse. The Whites were officially Republicans, but in reality were closet Monarchists.

From this point on the civil war was basically a three-sided class war: the new ruling class (Reds) vs. the old ruling class (Whites) vs. the workers and peasants (most Greens & Blacks). Greens were partisan groups formed mostly by peasants against both the Reds and the Whites:

*"Some deserters formed themselves into guerilla bands. These were called the Greens partly because they hid out in the woods and were supplied by the local peasants; sometimes these peasant armies called themselves Greens to distinguish themselves from both Reds and Whites. They even had their own Green propaganda and ideology based on the defence of the local*



If these "objective circumstances" (civil war, imperialism, etc.) caused Bolshevism to degenerate and become authoritarian then Bolshevism will always degenerate and become authoritarian because those "exceptional circumstances" commonly occur with revolutions. Revolutions are frequently caused and accompanied by economic and/or political crises. The revolution will inherit this crisis. A successful revolutionary strategy must be capable of dealing with it without degenerating. In *State and Revolution* (and elsewhere) Lenin claimed that a "dictatorship of the proletariat" was needed in order to defeat capitalist counter-revolutionary armies in civil war. If this "proletarian" state cannot do that without degenerating into a totalitarian hellhole then it should be avoided because it is incapable of achieving it's goal and will always degenerate into a totalitarian hellhole. It's pretty unrealistic to think that you can have a revolution without resistance from the capitalists. If Bolshevism cannot overcome that resistance without turning into a totalitarian nightmare then Bolshevism is to be avoided because it will always turn into a totalitarian nightmare.

This justification for Lenin's dictatorship cannot possibly justify the suppression of the Workers Opposition faction of the Bolsheviks party. The Workers Opposition was not only defeated but also banned. All factions within the Bolshevik party were banned, making Stalin's rise to power much easier since no one was allowed to organise against him. Nor can it justify the imperialism engaged in by Soviet Russia in the early 20s. They invaded not only Ukraine, where the anarchists had defeated the bourgeoisie, but also other states, which had become independent of the Russian Empire during the course of the revolution and civil war.

Repression not only continued after the civil war but increased, making the civil war excuse even more implausible. Many Leninists defend this by claiming that the country was too exhausted for genuine Soviet Democracy, and had they not continued party dictatorship the right would have come to power. The country obviously wasn't too exhausted at the end of the civil war because they were quite capable of launching numerous large revolts against the Bolsheviks (Kronstadt, Tambov, the Volynka, etc.). It is quite possible that had the Bolsheviks held free elections the SRs or Mensheviks might have won (the Bolsheviks would almost certainly have lost). It is further possible that this might have resulted in a restoration of the capitalists to power, through a Kolchak-style coup, a Menshevik-SR slide to the right or some other means. But the Bolshevik dictatorship resulted in the rule of the capitalist class anyway. I'm referring here not only to the eventual downfall of the USSR but the fact that the Bolsheviks established themselves as a new

# **Part 8:** Kissinger-esque Excuses

The standard Leninist defence of the authoritarian actions of the Bolsheviks after coming to power is that it was necessary to defeat the Whites, imperialists, etc. and prevent the gains of the revolution from being destroyed. This is wrong for several reasons. The Revolutionary Insurgent Army of the Ukraine (Makhnovist) was able to defeat the Whites, imperialists, etc. under conditions more difficult than the Bolsheviks had in Russia without their authoritarian policies. Thus, these authoritarian policies could not have been the only way the Bolsheviks could have defeated the Whites since there are successful examples of other ways to fight the counter-revolution.

The Bolsheviks were already becoming increasing dictatorial by the time the civil war, imperialist invasions, etc. happened. The civil war started on May 25th, 1918 with the revolt of the Czech legion. In spring 1918 the Bolsheviks lost the soviet elections. Their response was to disband all the soviets that voted the wrong way. This is what caused party dictatorship to come about, not the civil war. They also started disbanding factory committees in March 1918 and in April launched raids against anarchists. Anarchists (and others) were jailed and newspapers shut down, all before the civil war start. It is rather difficult to blame the civil war for Bolshevik authoritarianism when their authoritarian policies began before the civil war.

This pre-civil war authoritarianism actually played a role in starting the civil war and undermining popular support for the Bolsheviks. Far from being absolutely necessary to defeat the Whites, Bolshevik brutality probably helped the White cause. These actions caused many uprisings against the Bolsheviks, which the Whites took advantage of, and decreased eagerness to fight against the Whites. Bolshevik totalitarianism was the only way they could keep themselves, and the new ruling class created as a result of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," in power, not the only way to stop the Whites from winning.



> *peasant revolution. During the spring of 1919 virtually the whole of the Red Army rear, both on the Eastern and the Southern Fronts, was engulfed by these Green armies."* [8]

The Greens advocated ideas similar to both the Maximalists and the anarchists, though not identical to either. Some of these peasant rebels appeared to have a poor understanding of the political situation, but their rebellions were nonetheless an expression of class struggle against Reds and Whites. Anarchists also formed their own Black partisans that fought against Reds and Whites, mainly in the Ukraine. Some historians group the Black forces in with the Greens, but this isn't really correct because the Greens did not fully agree with anarchism (though there were some strong similarities). There were also Blues – local nationalists who fought to establish an independent nation-state in a country formerly ruled by Russia. They frequently came into conflict with the Whites, because the Whites aimed to restore the Russian empire, and also with the Reds because the Blues were usually right-wing capitalists. In addition, there were also various wannabe warlords, like Grigoriev, who attempted to take advantage of the instability of civil war to establish their own little fiefdoms.

Throughout the civil war both the Bolsheviks and the Whites were continually beset with worker and peasant unrest. There were numerous peasant revolts against them throughout the civil war, some quite large:

> *"if we were to look in greater detail at any one area behind the main battle lines in the eastern Ukraine, in western Siberia, in the Northern Caucasus, in parts of White Russia and Central Asia, in the Volga region and Tambov province, then we would find a series of smaller 'peasant wars' against the Reds and the Whites. These wars ... aimed to establish peasant rule in the localities against the authority of the central state."* [9]

Whole provinces were engulfed in rebellion including Tambov, Riazan, Tula, Kaluga, Smolensk, Vitebsk, Siberia, Pskov, Novgorod, Mogilev and even parts of Moscow.[10] *"The peasant uprisings were localist in their aspirations, and hostile to any form of central government."* [11] The peasant rebels desired *"to restore the localized village democracy of the revolution, which had been lost"* and *"aimed not to march on Moscow so much as to cut themselves off from its influence by fighting a guerilla and terrorist war against the Red Army and the state officials in the countryside."* [12] One peasant uprising against the Bolsheviks at Simbirsk and Samara, the 'War of the Chapany' (Chapany was the local peasant term for a tunic) in April of 1919 had as it's main slogan 'Long live the Soviets! Down with the Communists!' *"The politics of the uprising were couched in terms of the*

*restoration of the soviet democracy established during the October revolution."* [13] According to statistics from the Cheka there were 245 anti-Bolshevik uprisings in 1918 [14] and 99 in the first seven months of 1919.[15] Most of these were provoked by the grain requisitions against the peasants.

The Whites faced at least as much peasant unrest as the Reds, arguably more:

> *"By the height of the Kolchak offensive, whole areas of the Siberian rear were engulfed by peasant revolts. This partisan movement could not really be described as Bolshevik, as it was later by Soviet historians, although Bolshevik activists, usually in a united front with the Anarchists and Left SRs, often played a major role in it. It was... a vast peasant war against the [Whites]... the partisan movement expressed the ideas of the peasant revolution... Peasant deserters from Kolchak's army played a leading role in the partisan bands."* [16]

The peasant partisans used guerilla tactics to destroy White railroad tracks, harass and destroy enemy forces, ambush trains, and disrupt supply lines.[17] This forced the Whites to divert troops away from the front in order to combat unrest in their rear. In the Ukraine Makhnovist partisans waged a peasant war against the Whites. Workers in Omsk, the White Capital, launched a revolt against Kolchak on December 22, 1919. They managed to free more than a hundred political prisoners before being brutally crushed.[18] Railway workers generally would not work for the Whites except at the point of a gun.[19]

The Bolsheviks claimed to be a working class party but were opposed by the majority of workers who rebelled against them ever since the spring of 1918. The wave of labour unrest caused by the shooting of protesters on May 9, 1918 continued through the start of the civil war and culminated in a Petrograd general strike called for July 2. The state responded with mass arrests, forcibly breaking up worker assemblies and other standard union-busting tactics that succeeded in defeating the general strike. On June 28 the Sovnarkom issued its famous decree nationalising all remaining industries not already nationalised, which helped break the resistance of the working class by giving the state control over the entire economy.[20] Industrial unrest continued throughout the civil war. Workers denounced the "commissarocracy" and rebelled against it. In March 1919 strikes and riots against the Bolsheviks again broke out. A worker assembly at the Putilov Works, which had originally been a stronghold of Bolshevism and militant supporter of the October revolution, passed a resolution on March 10, 1919 saying:



and Stalin than most anti-Stalin Leninists would have us believe. Stalin used the same strategies and repressive machinery (systemic lying, repression of all opposition, etc.) Lenin used against the left SRs, anarchists, Mensheviks, etc. against his opponents.

What existed in the USSR was not communism or even socialism, but Red Fascism. The USSR was a totalitarian state that murdered millions and suppressed all opposition, even other revolutionaries. This form of government was very similar to that established by Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, and Franco in Spain. These classical Fascist states also implemented state-capitalism with a high degree of central planning, like the USSR. Just as Leninists pretend to be socialists, Nazis also call themselves socialists (neither are). Hitler claimed to be a 'national socialist.' Nazi Germany nationalised several industries and instituted a series of three-year plans similar to the five-year plans in the USSR. Mussolini implemented a form of joint state-corporate central planning. Most fascist states have historically used some form of central planning, and not only the classical fascist states. The biggest difference between Red Fascism (Leninism) and Brown Fascism (Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, etc.) lies in the philosophy and rhetoric they use to justify their policies. The policies themselves are very similar. Brown Fascists tend to be more favorable towards private property and never completely eliminate it (although they usually place some restrictions on it) whereas Red Fascists seek to completely replace private property with state (public) property. Brown Fascism, when it is not imposed by a foreign power, comes about as a defense of the presently existing state and ruling class, as a way of warding off revolution. Red Fascism, when it is not imposed by a foreign power, comes to power by overthrowing the old ruling class and establishing a new one. The new elite, created by the attempt to implement Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat," implements Red Fascism to insure it stays in power. Other than that, Brown and Red Fascisms are very similar. Marxist-Leninism is the left-wing version of Fascism.

like the soviets and factory committees. This also brought about a counter-revolution that the destroyed the soviets, factory committees, etc. and brought about Bolshevik dictatorship and the reign of terror. In the French Revolution after this new elite had succeeded in holding off its enemies and establishing its rule it overthrew the revolutionaries who created it – Thermidor. In the Russian Revolution after the new elite succeeded in hold off its enemies and firmly establishing its rule it overthrew the revolutionaries who created it – Stalinism. Just as Robespierre was killed with his own guillotine, Stalinism used the same repressive machine developed by Lenin and company to eliminate the revolutionaries who built it. There were quite a few differences between the French and Russian Revolutions, but they underwent similar processes because they both established the rule of a new elite through similar mechanisms (popular social revolution). Thermidor/Stalinism constituted a kind of 'second counter-revolution' in both cases.

Stalinism, Russia's long Thermidor, was not the outcome of Stalin's personality but of the structure of the state and society created in the early twenties. Had another individual been in power more or less the same things would have occurred. Preventing Stalinism or something similar to Stalinism would have required either a different outcome of the tenth party congress or an event that drastically changed things, like another revolution, another civil war, or a meteor destroying Moscow. Stalinism was the logical outcome of the way things were set up in the early twenties. Most of the things attributed to Stalinism had their precursors in the first years of Bolshevik rule:

- state farms/"collectives" first established in 1918
- war on the peasants - grain requisitions under Lenin / forced collectivization under Stalin
- using torture to extract "confessions" was first used against striking workers in 1919
- One party state established in the first half of 1918
- persecution of dissident party members began in 1921 with the decree banning factions
- suppression of independent socialist and labour organisations began in 1918

Of course Stalin took these things to an extreme beyond that of Lenin and Trotsky, but the precursors were there. There is more continuity between Lenin



> *"We, the workers of the Putilov Works, declare before the labouring classes of Russia and the world that the Bolshevist government has betrayed the ideals of the revolution, and thus betrayed and deceived the workers and peasants in Russia; that the Bolshevist government, acting in our names, is not the authority of the proletariat and peasants, but a dictatorship of the Bolshevik party, self-governing with the aid of Cheka and the police ... We demand the release of workers and their wives who have been arrested; the restoration of a free press, free speech, right of meeting and inviolability of person; transfer of food administration to co-operative societies: and transfer of power to freely elected workers' and peasants' soviets."* [21]

Several thousand workers participated in the assembly; only 22 voted against the resolution. The Bolsheviks responded to the strikes and unrest by firing strikers without compensation, banning meetings and rallies, evicting dissident workers from their homes and using armed force against strikers. Workers were forced to "confess" to being lead astray by provocateurs and "counter-revolutionaries." June and July of 1919 saw another wave of strikes and worker unrest against the Bolsheviks,[22] as did 1920.[23]

In July 1918 the Left SRs, hoping to restart the war against Germany, assassinated the German ambassador and launched an uprising against the Bolsheviks. The assassination failed to restart the war and the Bolsheviks suppressed the uprising. In 1919 Left SRs and anarchists detonated a bomb at the Moscow headquarters of the Communist party, managing to wound Bukharin.[24]

Strikes, insurrections and riots against both the Reds and Whites continued all throughout the civil war. Conscripted troops often mutinied or deserted, sometimes joining the Greens.

As a result of the resistance of the other classes to the new bureaucratic ruling class an extremely repressive police state was implemented in "soviet" territory to maintain the power of the new ruling class. There have been many instances of ruling classes implementing totalitarianism when it was needed to keep them in power. That is how fascism came about. The Bolsheviks implemented Red Fascism in order to keep themselves, the new ruling class, in power much as the German and Italian rulers implemented fascism to keep themselves in power. The center of power went from the Sovnarkom to the central committee to the politburo.

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" was in reality the dictatorship of the Communist party. Ever since early 1918 (before the civil war began) the "soviets" did nothing more than rubber-stamp the decisions of the party.

*"The borough soviets in the major cities disappeared. In areas near the front and in territories conquered by the Red Army, special revolutionary committees with unrestricted powers replaced constitutionally provided soviet organs. They were frequently identical with the Bolshevik Party committee."* [25] *"The soviets, designed to prevent bureaucratization through constant control by the voters, their right to recall deputies, and the union of legislative and executive branches, turned into bureaucratic authorities without effective control from below. ... The 'soviets,' allegedly ruling in Russia since 1918, are only powerless adjuncts of the party bureaucracy."* [26]

All opposition groups were severely persecuted, although they were not wiped out until the early twenties and the intensity of the persecution varied in different parts of the civil war. This included the anarchists:

*"From 1918 to 1920 the fragmented anarchist groups were almost constantly persecuted, with only occasional concessions. Echoing Bakunin's animosity to any [state], the anarchists fought Bolshevik "dictatorship of the proletariat" and its threatening centralism, commissars, and terror. They considered soviets a first step toward the anarchist commune, but thought existing soviets were flawed and usually refused to co-operate in them.... The group of anarcho-syndicalists active in Petrograd and Moscow called soviet power an 'exploitation machine for subjugation of most workers by a small clique.' Many anarchist slogans and demands subsequently turned up during the Kronstadt revolt."* [27]

The Bolsheviks waged a class war on the poor. Under the grain monopoly all grain produced by the peasants in excess of what they needed for themselves was the property of the state. Often the state would take some of what the peasant need as well. This policy provoked countless peasant rebellions as they resisted Bolshevik exploiters. The government sent armed forces into the villages to take the grain and suppress peasant resistance. Peasants resisted by reducing the amount they planted, which ultimately lead to less food being produced and a famine.

A black market flourished during the civil war; the Bolsheviks outlawed it and attempted to stamp it out. 'Bag traders' traveled to and from the city and countryside, attempting to trade city goods with the peasants. These traders were not petty capitalists but ordinary workers and peasants attempting to gain things they and/or their community needed. The peasants were willing to trade when they could get around the Bolsheviks. During the revolution co-operatives had often been set up to trade between city and country. This system, though



constitution was adopted. The height of the Great Terror occurred in 1937-38, when many members of the Communist party were liquidated. Dissidents were forced (through torture or other means) to "confess" to being Nazi agents, terrorists or some other absurd charge. Show trials and executions were used not only against dissidents and ordinary people but also against many leaders of the Bolshevik revolution.

The Great Terror was a sort of coup-without-a-coup, in which the bureaucracy liquidated the original revolutionary leaders. It was *"the culmination of the counter-revolution."* [49] The Marxist "dictatorship of the proletariat" created an extremely powerful bureaucracy that established its rule over the country. In the Great Terror that bureaucracy killed the original revolutionaries who created it and solidified it's rule. *"Almost all the most outstanding Red Army commanders who had risen to prominence during the Civil War perished."* [50] The rise of Stalin was part of the triumph of the bureaucracy. Stalin was not a major revolutionary leader but basically a bureaucrat who monopolised administrative positions (including the position of General Secretary of the party). When the bureaucracy launched its "coup" against the revolutionary leaders it did not need to actually overthrow the state because it already controlled most of the state, including it's coercive machinery. Major victims of the terror "were hundreds of thousands of rank-and-file party members." The "soviet" secret police *"arrested and killed, within two years, more Communists than had been lost in all the years of the underground struggle, the three revolutions, and the Civil War."* [51] At the 17th congress of the Communist Party 80 percent of representatives had joined the party before 1920, at the next (18th) party congress only 19 percent of the representatives had joined the party before 1920. The bureaucracy succeeded in eliminating the leaders of the Bolshevik revolution and solidifying its rule, thereby completing Russia's long Thermidor.

The early stages of the French Revolution saw popular organs of self-management, such as the Sans-Culottes' sectional assemblies, come into being just as the early part of the Russian Revolution saw popular organs of self-management such as the soviets and factory committees. The Jacobins used these to attain power for themselves, just as the Bolsheviks did. However, the institutions the Jacobins advocated (capitalism and representative government) are inherently systems of elite rule and are incompatible with non-hierarchical (anarchist) ways of running society like the sectional assemblies. This brought about a counter-revolution that destroyed the sectional assemblies and brought about Jacobin dictatorship and the reign of terror. The institutions the Bolsheviks advocated (centralism, "proletarian" dictatorship) are also inherently systems of elite rule and are incompatible with non-hierarchical (anarchist) ways of running society

Peasant resistance to collectivization was enormous, at one point bringing the country close to civil war. Peasants called collectivization a "second serfdom" and believed they were in the middle of Armageddon, with Stalin being the anti-Christ. In 1930 alone more than two million peasants participated in 13,754 mass rebellions.

In the end these rebellions failed to stop collectivization. The peasants were proletarianised – turned from peasants into workers. Every society transitioning from an agrarian peasant society into a capitalist society has undergone a period of proletarianisation like this, although Russia's proletarianisation was much faster and had it's own peculiarities. Capitalism is an economic system based on wage-labour, in which the majority of the population (the working class) has to sell their labour to a minority of the population (the capitalist class) in order to make a living. In order to establish capitalism a capitalist class must establish a monopoly (or near monopoly) over the means of production, including arable land. If the average person can make a living off the land they will not have to sell their labour to the capitalists in order to survive, which impedes the development of capitalism and negatively impacts their profits. Although the USSR claimed to be socialist, it actually practised state monopoly capitalism. The five-year plan system begun in 1928 was a centrally planned form of capitalism. Most of the population had to sell their labour, to the state, in order to survive. The capitalist class was made up of high-level bureaucrats and party members who controlled the state and exploited the workers. There is little difference between Stalinist-style central planning and having a single corporation monopolize the entire economy. Marxism is the ultimate capitalist monopoly. The NEP was also state-capitalist (as the Bolsheviks admitted), but of a different kind, and War Communism was a kind of state monopoly capitalism combined with elements of "agrarian despotism."

Stalin had already killed millions through the collectivization of agriculture but in the mid-thirties he launched a series of purges that slaughtered millions more, including most of the original revolutionaries who had helped build the "soviet" state. *"From the beginning of the thirties Stalin relied more and more on young Party officials, hand-picked by himself, and slighted many veterans of the Revolution."* [47] In late 1934 the great terror began, lasting through 1938. Stalin had Kirov, the second most powerful man in the country, assassinated and then framed his enemies for the assassination. A bloody hurricane of death swept across the country, as paranoid witch-hunts demonising "Trotskyite terrorists" and other boogeymen killed thousands. *"In 1936, the right to carry weapons was taken away from Communist Party members. Preparing for mass terror against the Party, Stalin feared some kind of active response."* [48] In that same year a new



greatly flawed, could have been used to feed the cities but the Bolsheviks instead attempted to suppress it. The new ruling class, the Bolsheviks, was waging a class war against the peasants & workers and so obviously could not allow this independent system to continue. Unless they successfully imposed their control over the food supply their control over the economy would be damaged, greatly threatening their position.

These policies, combined with the civil war, lead to famine and de-urbanization. Workers fled the cities to the villages, where they had a better chance of feeding themselves. The workers most likely to flee the cities were those who still had connections with the villages, who had moved to the city more recently. Those who were left in the city tended to be more connected to the city, often born in the city – hardcore proletarians.[28]

Trotsky advocated iron control over the working class by the state, completely crushing workers' freedom and de-facto defending the domination of the workers by a bureaucratic ruling class. In a speech at the 9th party congress Trotsky argued that, *"the working masses cannot be left wandering all over Russia. They must be thrown here and there, appointed, commanded, just like soldiers... Deserters from labour ought to be formed into punitive battalions or put into concentration camps."* In 1920 he claimed that:

> *"The very principle of compulsory labour service is for the Communist quite unquestionable.... The only solution of economic difficulties that is correct from the point of view both of principle and of practice is to treat the population of the whole country as the reservoir of the necessary labour power—an almost inexhaustible reservoir—and to introduce strict order into the work of its registration, mobilization, and utilization.... The introduction of compulsory labour service is unthinkable without the application, to a greater or less degree, of the methods of militarization of labour.... It would... be a most crying error to confuse the question as to the supremacy of the proletariat with the question of boards of workers at the head of factories. The dictatorship of the proletariat is expressed in the abolition of private property in the means of production, in the supremacy over the whole Soviet mechanism of the collective will of the workers, and not at all in the form in which individual economic enterprises are administered."* [29]

The Whites launched their own White terror against the populace just as brutal and bloodthirsty as the Red terror, arguably worse. All opposition was suppressed, even groups like the SRs who had helped in the fight against the

Bolsheviks. *"Peasants were flogged and tortured, hostages were taken and shot, and whole villages were burned to the ground."* [30] Many White soldiers indulged themselves in mass rape and pillage of the villages.[31] Workers in many cities were shot en masse. In Yuzovka one in ten workers would be shot whenever factories and mines failed to meet their output expectations.[32] In the town of Taganrog the Whites blinded, mutilated and then buried alive anti-White workers.[33] Similar events happened on a regular basis in White territory.

The Whites were also anti-Semites who carried out many pogroms against Jews. Anti-Semitism had long been a part of Russia and had been used by many Tsars to their advantage in the past. Anti-Semitism was more of a hangover from the old regime than an outgrowth of the revolution. Many on the right unfairly blamed Jews for the revolution and Communism. Although most Jews were not Communists, many Bolsheviks were Jews and Jews faced less persecution from the "Soviet" state than it's Tsarist predecessor. *"White propaganda portrayed the Bolshevik regime as a Jewish conspiracy."* [34] Whites would burn and destroy whole Jewish towns, execute Jews en masse, rape Jewish women and display Jewish corpses in the street with a red star cut into their chest. White officers rarely attempted to halt any pogrom, but in several cases encouraged them. During early October in Kiev White soldiers in Kiev, with the encouragement of officers and priests, went around pillaging Jewish homes, taking money, raping and killing Jews. The Whites cut off limbs and noses of their victims and ripped fetuses from their mothers' wombs. They forced Jews to run inside houses they had set on fire. Jewish girls were frequently gang raped; in Cherkass hundreds of pre-teen girls were gang raped by the Whites. In the town of Podole hundreds of Jews were tortured and mutilated, many women and young children had their corpses left in the snow for the dogs to eat.[35] When the Whites occupied the village of *"Gulyai-Polye, a large number of peasants were shot, dwellings were destroyed, and hundreds of carts and wagons filled with food and other possessions of the Gulyai-Polye inhabitants were [seized]... Almost all the Jewish women of the village were raped."* [36] Similar things happened all throughout White territory.

The Whites demonized anyone who opposed them as "Bolsheviks" including those who most definitely were not. They set up a false dichotomy – either you were with the Whites or you were with the Bolsheviks. Any opposition to them was equated as support for the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks did the same thing – any opposition to the Bolsheviks was equated as being support for the Whites. They labeled their opponents "counter-revolutionary" and other names – even groups like the anarchists, Left SRs and Maximalists who were militantly opposed to the Whites were smeared as "counter-revolutionary." All peasants who opposed the Bolsheviks were smeared as "Kulaks" regardless of whether



has complete control over almost every aspect of society it should come as no surprise that the state bureaucracy would acquire great power.

The NEP contained within it the seeds of it's own destruction. "Soviet" Russia underwent a series of "scissors crises." Agriculture was able to recover from the wars and revolution faster than industry. Workers were unable to produce enough goods for the peasants to buy (in addition to giving the elite a huge share of the economic pie), leading to economic crisis. In the first scissors crisis Trotsky proposed a state-driven program of crash industrialization designed to rapidly build up Russian industry. This was rejected and instead they used price fixing to end the crisis. This proved to be only a temporary fix, because they faced further scissors crises. They could have continued manipulating prices (and other economic interventions) in order to keep the NEP going, but this would have resulted in lower industrial growth. This was unacceptable to the elite because of their Marxist ideology (which was very much in favor of industrialization), the need to build an industrial infrastructure to defend against foreign invaders, and because it would require the ruling class to accept the extraction of a smaller surplus. In 1928 Stalin ended the NEP and opted for a variant of Trotsky's proposal of rapid industrialization (of course Trotsky was not given credit and had already been expelled by this time). This came in the form of a series of five-year plans made by central planners. This system of five year plans, a new one being drawn up every five years, continued with small variations for decades until Gorbachev.

Along with the five-year plans the state launched a war on the peasants in the form of forced collectivization. The Mir was destroyed and peasants coerced into joining state-run agricultural collectives. The collectives employed wage-labour and had a very authoritarian structure. It brought about mass famine and the death of millions. This class war on the peasants allowed the state to extract agricultural surpluses with which to fuel industrialization. In addition, it smashed the section of society most hostile to the ruling class and over which it had the least control, the peasants:

> *"The collective farm was to be an instrument of control: it would enable the state to exact a tribute from the peasantry in the form of grain and other produce and extend political and administrative domination to the countryside.... the party aimed at nothing less than the eradication of peasant culture and independence. It launched a wholesale campaign against... peasant institutions... Peasants lost control of their means of production and economic destiny. Collectivization was an all-out attack against the peasantry, its culture, and way of life."* [46]

The ban on factions led to a closing of party democracy and the consolidation of power into the hands of one man, Joseph Stalin. Purging and repression against party members began in the last years of Lenin's life, including the purging of Miasnikov,[43] but reached massive proportions under Stalin. The ban on factions made organising against Stalin almost impossible, allowing him to solidify his rule.

A power struggle arose between Trotsky and Stalin, each fighting for leadership of the party. One of the controversies in the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky was the issue of "Socialism in One Country." Trotsky defended the original view of the Bolsheviks that a worldwide revolution was necessary in order to build real socialism in Russia while Stalin argued that since the world revolution had been defeated they should attempt to build socialism in Russia by itself. "Socialism in one country" entailed abandoning the goal of a global revolution, instead seeking what was best for the Russia, and taking a less hostile stance towards bourgeois governments. By the time of Lenin's death Russia had already started moving towards a de-facto "socialism in one country." They signed a friendship treaty with Turkey even after the Turkish government carried out massacres of Turkish Communists.[44]

Stalin formed a Troika with Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky that dominated the party for several years. Later that broke up and Stalin allied with more right-wing elements against Trotsky. Trotsky led the "Left Opposition" against Stalin. Trotsky accused Stalin of replacing *"the party by its own apparatus"* and of therefore violating the *"Leninist principle, inviolable for every Bolshevik, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is and can be realized only through the dictatorship of the party"* [45] by replacing the dictatorship of the party with the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. In 1927 Trotsky and the Left Opposition were defeated and expelled from the party. Trotsky was sent into exile and murdered by a Stalinist agent with an ice pick in 1940.

In the context of this many Bolshevik leaders were starting to become aware of the increasing bureaucratization of "Soviet" society. The Workers' Opposition was among the first of the Bolsheviks to realize this. Even Lenin realized it in the later years of his life. He proposed to combat it in a top-down fashion that would have been completely ineffective because they were top-down and did not truly combat the source of the bureaucracy's power. He advocated greatly increasing the size of the Central Committee (and other organs) but this would not have combated bureaucratization because the bureaucrats would just appoint people who were loyal to them and, once in power, they would just become more bureaucrats. Bureaucratization was the natural outcome of the Bolshevik program, even though they did not intend it. In a situation where a modern state



they actually were Kulaks or not. A Kulak was supposedly a rich peasant, but in the hands of the Bolsheviks it lost all real meaning and became little more than a term of abuse applied to any peasant opposition:[37]

> *"Soviet historians, unable to admit the existence of popular resistance to the Bolshevik regime, have dismissed [peasant] uprisings as 'kulak revolts', stage-managed by the opposition parties and their allies abroad. The empirical poverty of this interpretation is such that it does not warrant a detailed critique. Suffice to say that the few Western studies so far completed of the Makhno uprising in the Ukraine and the Antonov uprising in Tambov province have established beyond doubt the mass appeal of these movements among the peasantry."* [38]

The agrarian revolution had a levelling effect on the peasantry, decreasing stratification within the villages. Lenin over-estimated peasant stratification even before the revolution [39] and after the revolution it became even more egalitarian. Russian peasant villages were generally very egalitarian especially after the revolution. Bolshevik supporters *"have laid a great deal of stress on the 'class struggle' between rich and poor peasants during the land re-divisions. Yet the records of the village and volost' soviets leave little evidence to suggest that such a struggle played anything more than a very minor role."* [40]

There was also military intervention by foreign imperialists who backed the Whites and attempted to destroy the "soviet" state. Pro-Bolshevik accounts of the revolution often leave the impression that, immediately upon coming to power the whole world declared war on the Soviet Union. They tell stories about how 17, 25, 33 or some other made up number of countries invaded and waged full-scale war on the Bolsheviks. However, the military interventions were not as major as they portray it as, nor were the imperialist powers as universally hostile to the Bolsheviks as they imply. The Germans had actually helped deliver Lenin from exile into Russia in the hopes that he would stir up unrest and possibly force Russia to make a separate peace with Germany. During the negotiations for the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which pulled Russia out of the First World War, the Entente made friendly gestures towards the Bolsheviks in the hope that they would continue the war, thereby keeping two fronts against Germany open. They offered military and economic assistance to keep the war going, which the Bolsheviks refused. These were capitalist countries, both Entente and Central Power, making friendly advances towards the Bolshevik regime in order to further their own imperialist interests.

The Entente initially landed troops in the hopes of reopening the Eastern Front and to retrieve supplies they had given to the Russians to aid them in the war. They were too busy fighting World War One to launch a serious intervention against the Bolsheviks until after the war was over. A blockade was imposed on the country. The British were the most active of the interventionists; their forces repeatedly clashed with the Reds. Both the Japanese and United States landed forces in the Far East. France attempted to intervene but their troops mutinied. The most significant place of intervention was in the North, in Murmansk and Archangel. Allied forces landed and propped up the local Whites, who came close to taking Petrograd. This was mainly a British operation, but included other countries (including small Canadian and Serbian detachments).[41] Troops from newly independent Finland also made a few small forays into Russian territory. In 1920 Russia fought a border war with Poland, which had become independent from Russia in the wake of the Revolution. Probably more significant than the military intervention was the aid supplied to the Whites. The Whites were greatly helped by the money, weapons and supplies provided to them by foreign powers – without it they probably would have lost much quicker.

The existence of the Bolshevik government was a threat to the other capitalist countries not only because it nationalised the property of foreign companies but also because it provided the threat of a good example. The Bolshevik government had the potential to inspire similar revolutions in other countries, and so they had to destroy it to ward off that threat. Despite this the imperialist intervention into Russia was rather limited. The Whites bitterly complained that they were not receiving enough aid.[42] The countries involved had just finished fighting the First World War and were in no shape for another full-scale war. In addition, the period after the Russian Revolution was a period of global unrest that restricted the amount of intervention possible without causing a revolution in the homeland. The intervention was also hampered by conflicts between the different imperialist powers, which were all competing with each other for greater influence within Russia.[43]

The Bolsheviks had a military advantage in that they controlled the centre of the country while the Whites were based on the periphery. The Whites were divided into several different areas, with their main bases in the south and the east (for a while there was also a northern front near Petrograd). For much of the civil war General Anton Denikin commanded the south. The White forces in the south evolved from failed attempts to launch a right-wing counter-revolution in the wake of October but they had no real success until the later part of 1918. Although Admiral Kolchak was officially the head of state for the entire White army, in practice he only ran the east. The south (and north) was



> *catastrophe. And when a Menshevik says: 'you are now retreating but I was always favoring a retreat, am in full accord with you, I am one of your people, let us retreat together,' we tell them in reply: an avowal of Menshevik views should be punished by our revolutionary courts with shooting, otherwise the latter are not courts but God knows what.... if you don't refrain from openly enunciating such [Menshevik and SR] views, you will be put against the wall"* [41]

This shows a link between the economic retreat to the NEP and the greater repression of the time period. The period after the defeat of Kronstadt and the other rebellions saw massive repression against all opposition groups. Before this period the Mensheviks, anarchists, left SRs and other opposition groups had been severely persecuted but at least managed to survive. The early twenties saw systemic assaults on all these groups, which succeeded in annihilating them. In the situation the Bolsheviks found themselves, with the immense majority of the population completely opposed to them, the only way they could stay in power was through Red Fascism, suppressing all opposition. They had even support than previously because they could no longer use the White boogeyman to scare everyone into submission and the NEP discredited their ideology, since they were no longer even defending something remotely resembling socialism. The opposition groups were now eliminated from society.

Inside the ruling party there was also a clampdown. During the civil war the Communist party had maintained a certain degree of internal democracy. This was a highly centralised, representative democracy but there were still different factions within the Communist party who openly debated and competed with each other. Outside the party all opposition was repressed, but within the party (ruling class) a limited degree of democracy survived. The tenth party congress ended this with its ban on factions. Lenin, and several other Bolshevik leaders, was very afraid of a split within the party. Such an eventuality would probably have lead to the fall of the "soviet" state because the vast majority of the population was opposed to it and would take advantage of such a split to overthrow it. In the kind of precarious situation the ruling class found itself in the only way it could be sure of staying in power was to completely suppress all dissent, both inside and outside the party.[42]

The tenth party congress should be considered the beginning of Russia's long Thermidor. What followed afterwards, Stalinism, was the logical outcome of the way the system was set up at that congress. Had the congress made different decisions things may have gone differently but the rise of Stalinism was made the most likely outcome by the decisions made at this congress.

*meaning of these speeches, which have no particular meaning at all. They are all words of the same order. After all, comrades, we ought to discuss not only words, but also their meaning. You can't fool us with words like "freedom to criticize".... this is no time to have an opposition. Either you're on this side, or on the other"* [39]

Lenin's position won a majority of the votes at the Tenth party congress. A resolution was passed condemning the Workers' Opposition as a 'syndicalist' deviation, which the Democratic Centralists voted in favour of.[40] A resolution banning factions (including the Workers' Opposition and Democratic Centralists) within the party was passed, marking the beginning of the end of (representative) democracy within the party.

Instead of the left-wing proposals for reform advocated by the Workers' Opposition and Democratic Centralists a right-wing proposal called the New Economic Policy (NEP) was implemented. The grain requisitions were abolished and replaced by a tax in kind. Instead of taking all the peasant's surplus grain the state only took part of their grain. The remainder they were allowed to sell on the open market. The NEP allowed a limited amount of free enterprise although most industry, the "commanding heights" of the economy, stayed under state ownership. Lenin characterized the NEP as "state-capitalism," the previous system was now called War Communism. Most Bolshevik leaders viewed the NEP as a retreat compared to War Communism, but a necessary one given the circumstances. The NEP succeeded in decreasing anti-Bolshevik rebellions and in getting the economy back on its feet. The end of grain requisitions probably played a role in defeating the post-Civil War peasant uprisings since that was the peasants' number one grievance. In the years that followed the economy gradually recovered to it's pre-World War One levels.

The NEP was basically a variation of the Menshevik's economic program. This did not prevent the Bolsheviks from continuing to suppress and execute Mensheviks, in fact the suppression of opposition groups increased in this period. Lenin implemented Menshevism while shooting the Mensheviks. His justification of this was:

*"The Mensheviks and SRs who advocate such views wonder when we tell them that we are going to shoot them for saying such things. They are amazed at it, but the question is clear: when an army is in retreat, it stands in need of discipline a hundred times more severe than when it advances because in the later case everyone is eager to rush ahead. But if now everyone is just as eager to rush back, the result will be a*



autonomous, with little direction from Kolchak. Bolshevik control of the centre of the country also gave them control over most of the industrial areas and many of the railroads, which gave them another advantage.

One of the main reasons the Whites lost was because they had even less popular support than the Bolsheviks. Many *"feared the return of Tsarist and of the pomestchiki, the big land-owners, much more than Bolshevism."* [44] The Whites wanted to restore the Russian empire, making enemies out of anti-Bolshevik nationalists. Although most of the population was opposed to both the Reds and the Whites, a substantial portion of the population regarded the Reds as a "lesser of two evils." Their reactionary policies cost the Whites victory; White decrees made excellent propaganda for the Reds. Near the end of the civil war General Wrangel attempted to remedy this by implementing limited reforms, but it was too little, too late.

The height of the civil war was in 1919, when the Whites came closest to victory. Admiral Kolchak launched a major offensive from the east in early 1919 but it was defeated in April. Denikin launched a major offensive from the south in May that came the closest to victory of any of the White forces. Denikin's offensive came within 120 miles of Moscow before being defeated in October, the closest of any White army.[45] Black partisans inflicted serious damage on Denikin's army in Ukraine, which aided his defeat. By early 1920 the Whites were in retreat everywhere. In November Kolchak abandoned Omsk, formerly his capital, and fled east towards Irkutsk. On his way to Irkutsk Kolchak's train was held up by rebellious Czech troops and a popular uprising erupted in Irkutsk. The uprising overthrew the Whites and established a new government, the Political Center, run by SRs and Mensheviks. The Political Center was later taken over by the Bolsheviks. The Reds captured Kolchak and executed him on the morning of February 7th, 1920. The war in the east was effectively won; they only had to finish mopping up the remnants of Kolchak's forces.[46] In early 1920 it looked as if the war was about to be won in the South as well. Denikin resigned and handed command over to General Petr Wrangel. Wrangel managed to launch one last offence against the Reds, but was also defeated after a few months. In November 1920 Wrangel fled Russia. The Reds had won the civil war.

# **Part 6:** Revolutionary Ukraine

The revolution in the Ukraine took a different course from many other parts of the former Russian empire, mainly as a result of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, in which the Bolsheviks agreed to allow the Central Powers to take over the Ukraine. In addition, the Bolshevik party was relatively weak in Ukraine and the Ukrainian anarchists were better organised than the Russian anarchists. An anarchist revolution developed in the Ukraine, based on village assemblies, communes and free soviets. A partisan militia was formed to fight against counter-revolutionary armies that were attempting to forcibly re-impose the state and class society. This militia succeeded in defeating the Germans, Austrians, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the White armies of Denikin and Wrangel. It was not, however, able to defeat the Bolsheviks, who used their far superior resources to conquer the Ukraine in 1921.

At first the revolution in the Ukraine took a course similar to the rest of the Russian empire. Soviets were formed, land was expropriated, etc. The Germans and Austrians set up a puppet dictatorship headed by Hetman Skoropadsky. This government launched a counter-revolution, restoring the landlords to power and oppressing the peasants. The people living in Ukraine did not have a say in the treaty delivering them to the Austro-German imperialists and did not particularly want to be ruled by the Central Powers. So they rebelled. Peasant insurrections erupted all throughout the Ukraine against the Hetman government and it's imperialist masters. Peasants formed partisan units to wage guerilla warfare.[1] These partisans formed links with each other and eventually formed the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of the Ukraine. The existence of this movement lends support to left-wing critics of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, who argued in favor of a revolutionary guerilla war.

A major organiser in this peasant war was the anarchist-communist Nestor Makhno. Prior to the German takeover Makhno had been active in the peasant and workers movement, acting to help expropriate the means of production and overthrown capitalism. The RIAU was also called the Makhnovists (after Nestor



party democracy.[36] The other, larger, group was the Workers' Opposition. They criticized the increasing bureaucratization of Russian and advocated having the economy run by the trade unions that would organise an All-Russian Congress of Producers to centrally plan the economy. They were (incorrectly) accused of 'syndicalism.' One of their leaders, Shliapnikov, advocated a separation of powers between the Soviets, Trade Unions and party.[37] The leadership of the Workers' Opposition also included Alexandra Kollontai, who was the only senior Bolshevik leader to support Lenin's "April Theses" from the very beginning. Neither of these groups challenged the dictatorship of the Communist party and both supported the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion.

Trotsky took a position on the unions opposite from the Workers' Opposition, arguing that the unions should be completely subordinated to the state. Trotsky accused the Workers' Opposition of having

> *"come out with dangerous slogans, making a fetish of democratic principles! They place the workers' right to elect representatives above the Party, as if the party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers' democracy. It is necessary to create amongst us the awareness of the revolutionary birthright of the party, which is obliged to maintain its dictatorship, regardless of temporary wavering even in the working classes.... The dictatorship does not base itself at every given moment on the formal principle of a workers' democracy."* [38]

Lenin took a position on the trade unions that seemed to be in-between the Workers' Opposition and Trotsky but in actual practice was not that far removed from Trotsky's position. He opposed Trotsky's idea of directly subordinating the unions to the state, claiming that they should have their own autonomy from the state. In practice this was not that different from Trotsky's position because the party dictatorship ensured that the party would always have control of the unions and the party also controlled the state. Thus they would in practice be subordinated to the same people running the state, even if they officially had some autonomy. Lenin also opposed the Workers' Opposition. He said of their program:

> *"What is this "All-Russia Congress of Producers"? Are we going to waste more time on that sort of opposition in the Party? I think we have had enough of this discussion! All the arguments about freedom of speech and freedom to criticize, of which the pamphlet is full and which run through all the speeches of the Workers' Opposition, constitute nine-tenths of the*

his advice to the rebels and drew up military plans, which the rebels rejected and chose not to implement. Every non-Leninist account of the Kronstadt rebellion agrees that Kozlovsky did not play a significant role in the revolt. The newspaper, resolutions and propaganda of the rebellion all explicitly opposed the Whites and call for Soviet Democracy. There is no evidence that Kronstadt was a White plot. Another lie was the claim that the Kronstadt rebels demanded privileges for themselves. In fact they explicitly called for the end of privileges and point nine of their program demanded the equalization of rations. It was the Bolsheviks who defended privileges (for party members), the Kronstadt rebels demanded equality. Another Leninist lie was the claim that the sailors who rebelled in 1921 were not the same revolutionary sailors who had helped make the October revolution in 1917. Peasant conscripts who no longer had the same revolutionary spirit as the original Kronstadt revolutionaries had allegedly replaced them. Historian Israel Geltzer researched this claim and found that 75.5% of the sailors in Kronstadt during the revolt had been recruited before 1918, disproving this Bolshevik lie. This claim was invented to justify the suppression of the rebellion; before the rebellion erupted the Bolsheviks were still calling Kronstadt the "backbone of the revolution" even in the period when new recruits had allegedly replaced Kronstadt's revolutionary sailors. In his memoirs the Bolshevik Victor Serge, who considered the suppression of the rebellion an unfortunate necessity, admitted that all these claims were lies.[34]

The Bolshevik's brutal suppression of Kronstadt, the "pride and glory" of the revolution, further shows their counter-revolutionary nature. Using airplanes and artillery, the final defeat of the rebels occurred on March 17th. Trotsky authorized the use of chemical warfare if the final assault failed to defeat the rebels. *"Among the dead, more than a few were massacred in the final stages of the struggle. A measure of the hatred which had built up during the assault was the regret expressed by one soldier that airplanes had not been used to machine gun the rebels fleeing across the ice."* [35] Many of the survivors were put in concentration camps and executed as "counter-revolutionaries." Similar brutality was used against Tambov, the Volynka and the other anti-Bolshevik rebellions.

Although these attempts at a Third Revolution were defeated, they did force the Bolsheviks to grant concessions and make a major change in the economic system of "Soviet" Russia (and it's client states). The tenth congress of the Communist party met in early March, at the same time as the Kronstadt rebellion. At the congress there were several proposals for reform, including two groups within the Communist party opposed to the mainstream leadership of the Communist party. One opposition group was the Democratic Centralists; they criticized the increasing centralisation within the Communist party and called for greater



Makhno), the insurgent army and the black army after it's distinctive black flags (black being the colour of anarchism). Although named after Makhno, *"The movement would have existed without Makhno, since the living forces, the living masses who created and developed the movement, and who brought Makhno forward merely as their talented military leader, would have existed without Makhno."* [2] Many other anarchists also played significant roles in organising the insurgent army, although it was not a purely anarchist army. Most members of the movement were not well versed in anarchist theory; they became anarchists more on the basis of their own experience:

> *"Ukrainian peasants had little reason to expect any good from the state. For decades the Russian regime gave the peasants only national and sociopolitical oppression, including conscription for military service, [and] taxation,... Experiences with the 'Reds,' 'Whites,' Germans, and Austro-Hungarians had taught them that all governments were essentially alike – taking everything and giving nothing. Therefore, the peasants were more apt to revolt than to create or support a national government. They felt the Revolution gave them the right to secure the land and to live peacefully on it.... they wanted to be left alone to arrange their lives and affairs."* [3]

There was also a civilian anarchist organisation during the revolution, the Nabat confederation. This was a synthesist organisation that combined all the different anarchist tendencies into one organisation. In Ukraine at this time the main forms of anarchism were anarchist-communism, anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-individualism. The Nabat federation published anarchist newspapers, spread anarchist ideas and attempted to defend and further the revolution. Nabat occasionally criticized the Makhnovist army as well; neither was simply the tool of the other.

The RIAU was not a traditional army but a democratic one. In many ways this was a continuation of the military democracy created during 1917, with soldier committees, general assemblies, etc. It was similar to the democratic militias created by anarchists in the Spanish revolution and the democratic militaries in many other revolutions. Officers in the ordinary sense were abolished; instead all commanders were elected and recallable. *"Unlike the Red Army, none of the well-known Makhnovist commanders came from the ranks of Tsarist officers."* [4] Regular mass assemblies were held to discuss policy. The army was based on self-discipline, with all of the army's disciplinary rules approved by soldier assemblies. Unlike the Red and White armies the RIAU relied on voluntary enlistment instead of conscription.

This partisan army was quite effective. Especially when defending their own communities, democratic militias are quite capable of fighting battles effectively. Traditional militaries have an ultra-hierarchical undemocratic structure primarily to defend elite rule, which is what their main purpose is. Traditional militaries are used by elites for their own benefits, to suppress rebellions, conquer other countries, etc. all of which primarily benefits the elite more than the rank and file soldier. A democratic army might refuse to do these things and so are not very good at achieving the goals set for them by elites. Authoritarians thus disparage democratic armies as "ineffective" because they defend elite rule and democratic militaries are ineffective at defending elite rule. In terms of defending their communities from hostile attack democratic militias have been shown to be effective many times in history, including the Makhnovists.

The RIAU won countless battles against incredible odds. Makhno *"was a master of tactics. ... he displayed great skill in the techniques of guerilla warfare: the ability to work without a fixed based, the ability to retreat as well as advance, and stratagems of various kinds."* [5] They employed guerilla tactics and their close links with the peasantry to their advantage. *"The army was never a self-sufficient force. It always derived its revolutionary ideas from the vast masses, and defended their interests. The peasant masses, on their side, considered this army as the leading organ in all facets of their existence."* [6] Peasants supported the army with supplies, horses, food, information and *"at times large masses of peasants joined the detachments to carry out in common some specific revolutionary task, battling alongside them for two or three days, then returning to their fields."* [7] The partisans were virtually indistinguishable from ordinary non-partisan peasants, which they used to their advantage. In 1918 they were able to defeat Ukrainian nationalists during a battle at Ekaterinoslav, despite being outnumbered and outgunned, by *"boarding what appeared to be an ordinary passenger train, sending it across the river into the centre of the town"* [8] and launching a surprise attack on the enemy.[9] They used peasant carts to move quickly, and could infiltrate enemy positions by hiding under hay in them and springing out to surprise and often defeat the enemy. In retreat Makhnovists could bury their weapons and join the local peasant population.

When enemy forces were captured they would usually shoot the officers and release the rank and file soldiers. They encouraged the released soldiers to spread the revolution to their homeland and spread unrest.[10]

The Makhnovshchina came under massive attack from the Whites. The south, near and including parts of Ukraine, was a stronghold of the White counter-revolution. General Denikin commanded the Whites in the south for most of this period, until 1920 when General Wrangel took over. Despite this, the



*it. Having achieved power, it fears only to lose it, and for this end all means are allowable: slander, violence, fraud, murder, and revenge on the families of rebels."* [30]

In their newspaper they printed an article titled "Socialism in Quotes" which complained that under Bolshevik rule:

*"From a slave of the capitalist, the worker became a slave of the bureaucratic institutions. Even that became too little. They planned to bring in the Taylor sweat shop system...The entire labouring peasantry was counted with the kulaks, declared an enemy of the people.... [Kronstadt] is fighting for a labouring Soviet Republic, where the producer will find himself the fully empowered master and commander of the produce of his own labour."* [31]

The rebellion caused mass resignations from the Communist Party who sided with Kronstadt. One made an appeal to his fellow party members to rebel and overthrow the leaders of the party:

*"Rank and file Communist comrades!... we are caught in a terrible bind. We have been led into it by a handful of bureaucratic "Communists" who, under cover of being Communists, have feathered themselves very comfortable nests in our Republic.... As a Communist, I beseech you: dump these phony "Communists" who are herding you in the direction of fratricide.... Do not let yourselves be taken in by these bureaucratic "Communists" who are provoking and inciting you into carnage. Show them the door!"* [32]

Kronstadt was long a centre of revolutionary ideology and activism. They played major roles in the 1905 revolution, in the July days, in October and other rebellions. They were at the forefront of the revolutionary movement and helped put the Bolsheviks in power. Trotsky called them the *"pride and glory of the Revolution."* [33] That they came out against the Bolsheviks, accusing them of betraying the revolution, is a damning indictment of the Bolsheviks. The same revolutionaries who put the Bolsheviks now denounced the Bolsheviks for destroying the gains of the revolution.

The Bolsheviks spread all sorts of lies about Kronstadt (and other rebellions) in order to justify the suppression of the rebellions and to prevent them from spreading. They claimed the Kronstadt rebels were Whites led by former Tsarist General Kozlovsky. General Kozlovsky was actually one of the many ex-Tsarist officers employed by the Red army; he was a Red general not a White general. Trotsky stationed him in Kronstadt. During the rebellion he offered

*(12) To request all branches of the Army, as well as our comrades, the military kursanti, to concur in our resolutions [to endorse this resolution];*

*(13) To demand for the latter publicity in the press;*

*(14) To appoint a Travelling Commission of Control;*

*(15) To permit free kustarnoye (individual small scale) production by one's own efforts."* [25]

Originally the Kronstadt rebels hoped to get the Bolsheviks to agree to their demands without bloodshed, but when Trotsky ordered them "shot like partridges" they had no choice but to defend themselves. Complaining that *"The Communists hope to renew their despotic rule at the price of the blood of toilers"* [26] and that *"They shoot workers and peasants right and left"* they called for a Third Revolution to *"destroy the commissarocracy."* [27] They rejected the Constituent Assembly and instead called for Soviet Democracy. They stood *"for power of Soviets, and not parties.... for freely elected representatives of labourers. The current Soviets, seized and subverted by the Communists, have always been deaf to all our needs and demands. In answer we received only executions."* [28] Their newspaper proclaimed, *"The dawn of the 3rd Revolution is rising. The bright sun of freedom shines here in Kronstadt. The oppressors power tumbled down like a house of cards, and we, free, are building our Revolutionary Soviet.... power to Soviets, and not parties."* [29] They accused the Bolsheviks of betraying the revolution:

*"Carrying out the October Revolution, the working class hoped to achieve its emancipation. The result, however, was the creation of a still greater enslavement of the human personality. The power of police-gendarme monarchism passed into the hands of usurpers, the Communists, who brought to the labourers, instead of freedom, the fear every minute of falling into the torture chamber of the Cheka.... The Communist authorities have replaced the hammer and sickle, glorious arms of the labouring state, in fact with the bayonet and prison bars. They have done this for the sake of preserving a calm, unsaddened life for the new bureaucracy of Communist commissars and bureaucrats. To protests by peasants, expressed in spontaneous uprisings, and by workers, forced into strikes by the very condition of life, they answer with mass executions, and with such bloodthirstiness that they don't have to borrow any from the tsarist generals.... the [Communist Party] is not defender of the labourers, as it has presented itself. Rather, the interests of the labouring mass are foreign to*



Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of the Ukraine was able to successfully drive out multiple white invasions from Denikin and then Wrangel.

The RIAU was outgunned and outnumbered in many battles, yet managed to win anyway. One example was on September 25th, 1919 at the village of Peregonovka when some militias, after retreating 400 miles, found themselves surrounded by Denikin's White army. They succeeded in turning Denikin's flank with a tiny force of cavalry and in the ensuing panic Denikin's army was routed. This action was one of the most massive defeats inflicted on them. Denikin came the closest of any White General to victory. In October of that same year he came within 120 miles of Moscow. The Red Army was eventually able to beat him and save their dictatorship, but had the Anarchists not done significant damage to his army in Ukraine Denikin may well have taken Moscow.[11] The Bolshevik Victor Serge admitted that the Makhnovists *"inflicted a defeat on General Denikin from which the latter was never to recover."* [12]

The RIAU also acted to counter anti-Semitic pogromists attempting to impose their authority on Jews. For example, when in the summer of 1919 five men in Uman engaged in pogroms against Jews Makhnovists shot them. Many Jews played an important role in the movement and the movement had good relations with Jewish peasants and workers. Makhno encouraged Jews to organise self-defence and furnished them with weapons.[13] The Makhnovists also shot Grigoriev, who was an opportunist attempting to establish his own little fiefdom over the population and led vicious anti-Semitic pogroms.[14] The Jewish historian M. Tcherikover, an expert on the persecution of Jews in Russia and Ukraine (and who was neither an anarchist nor a revolutionary), said, *"of all these armies, including the Red Army, the Makhnovists behaved best with regard the civil population in general and the Jewish population in particular.... Do not speak of pogroms alleged to have been organised by Makhno himself. That is a slander or an error. Nothing of the sort occurred."* [15]

The RIAU did not implement a state or impose their authority on the population but instead handed power over to the peasants (or proletarians in the cities), upon with the army was based. *"Makhno's Insurgent Army... was the quintessence of a self-administered, people's revolutionary army. It arose from the peasants, it was composed of peasants, it handed power to the peasants."* [16] The insurgent army did not stand above the population and give them orders. Peasants organised themselves from the bottom up, without a state. The RIAU had no monopoly on legitimate violence. All these militias did was defend their communities from people attempting to impose a state on them. The RIAU did not enforce the rule of anyone over the rest of the population. Its purpose was to prevent any group of people from imposing their rule over anyone else. In this case, the various

capitalist factions (Bolsheviks, Whites, Austrians, Nationalists, etc.) were trying to impose their authority on the peasants and workers so they ended up fighting the capitalists. People could organise themselves as they saw fit, so long as they didn't impose their authority on others. As one participant put it:

> *"As soon as they entered a city, they declared that they did not represent any kind of authority, that their armed forces obliged no one to any sort of obligation and had no other aim than to protect the freedom of the working people. The freedom of the peasants and the workers... resides in the peasants and workers themselves and may not be restricted. In all fields of their lives it is up to the workers and peasants themselves to construct whatever they consider necessary."* [17]

When RIAU forces entered a city or town they posted on the walls notices to the population making statements such as:

> *"This army does not serve any political party, any power, any dictatorship. On the contrary, it seeks to free the region of all political power, of all dictatorship. It strives to protect the freedom of action, the free life of the workers against all exploitation and domination. The Makhno Army does not therefore represent any authority. It will not subject anyone to any obligation whatsoever. Its role is confined to defending the freedom of the workers. The freedom of the peasants and the workers belongs to themselves, and should not suffer any restriction."* [18]

*"One of the most remarkable achievements of the Makhnovists was to preserve a freedom of speech more extensive than any of their opponents."* [19] Non-anarchist groups were free to organise and advocate their views so long as they did not attempt to impose authority upon others. Several non-anarchist groups published regular newspapers, including Bolshevik, SR and Left SR papers.

The Insurgent Army was the armed wing of a mass movement aiming to completely transform society. In the liberated areas the state and class society were abolished in favour of free organisation from the bottom up. Prisons were abolished, in some cases physically destroyed.[20] Private property was abolished and land was redistributed. Peasant assemblies ran the villages and held regional congresses based on mandated and recallable delegates. Although based mainly in the rural areas, at its height the movement included cities where workers took over their workplaces and implemented self-management.



*"(I) In view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants, immediately to hold new elections by secret ballot, the pre-election campaign to have full freedom of agitation among the workers and peasants;*

*(2) To establish freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, for Anarchists and Left Socialist parties;*

*(3) To secure freedom of assembly for labour unions and peasant organisations;*

*(4) To call a non-partisan Conference of the workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt, and of Petrograd Province, no later than March 19, 1921;*

*(5) To liberate all political prisoners of Socialist parties, as well as all workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors imprisoned in connection with the labour and peasant movements;*

*(6) To elect a Commission to review the cases of those held in prison and concentration camps;*

*(7) To abolish all politodeli (political bureaus) because no party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive the financial support of the Government for such purposes. Instead there should be established educational and cultural commissions, locally elected and financed by the Government;*

*(8) To abolish immediately all zagraditelniye otryadi* (Armed units organised by the Bolsheviki for the purpose of suppressing traffic and confiscating foodstuffs and other products. The irresponsibility and arbitrariness of their methods were proverbial throughout the country)*;*

*(9) To equalize the rations of all who work, with the exception of those employed in trades detrimental to health;*

*(10) To abolish the Communist fighting detachments in all branches of the Army, as well as the Communist guards kept on duty in mills and factories. Should such guards or military detachments be found necessary, they are to be appointed in the Army from the ranks, and in the factories according to the judgement of the workers;*

*(11) To give the peasants full freedom of action in regard to their land, and also the right to keep cattle, on condition that the peasants manage with their own means; that is, without employing hired labour;*

*populists and supported by a broad band of the Russian working peasantry provoked especially by the continued armed requisitioning of August 1920."* [22] Most of these rebellions sought to defend the peasant revolution against the Bolshevik counter-revolution.

The cities were engulfed by a wave of strikes and worker unrest. "Soviet" historians labelled this the "Volynka," which means "go slow." By using this term, instead of calling it a strike wave, they made this working class anti-Bolshevik unrest seem less serious and lighter. Strikes erupted in the Donbass, Saratov, Aleksandrovsk, the Urals and elsewhere. Strikes in Saratov peaked on March 3rd and had been defeated by March 6th. The strikes in Moscow reached their peak in late February. On February 25th Bolshevik forces opened fire on demonstrators; on the 25th they declared martial law and made mass arrests of opposition anti-capitalists. On March 3rd the leaders of the railway strike was arrested. By March 6th the strike wave in Moscow had been mostly defeated. In Petrograd the strike wave reached it's peak on February 26th. One observer described the situation as *"strikingly akin to the scenes of the March Revolution of 1917. The same cry for bread, the same demand for liberty of speech and the press, only this time the banners read 'Down with the Soviet.' Children running around merrily sang popular songs satirizing the government."* [23] On February 24th the Bolsheviks declared martial law and imposed a curfew banning movement after 11pm. On the 26th they launched mass arrests and a military clampdown on the city. By February 28th the high point had passed and by March 8th the strike wave in Petrograd was basically over. Most of these strikes followed forms very similar to the traditional forms of worker protest in Russia.[24]

On February 26th rank and file sailors at the Kronstadt naval base, about twenty miles west of Petrograd, decided to send a delegation to Petrograd to find out what was happening. On the 28th they returned and told of the Bolshevik's suppression of the strikers. Many of the sailors were already unhappy with the Bolsheviks and the suppression of the Petrograd strikes prompted them to rebel. At a general assembly on March 1st the sailors unanimously voted to rebel (with two abstentions) and put forth these demands:



Free soviets were formed. Unlike the soviets in Russia these free soviets were actually controlled from below. Political parties did not play a significant role in the free soviets. Representatives instead followed the mandates of the assemblies they came from.[21]

In most villages the repartitional system was in place. Individual households were assigned a plot of land, but no more than they could use themselves, and what they produced was theirs to keep. Some peasants chose to take this further and formed "free communes." Unlike in the Mir, in these communes land was worked in common and the produce shared among the members. Communes were run by general assemblies of all members and usually set up on former estates of landlords. These combined individual freedom with radical egalitarianism. Individuals in the communes were given whatever personal space they desired; any member who wanted to cook separately or take food from the communal kitchens to eat in their quarters was free to do so. Those who preferred to eat in common could also do so. They also decided to implement anti-authoritarian schooling based on the ideas of Francisco Ferrer.[22] These free communes were very similar to the rural collectives set up on a large scale during the Spanish Revolution. *"Very few peasant movements in history have been able to show in practice the sort of society and type of landholding they would like to see. The Makhnovist movement is proof that peasant revolutionaries can put forward positive, practical ideas."* [23]

The development of these anarchic institutions was limited by the civil war situation. The Makhnovshchina was caught between several major armies, several of which vastly outnumbered and outgunned them. They unfortunately had no choice but to focus their energies on the military struggle instead of the construction of a new society. The constant attacks by the Whites, Reds and others disrupted the development of the free society. Invading armies would smash the free communes and attempt to destroy these organs of self-management. In times of relative peace these institutions could begin to flourish, but in times of greater conflict the rapid changing of territory made the setting up of permanent organisations more difficult.

Successful counter-revolution in the Ukraine did not come from the Whites, who were defeated by the Insurgent Army, but from the Reds. While the RIAU and Reds were both fighting the Whites the Bolsheviks took a friendlier attitude towards the Makhnovists. The Bolsheviks and Makhnovists even made alliances against the Whites. The Bolsheviks in Ukraine *"were not very effective. They fought only along the railways and never went far from their armoured trains, to which they withdrew at the first reverse, sometimes without taking on board all their own combatants."* [24] As part of one of the alliances the Bolsheviks were supposed to

supply arms to the Insurgent Army, but they *"refused to give arms to Makhno's partisans, failing in [their] duty of assisting them."* [25] The Bolsheviks launched three assaults on the Makhnovists, the final one succeeded in destroying the movement. After the civil war was over the Bolsheviks invaded and imposed their dictatorship on the Ukraine, suppressing the revolution. The Reds allied with the Makhnovists when they could use the Makhnovists against the Whites, and then betrayed them when the Whites were no longer a danger.[26]

While the RIAU was fighting against the Whites the Bolshevik press hailed them as the "nemesis of the Whites" and portrayed the movement positively.[27] When the Reds turned against the Insurgent Army they demonized the movement, spewing all sorts of lies and slanders. The Bolsheviks claimed that the Makhnovists were anti-Semitic pogromists, that they were Kulaks, that they supported the Whites and all sorts of other nonsense. Many Jews participated in the movement and many Jews present claimed that the accusation of being anti-Semitic pogromists were false including L. Zinkovsky, Elena Keller, Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman, Voline and Sholem Schwartzbard. The Central Committee of Zionist Organisations during the civil war listed many groups committing Pogroms including the Whites, Grigoriev and Reds, but did not accuse the Insurgent Army of engaging in pogroms. The Bolsheviks called any peasant who opposed them a 'kulak.' The movement was based mostly on poor peasants, most of the commanders were poor peasants – most of the exceptions were proletarians. Its policies, including the free communes, redistribution of land, and the abolition of wage labour & private property, favoured poor peasants. Due to it's heavy reliance on local peasants the movement would not have been able to survive for as long as it did if it depended only kulaks (no more than a fifth of the population). The Bolsheviks' own press refutes the allegation that the Makhnovists worked with the Whites; when the Red and Black Armies were fighting together against the Whites the Makhnovists were hailed as the "nemesis of the Whites." In exile General Denikin himself said that the Makhnovshchina was *"most antagonistic to the idea of the White movement."* [28] Victor Serge, who was a member of the Russian Communist party at the time, said in his memoirs (and elsewhere) that these slanders were all lies.[29]

The Bolsheviks were able to defeat the Revolutionary Insurgent Army for several reasons. The Bolsheviks had vastly superior numbers and vastly superior resources compared to the Makhnovists. They had significant industrialized areas; the Makhnovists did not. Most of the fighting the Whites engaged in against Ukraine happened at the height of the civil war when they were also battling the Red Army. When the Red Army defeated the Anarchists the civil war was over; they had fewer enemies to worry about and could focus more



not to invade other countries are not the same people who have to fight and die in those wars. Statist/class societies thus encourage war and imperialism because the individuals who decide whether to launch wars are not the ones who have to pay most of the costs of war but they gain most of the potential benefits. The rulers of the world send the workers of the world to slaughter each other while keeping the spoils of victory for themselves. Bolshevik imperialism arose from the creation of a new elite, which now found it beneficial to conquer other countries even though their ideology prior to coming to power was opposed to it.

During the civil war, although most were opposed to both the Reds and the Whites, a substantial portion of the population considered the Reds the 'lesser of two evils.' As a result many people who would otherwise have taken up arms against the Bolsheviks did not do so, for fear that this would lead to the victory of the Whites. With the end of the civil war this was no longer a possibility and so massive rebellions erupted throughout Russia against the Bolsheviks. The threat of the Whites could no longer be used as an excuse to justify Bolshevik tyranny. The rebellions started in late 1920, peaked in February and March 1921 and then declined afterwards. According to Cheka sources there were 118 anti-Bolshevik uprisings in February 1921 alone.[18] This occurred at the same time Makhno was fighting a guerilla war against the Bolsheviks' final assault on the Ukraine. The Bolsheviks were able to defeat the rebellions through a combination of brutal repression and granting concessions, especially the end of the grain requisitions. Most of the rebellions were not from the right but were anti-capitalist. Demands of the rebellions ranged from the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly to the restoration of Soviet Democracy to full-fledged anarchy.

The grain requisitions resulted in many peasant uprisings against the Bolsheviks demanding the end of the grain monopoly among other things. Peasant insurgents surged across the land in a showdown between the Reds and Greens. Peasant uprising in Armenia provoked by grain requisitions and Bolshevik imperialism nearly succeeded in toppling the "soviet" client state; Russian troops had to be called in to suppress the rebellion.[19] *"In western Siberia the tide of rebellion engulfed nearly the entire Tiumen region and much of the neighbouring provinces"* [20] as many who had formerly rebelled against the Whites now turned their guns on the Reds. *"The Siberian irregulars were for free soviets and free federations."* [21] The largest and best known of these rebellions was in Tambov province, where A.S. Antonov's Green partisans waged a guerilla war against the Bolsheviks from August 1920 until June 1921, when it was defeated. *"The Tambov revolt was a genuine peasant movement, led by radical*

*both of whom the War Minister is trying so hard to find fault and with whom impermissible and intolerable conflicts are being created."* [13]

Once in power this opposition to imperialism was only applied to other countries, not to "Soviet" Russia. During the revolution and civil war many countries broke away from Russia and became independent, usually setting up independent nation-states. This included Finland, Poland, Georgia, Armenia and others. The Bolsheviks invaded many of them and installed client states. In April 1920 Azerbaijan was conquered and the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, a Bolshevik client state, proclaimed. In November Armenia was conquered and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic declared. These "soviet socialist republics" were modelled after Bolshevik Russia, with a party dictatorship, grain requisitions, nationalised industry, a Sovnarkom, and "soviets" that rubber-stamped the decisions of the party. On December 30, 1922 the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic and its client states, these "soviet socialist republics" it had installed, merged into one big state to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[14]

In most cases these break away states were very conservative governments; some were basically ultra-rightist dictatorships. Some also had their own imperialist ambitions and fought border wars with each other. In Finland right-wing capitalists massacred thousands of left-wing workers. There were two major exceptions to this: Ukraine, which went anarchist, and Georgia, where the Mensheviks came to power. Georgia was officially neutral in the civil war but unofficially preferred the Whites win, a position that the Russian Mensheviks criticized. They implemented a progressive capitalist system very similar to the New Economic Policy the Bolsheviks would later implement in Russia. Most industry was nationalised and land reform was implemented.[15] The Bolsheviks invaded in February 1921; on February 25th Tiflis was captured and the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, a Russian client state, was declared.[16] *"A campaign of terror was unloosed against Socialists, workers, [and] peasants with the meaningless cruelty characteristic of the Bolsheviks."* [17]

The Bolsheviks modified their support for national self-determination to "self-determination for workers" as a justification of their imperialism. This meant countries had self-determination so long as they "determined" to do what the Russian Bolsheviks wanted – creating a "soviet" state similar to Russia and subordinated to Moscow. This change came about as a result of the creation of a new ruling class. Imperialism is the result of the state and class society. In a society ruled by a small elite (which all statist/class societies are) that elite can often gain benefits for itself by attacking other peoples. This can include resources, territory, labour and other things. The elite who decides whether or



forces on Ukraine. Third, the Makhnovists made the mistake of trusting the Leninists. They made several deals with them, which the Bolsheviks broke, and believed that the conflict with them would be fought mainly in the ideological realm through propaganda and similar means.[30] It ended up being fought on the military front. It was a mistake for the movement to ally with the Bolsheviks.

The RIAU were able to repel several of the Red's initial attacks. The Red Army was initially incapable of dealing with the unusual guerilla tactics employed by the resisting peasants. Eventually they realized that they were fighting against an armed self-acting population, and would need a different strategy.[31] As one Red officer pointed out:

> *"This 'small war' requires different organisation, different training of troops, from the war against Wrangel or, let us say, against the White Poles. Our units maintained a cumbersome, burdensome rear; hence, we acted slowly, heavily, while Makhno, on the other hand, [used] speed and bold maneuver. We have not considered the environment that nourishes the criminal bands. They have their bases, that is, certain segments of the population, a flexible structure, stand behind them."* [32]

So they developed a different strategy: station units in all occupied territories and have them terrorize the population:

> *"The third campaign against the Makhnovists was at the same time a campaign against the Ukrainian peasantry. The general aim of this campaign was not merely to destroy the Makhnovist army, but to subjugate the dissatisfied peasants and to remove from them all possibility of organising any type of revolutionary-guerilla movement.... The Red Divisions travelled through all the rebel villages in the insurgent region and exterminated masses of peasants on the basis of information provided by local kulaks."* [33]

*"On the occupation of a village by the Red Army the Cheka would hunt out and hang all active Makhnovite supporters."* [34] These attacks ultimately succeeded in subduing the population and imposing the dictatorship of the party over the proletariat on the Ukraine. The Reds *"concentrated huge numbers of troops against them and stepped up brutal actions against peasants who sheltered them. This counter insurgency strategy, which the US later used in Vietnam, succeeded because of the relatively small size and isolation of the Eastern Ukraine."* [35] They won because they resorted to war crimes.

As historian Michael Palij, one of the few American historians to write a book on the Makhnovshchina, said, *"The history of the Makhno movement, despite its significance to the history of the Ukrainian Revolution and the Russian Civil War, has generally been neglected."* [36] The Makhnovshchina are frequently ignored in accounts of the Russian Revolution and in the rare cases where it is mentioned they are smeared, repeating one or more of the old (usually Bolshevik-originated) slanders. This is true of both left wing and right-wing accounts of the revolution. There are two main reasons for this. Partly it is the outcome of the sources on the Revolution. Many historians, especially in the earlier decades after the revolution, basically had to rely on Red, White or Nationalist propaganda as sources, although this is less true today. Partly this is because of ideology – history in Russia was written by the victors and in the West was written by White sympathizers. Both of these groups are obviously very hostile towards a peasant movement opposed to both groups. There are exceptions to this, though; a few non-anarchist historians have analysed the movement. Christopher Read included a well-written section on the Makhnovists in his book *From Tsar to Soviets*. Michael Malet and Michael Palij have both written good monographs on the subject, Malet's book is arguably the best book ever written on the subject. In addition there are various eyewitness accounts and anarchist histories of the movement.

The Makhnovshchina was not perfect. The hero worship of Makhno isn't terribly anarchistic, there were a couple occasions where military democracy was not followed as closely as it should have, allying with the Bolsheviks was a big mistake and there were other flaws. But it was vastly superior to the totalitarian state implemented by Lenin and Trotsky. The fact that they were able to defeat the whites, nationalists and foreign imperialists without a state, let alone the one-party dictatorship implemented by the Bolsheviks, proves that Lenin's repressive policies were not necessary to defeat the Whites. The Makhnovshchina disproves the Leninist claims that censorship, party dictatorship, etc. was necessary to defeat the Whites. The imperialist invasion and conquest of the Ukraine by the Bolsheviks further shows how counter-revolutionary they really were. The construction of a free society that was begun in the liberated areas also shows that a stateless and classless society is possible. The regions where the state was abolished did not turn into complete chaos, quite the opposite – the areas where states ruled were wracked with unrest and quite chaotic. Anarchy is order; government is chaos.



> *"In early 1918 Lenin himself had backed a plan to organise a special closed restaurant for the Bolsheviks in Petrograd on the grounds that they could not be expected to lead a revolution on an empty stomach.... Since then the principle had been gradually extended so that, by the end of the civil war, it was also deemed that party members needed higher salaries and special rations, subsidized housing in apartments and hotels, access to exclusive shops and hospitals, private dachas, chauffeured cars, first-class railway travel and holidays abroad, not to mention countless other privileges once reserved for the tsarist elite.*
>
> *Five thousand Bolsheviks and their families lived in the Kremlin and the special party hotels, such as the National and the Metropole, in the centre of Moscow. The Kremlin's domestic quarters had over 2,000 service staff and it's own complex of shops, including a hairdresser and a sauna, a hospital and a nursery, and three vast restaurants with cooks trained in France. Its domestic budget in 1920, when all these services were declared free, was higher than that spent on social welfare for the whole of Moscow. In Petrograd the top party bosses lived in the Astoria Hotel, recently restored to its former splendour, after the devastation's of the revolution, as the First House of the Soviets. From their suites, they could call for room service from the 'comrade waiters', who were taught to click their heels and call them 'comrade master'. Long-forgotten luxuries, such as champagne and caviar, perfume and toothbrushes, were supplied in abundance. The hotel was sealed to the public by a gang of burly guards in black leather jackets. In the evening government cars were lined up by the entrance waiting to take the elite residents off to the opera or to the Smolny for a banquet....*
>
> *The top party leaders had their own landed estates requisitioned from the tsarist elite.... Trotsky had one of the most resplendent estates in the country: it had once belonged to the Yusupovs. As for Stalin, he settled into the country mansion of a former oil magnate. There were dozens of estates dotted around the capital which the Soviet Executive turned over to the party leaders for their private used. Each had its own vast retinue of servants, as in the old days."* [12]

This was at a time when ordinary Russians were literally starving to death.

Along with the solidification of a new ruling class came imperialist policies. Before the Bolsheviks seized power they were in favour of national self-determination and opposed imperialism. In June 1917 Lenin declared, *"The Russian Republic does not want to oppress any nation, either in the new or in the old way, and does not want to force any nation, either Finland or Ukraine, with*

*"Nothing is more dangerous for man's private morality than the habit of command.... Two sentiments inherent in power never fail to produce this demoralization; they are: contempt for the masses and the over-estimation of one's own merits. "The masses" a man says to himself, " recognizing their incapacity to govern on their own account, have elected me their chief. By that act they have publicly proclaimed their inferiority and my superiority. Among this crowd of men, recognizing hardly any equals of myself, I am alone capable of directing public affairs. The people have need of me; they cannot do without my services, while I, on the contrary, can get along all right by myself; they, therefore, must obey me for their own security, and in condescending to obey them, I am doing them a good turn. "...It is thus that power and the habit of command become for even the most intelligent and virtuous men, a source of aberration, both intellectual and moral."* [10]

Along with inequalities of power came inequalities of wealth. Economic inequality skyrocketed. In early 1921 the Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai complained that:

*"so far the problems of hygiene, sanitation, improving conditions of labour in the shops - in other words, the betterment of the workers' lot has occupied the last place in our policy.... To our shame, in the heart of the Republic, in Moscow itself, working people are still living in filthy, overcrowded and unhygienic quarters, one visit to which makes one think that there has been no revolution at all. We all know that the housing problem cannot be solved in a few months, even years, and that due to our poverty, its solution is faced with the serious difficulties. But the facts of ever-growing inequality between the privileged groups of the population in Soviet Russia and the rank and file workers... breed and nourish the dissatisfaction. The rank and file worker sees how the Soviet official and the practical man lives and how he lives... during the revolution, the life and health of the workers in the shops commanded the least attention... "We could not attend to that; pray, there was the military front. '' And yet whenever it was necessary to make repairs in any of the houses occupied by the Soviet institutions, they were able to find both the materials and the labour."* [11]

By 1921 there were twice as many bureaucrats as workers. The bureaucracy consumed ninety percent of the paper made in Russia during the first four years of "Soviet" rule. One historian describes the opulent lifestyle enjoyed by the new ruling class:



# **Part 7:** Red Fascism Ascendant

Power in "soviet" Russia went from being concentrated in the Sovnarkom, to the central committee, to the politburo. A centralised one-party dictatorship came about. In 1920 Lenin described the structure of this new regime:

*"the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organised in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks, which, according to the figures of the latest Party Congress (April 1920), has a membership of 611,000.... The Party, which holds annual congresses (the most recent on the basis of one delegate per 1,000 members), is directed by a Central Committee of nineteen elected at the Congress, while the current work in Moscow has to be carried on by still smaller bodies, known as the Organising Bureau and the Political Bureau, which are elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee, five members of the Central Committee to each bureau. This, it would appear, is a full-fledged "oligarchy". No important political or organisational question is decided by any state institution in our republic without the guidance of the Party's Central Committee."* [1]

This was not the rule of the working class (and/or peasants) as Leninists claim; it was the rule of the 19 people on the central committee. If no major decision is made without the approval of the central committee then it is the central committee that rules, not the proletariat.

Along with this centralisation of power, the ideology of the Bolsheviks changed to match their practice. Whereas prior to the revolution most Bolsheviks favoured a highly democratic state after coming to power they came to believe in a one-party state. The party was a very effective means of organising the ruling class & controlling society and was already available to them as they consolidated their power. At first this one-party state was viewed as just being particular to Russia under their present circumstances but eventually they came to the conclusion

that workers' rule would take this form in all societies. Zinoviev is not unusual in this regard:

> *"Any class conscious worker must understand that the dictatorship of the working class can be achieved only by the dictatorship of its vanguard, i.e., by the Communist Party... All questions of economic reconstruction, military organisation, education, food supply – all these questions, on which the fate if the proletarian revolution depends absolutely, are decided in Russia before all other matters and mostly in the framework of the party organisations... Control by the party over soviet organs, over the trade unions, is the single durable guarantee that any measures taken will serve not special interests, but the interests of the entire proletariat."* [2]

In 1919 Lenin said, *"When we are reproached with having established a dictatorship of one party... we say, 'Yes, it is a dictatorship of one party! This is what we stand for and we shall not shift from that position."* [3] A year later he generalised this:

> *"In the transition to socialism the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, but it is not exercised by an organisation which takes in all industrial workers.... What happens is that the Party, shall we say, absorbs the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat.... the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organisation embracing the whole of that class, because in all capitalist countries (and not only over here, in one of the most backward) the proletariat is still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted in parts (by imperialism in some countries) that an organisation taking in the whole proletariat cannot directly exercise proletarian dictatorship. It can be exercised only by a vanguard"* [4]

Lenin claimed that *"The mere presentation of the question—'dictatorship of the party or dictatorship of the class; dictatorship (party) of the leaders, or dictatorship (party) of the masses?'— testifies to most incredibly and hopelessly muddled thinking."* [5] In 1921 he said, *"After two and a half years of the Soviet power we came out in the Communist International and told the world that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the Communist Party."* [6]

Trotsky came to the same conclusions. In 1920 he said, *"the dictatorship of the Soviets became possible only by means of the dictatorship of the party.... In this "substitution" of the power of the party for the power of the working class there is nothing accidental, and in reality there is no substitution at all. The Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class."* [7] He continued to argue this even after being exiled from Stalin. In 1937 he claimed that, *"The revolutionary party (vanguard) which renounces its own dictatorship surrenders the masses to the counter-revolution... abstractly speaking, it would be very well if the party dictatorship could be replaced by the 'dictatorship' of the whole toiling people without any party, but this presupposes such a high level of political development among the masses that it can never be achieved under capitalist conditions."* [8] In the same year he also said:

> *"A revolutionary party, even having seized power... is still by no means the sovereign ruler of society.... The proletariat can take power only through its vanguard. In itself the necessity for state power arises from the insufficient cultural level of the masses and their heterogeneity. In the revolutionary vanguard, organised in a party, is crystallized the aspiration of the masses to obtain their freedom. Without the confidence of the class in the vanguard, without support of the vanguard by the class, there can be no talk of the conquest of power. In this sense the proletarian revolution and dictatorship are the work of the whole class, but only under the leadership of the vanguard. The Soviets are the only organised form of the tie between the vanguard and the class. A revolutionary content can be given this form only by the party.... Those who propose the abstraction of the Soviets from the party dictatorship should understand that only thanks to the party dictatorship were the Soviets able to lift themselves out of the mud of reformism and attain the state form of the proletariat."* [9]

Note the new justification here: workers are too stupid ("lack the political development" "divided and corrupted") to rule themselves. The main justification used for the state prior to the revolution had been that it would be necessary in order to defeat counter-revolutionaries. Most Bolsheviks believed that what they had created was not the rule of a new bureaucrat-capitalist ruling class but the rule of the workers & peasants. They equated their own rule with the rule of the peasants & workers. This new justification fit well with their new position as ruling class - since workers opposed their rule (which they confused with worker's rule) the workers were not fit to govern themselves. They needed a vanguard to stand over them and defeat "wavering" elements of the working class that wanted to rule itself. This transformation in Marxist ideology is consistent with Bakunin's description of how concentrations of power affect those who wield it: