

Lenin and Trotsky (and Makhno)

Opening Context

- 1850 90% of Russia is serfs. The Romanov family has been in control for 300 years.
- 1860 serfdom is “ended,” but land allotments are cut to half
- >500 riots—put down by military
- 1881 Alexander the II is assassinated, by bomb. Alexander III, his successor, establishes the Okhrana secret police, who pioneer photographic and fingerprint record-keeping
- 1883 Peasants’ Land Bank is formed
- 1892 former RR administrator in charge of “industrializing” Russia. Heavy taxes, very large loans from international bankers; massive “cooperation” of the state with capital (remember Diaz’ Mexico)
- Radical elements within industrial workers (1st international), education... terrorist groups including Lenin’s brother
- 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war—over control of Manchuria and Korea... Russians lose. At least 80,000 Russian soldiers die.
- 1904: Strikes in Petrograd. 80,000 marchers to the Winter Palace. They’re fired on and 200-1000 die. “Bloody Sunday.”
- 1904-1905. More strikes....
- 1905: Duma (congress) established, with a purely advisory role.
- 1906: Constitution established, with civil rights and allowance of multiple political parties
- 1906-1909: Terrorist attacks by the “SR Combat” group (militant wing of the “Social Revolutionary party” at the front of the 1917 Spring Revolution).

- 1914. WWI. 5 million casualties over next 2 ½ years. (4 in year 1)
- Food shortages
- Strikes, especially in Petrograd
- The “Spring Revolution”, March 1917, puts Kerensky and the Social Democrats in control. Lenin shortly returns. This revolution is insufficient for the Bolsheviks.
- October 1917: a coup led by Trotsky and the Red Army gives power to the Bolsheviks.
- Nationalization of all industry and land; equal rights for men and women...
- With assassination attempts on Lenin, a new secret police: the Cheka
- Banning of all opposition parties; establishment of a “central committee
- 1918-1923 Civil war: Reds vs. Whites (14 nations send aid and troops to the Whites... but they lose.)
- 1924: Lenin dies
- 1929 Trotsky expelled

Lenin's Thought: Capitalism and Imperialism

- The old catchphrases of the capitalists, about democracy, free competition, and small proprietorship, are antiquated at best. Presently they are masks and deceptions.
- Capitalism tends towards concentration (of different forms of capital), monopoly, and eventually “combination” or “vertical integration.”
- At the huge scale monopolies eventually achieve, all the world's raw materials and markets can be surveyed and eventually captured. This includes skilled labor as well, which eventually serves capital.
- Small capital can not truly compete. Startup costs are too high; markets are saturated; economy of scale allows big companies to sell cheaper.
- With such huge competition for raw materials and markets, colonial relations are much favored. (Best to have a resource or a market where your access is guaranteed by force).
- The World War(s) result from the mutual competition of monopolists and their affiliated states for resources and markets. Thus these are “their” wars, not “ours.”

:The State and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

- What is the “state,” really?
- Lenin: An organ of class domination. Legalization and perpetuation of oppression. A special organization of force. Or best: “The systematic use of violence by one class against another.”
- The “dictatorship of the proletariat” = the systematic use of violence against the bourgeoisie.
- Lenin says: there’s no freedom until the state dies away. And he has no intention of letting the state die away any time soon.

: What is to be done?

- Economically:
- Nationalize everything. The means of production must pass to the hands of the workers. This is possible only given the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- Organize “rigorous,” “disciplined,” large-scale production. Everybody gets the same wage.
- **STRICT CONTROL** over all work and production.

(see pp 368-369, 371)

- Towards the revolution:
- Workers, the proletariat, are nominally our protagonists in this story. BUT for Lenin, they are only capable of “trade-union consciousness.” To act intelligently they need to be guided by a group with true “socialist” or “political” consciousness, or they need to have this consciousness generated within them. They need to SEE THE WHOLE, with special emphasis on police violence and capitalist exploitation.
- Special VANGUARD groups are necessary, for raising consciousness, determining strategy, and specifically for combating the political police. These groups should be SECRET, CENTRALIZED, and affiliated with a network of covert agents.
- GENERATING CONSCIOUSNESS AMONGST THE MASSES is a key, pressing problem. After the revolution, this task corresponds to revolutionary art. As in Mexico, a Ministry of Education is formed and artists’ collectives established under its jurisdiction. “VKHUTEMAS” (an acronym for “Higher Art and Technical Studios”) is the primary group.

Makhno—in opposition to Lenin

- Makhno's group in Ukraine was rooted in the civilian population, composed entirely of voluntary fighters, following rules constructed by general assembly...
- They allied with the Bolsheviks to expropriate land in Ukraine, but refused to place their force under the Red Army's command. They also refused the full support the Red Army demanded in terms of food and other support.
- Makhno claimed the Red Army was inefficient, railroad-bound, distant from popular support.
- It was thus Makhno's anarchists (in coalition with other smaller groups) who performed the revolution in Ukraine.
- For his refusal to submit to Trotsky and the Red Army, Makhno's diplomats were tricked, ambushed, arrested by the Cheka (Lenin's new secret police) and shot. The rest of the group was destroyed across 9 months of warfare.
- Meanwhile Lenin sought out and executed anarchists in Moscow and elsewhere. The Bolsheviks were centralizing and concentrating power.

UKRAINE March - November 1918 GERMAN OCCUPATION & HETMANATE



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- UKRAINE UNDER GERMAN AND AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PROTECTORATE
- OTHER GERMAN- AND AUSTRO-HUNG. OCCUP. TERRITORIES
- MODERN UKRAINE



UKRAINE: August, 1920 - March, 1921



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-  FURTHEST EXTENT REACHED BY SOVIET ARMIES BY 15.08.1920
-  FURTHEST EXTENT OF POLISH ARMIES DURING THEIR COUNTER-OFFENSIVE OF 16.08 - 08.10.1920
-  "CURZON LINE": BRITISH-RECOMMENDED TEMPORARY EASTERN BORDER OF POLAND, 08.12.1919
-  POLISH-SOVIET BORDER AND POLISH ACQUISITIONS, CONFIRMED BY THE TREATY OF RIGA OF 18.03.1921
-  RETURNED TO THE SOVIETS BY THE TREATY OF RIGA (18.03.1921)
-  MODERN UKRAINE

Trotsky's Critique of Stalin's Soviet Union

- The “triumph of bureaucracy over the masses”
- “Specific functions have created specific organs”
(consider OUR military-industrial complex)
- Privileged officials and the commanders of the standing army... turned against the masses
- Production nationalized, yes... but consumption still unequal
- ** “Nobody who has wealth to distribute ever omits themselves.”

Fuller analysis:

- USSR (1935): = “a contradictory society halfway between capitalism and socialism”
- Productive forces insufficient
- Tendencies to “primitive accumulation” because of want
- Distribution still following a bourgeois pattern
- Economic growth fueling a swift formation of privileged strata
- Bureaucracy = an uncontrolled caste “alien to socialism”
- Social revolution betrayed by ruling party but still existing in (new) property relations and in consciousness of masses
- Accumulating contradictions can drive either to capitalism or to socialism
- Counter-revolution (☾ capitalism) would have to break worker resistance
- Continued revolution (☾ communism) would have to overthrow the bureaucracy

How did the ruling clique accumulate such power?

- Every step they took, though it looked like a stupid mis-step re. communism, was actually intelligently aimed at the BUREAUCRACY'S OWN SURVIVAL AND STRENGTHENINGThe more threat against ITS rights... the more alarmed and vicious...
- Importing capitalist-patterned factories...

Problems

- Quality of products
- **REQUIRES:** freedom of criticism and initiative
- A “democracy of producers and consumers”
- **Vs. TOTALITARIANISM:** fear, lies, flattery
- Have to back off this “dictatorship of the proletariat”
- Need a Soviet Democracy

And why does Stalin become a Hero / God?

- It's the same process as fascism.
- “Caesarism / Bonapartism”... = a political weapon of (a ruling class) during a critical period
- These are both vs. the world revolution...