
Russian Society and Institutions before and after 1917

The first section of the Encyclopedia surveys the principal institutions and strata of society which played a part in the events leading up to the revolution of 1917 and in the revolution itself. Obviously, Russian society comprehended more groups than those surveyed in this section, but the peasantry, the workers, the army, the women's movement, the Church and the secret police played sufficiently important parts in the chain of revolutionary events to merit separate discussion.

Seeking to stabilize the autocracy, Alexander II launched reforms which only encouraged a desire for more radical change, including representation, democracy and the abolition of the autocracy itself. To turn back the tide, Alexander III, after his father's assassination, imposed a harsh regime of repression which drew on traditional Russian values of conservatism, Christian piety and nationalism. In response, Russian society became increasingly polarized as a revolutionary movement arose, based on the internationalist platform of Marxism, which found its natural allies among the nascent national liberation movements of the anti-Russian ethnic minorities of the Empire.

Russia's vast peasant population, eighty per cent of the total, was becoming restive. While some had gained from the emancipation of 1861, the majority had too little land and too much debt. The 1905 REVOLUTION was even more violent in the countryside than in the towns. The FIRST WORLD WAR increased the pressure on the peasant economy by mobilizing their manpower, but it also armed a vast number of men who by 1917 were ripe for agitation which called on them to lay down their arms and return to their villages to claim the land that the Bolsheviks were promising. Peasant-Bolshevik comradeship, however, was shortlived. By its policy of WAR COMMUNISM, the Soviet government imposed draconian demands for food and soon the peasant economy almost ceased to exist. In 1921 Lenin recognized the need to make concessions to the peasants and his New Economic Policy temporarily reintroduced a market economy for small producers.

One of the goals of the emancipation had been to recruit labour into new industries. By the end of the nineteenth century the number of workers in all branches of the urban and industrial economy had duly grown rapidly and in terms of coal output, iron, steel, oil and wheat production, Russia had become a factor on the world markets, but at great social cost to the workers. Bereft of family and village life, Russia's new working class of ex-peasants, illiterate, unskilled and ignorant, were poorly paid and housed, harshly treated and felt themselves uprooted. They were moreover regarded by the police as a potential source of unrest. Workers' organizations were to the fore in the 'dress rehearsal' of 1905, and the OCTOBER REVOLUTION created the first 'Workers' State'. It was not long before discord arose between the workers' organizations and the BOLSHEVIKS over what this term was to mean in practice.

Women also had their grievances. Illiteracy, economic exploitation and inferior status made fertile soil for protest. Prompted by the reforms of Alexander II, the early stirring of a women's movement soon diversified into a wide range of activities, including women's education, philanthropy and in due course political organization. In many respects, 1917 yielded the results women wished for.

A tool of the State since the early eighteenth century, the Russian Orthodox Church lacked the intellectual independence and vigour to counter the spread of new ideas, and it became increasingly identified with a backward-looking, defensive regime. Attempting to remain politically neutral in the CIVIL WAR, the Church inevitably became a focus of comfort and spiritual reassurance in the hard times of 1917 to 1921. Its position, however, was ultimately made untenable by a combination of Bolshevik militant atheism and the activities of its émigré elements.

A modernized, industrialized Russia that would hold its own with the other great powers also needed a

modern army to march in step with society. Alexander II's reforms abolished the recruitment of peasants for twenty-five years, and instituted universal conscription for far shorter periods. By greatly increasing the re-cycling of citizens and soldiers, the government hoped to keep the army in step with social change, to create a 'nation-in-arms'. While in peacetime the army remained predominantly peasant, the Russo-Japanese War and more dramatically the First World War drew all levels of society into the ranks. While regular officers lamented and were demoralized by the tsar's abdication in March 1917, many young conscripted officers were elated. As for the ordinary ranks, the sudden collapse of authority prepared them for Lenin's agitation, and on the issue of war and peace (in Lenin's immortal phrase) they voted with their feet. HS

The Peasants and Revolution: 1900–1921

On the eve of the fall of the tsar, some eighty-six per cent of the population of the Russian empire lived in the rural areas. The vast majority of these people were peasants, engaged in small-scale agriculture and living in innumerable small villages scattered throughout the country. If for no reason other than the physical size of this group, the actions and attitudes of the peasants were bound to have a major impact on the course of Russian development during the first two decades of this century.

Background

The position of the peasantry at the turn of the century was a direct reflection of the terms of the Emancipation Act of 1861. This legislation had been designed to liberate the peasants from serfdom, in the process passing much of the land into their hands. But the terms of the emancipation were profoundly disappointing to many peasants. Much of the best quality land remained in the hands of non-peasant landowners, while the land which the peasants did gain had to be purchased through a process of annual redemption payments. In the traditional grain-producing areas, in the central agricultural and in the middle Volga regions, the area of land the average peasant household held after emancipation was less than it had cultivated prior to 1861. Furthermore their holdings were often unbalanced, with too little meadow and pasture compared with arable land. The combined effects of growing indebtedness as the peasants fell behind in their redemption payments, the low levels of agricultural technology and the disruptive effects of the traditional inheritance and tenure arrangements mediated through the repartitional PEASANT COMMUNE, led to significant deterioration of peasant living standards throughout much of these traditional growing areas. In these regions where peasant agriculture remained technically backward and controlled by the repartitional peasant commune, peasant agriculture stagnated in the half century following emancipation.

This fate did not befall all peasant agriculture. In the newer grain-producing regions of the UKRAINE, north Caucasus, SIBERIA and Kazakhstan, the standard and output of peasant agriculture improved. Here peasant plots were larger, the repartitional commune was much weaker than in the traditional areas, and the pressures of land hunger were less intense. The predominance of private over

communal tenure facilitated technological innovation, which was a major spur for the development and growth of peasant agriculture here.

Despite the improvements in the newer grain-producing regions, the period following emancipation saw many of the peasants bitter and disappointed. Land hunger remained unassuaged and may even have been heightened in the traditional producing areas. Standards of living were continually under pressure, as was the maintenance of a traditional life-style. Particularly important in this regard was the decline of peasant handicraft in the face of competition from the rise of industry in the towns which made the peasants even more reliant on a market economy and on income gained through sale of their produce in that market. Many peasant households were also reliant on capital remitted by members of the household who worked on either a seasonal or permanent basis in the expanding factory network in the towns. This human link reinforced the economic link by which the market was to pull the futures of the towns and the countryside closer together.

1905

The accumulated frustrations and tensions thus generated erupted in THE 1905 REVOLUTION. The peasants believed that the solution to their difficulties lay in seizing that land which lay outside their control. This was a misperception because the problems of peasant agriculture stemmed from the structure of that agriculture (see PEASANT COMMUNE). Nevertheless in 1905–7, peasants across Russia seized land which they believed to be theirs by right. Acting on the principle that land should belong to those who worked it, the peasants dispossessed private landowners of their land, livestock and implements, often destroying their houses and killing those landowners in the process. The authorities lost control in the countryside, with the organs of local government unable to exercise authority in the villages. The government had to restore order in the rural areas by force: many peasants were killed, and by 1907 the unrest had subsided.

Attempted reform

In an attempt to avoid future rural unrest, the government undertook major reforms, including the encouragement of large-scale peasant migration to the newer areas of Siberian settlement and, more important, the restructuring of

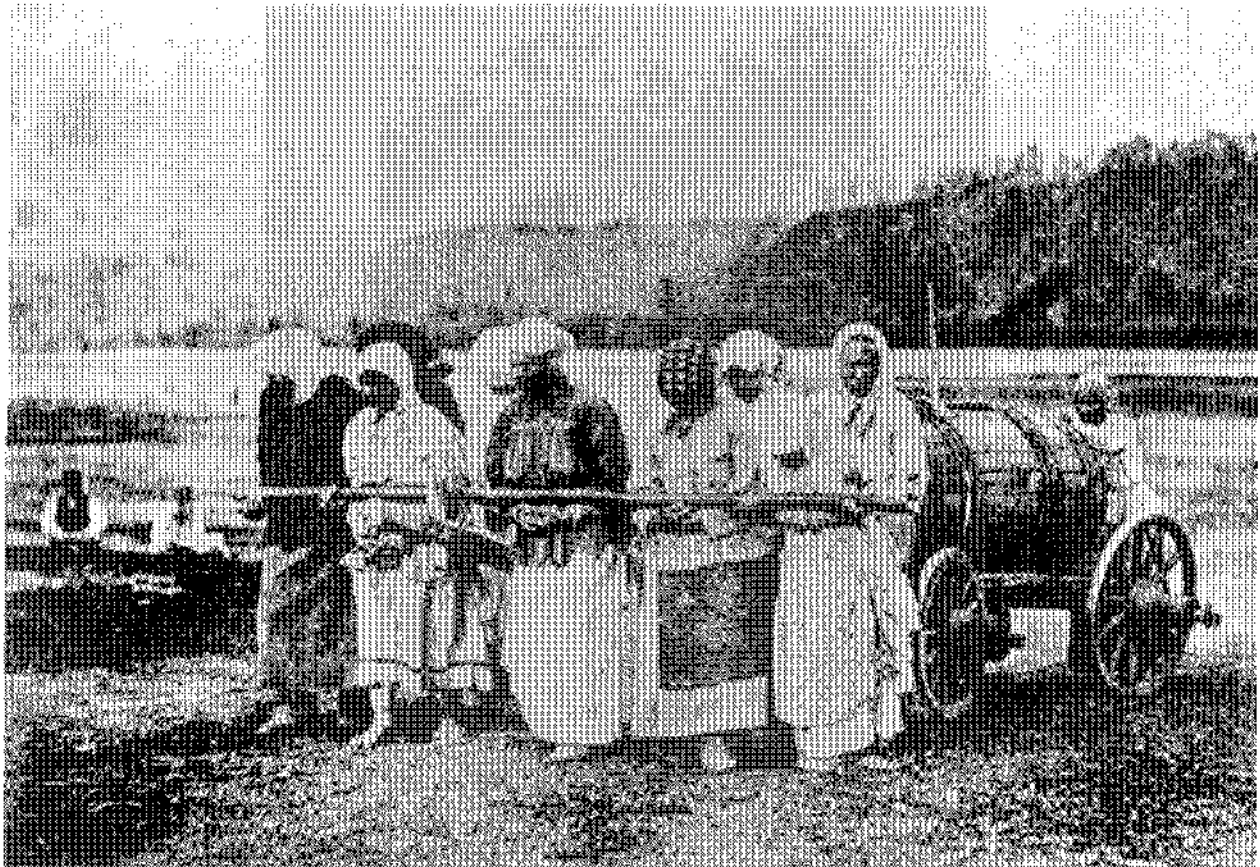


Figure 1 Peasant women at work.

agriculture by destroying the peasant commune. The commune was seen, in the light of 1905, as a major force for peasant revolution which needed to be undermined if stability was to be brought to the rural areas. Under the guidance of P. A. STOLYPIN, the government embarked on the so-called 'wager on the sturdy and the strong'. This was a series of measures designed to facilitate the separation of individual peasants from the commune, by enabling an individual householder to consolidate his diverse strips into a single holding and obtain hereditary tenure over his farm. Peasants could thus escape the multifying control of the commune and set up their own, independent farm. This seemed, in principle, to be a major blow at the power and position of the repartitional commune and a move in the direction of greater innovation in Russian agriculture.

But the success of the Stolypin reforms was limited. More than eighty per cent of peasants remained within the traditional institution, and even the 'separators' who did consolidate and separate their arable land from the commune, often retained their dwelling in the village and kept usage rights in the undivided land, pastures, meadows and forests. Their separation from the commune was by no

means complete. Moreover their act of separation was met with significant resentment by many who remained within the commune, for the consequent disruption could lead to a decline in the quality of the land held by those remaining. Furthermore the separators' stronger economic position often enabled them to acquire extra land through rental and purchase more easily than those remaining in the commune. Paradoxically, the Stolypin reforms and the separation may have strengthened the commune: those still within its confines saw reinforcement and reimposition of the communal principle as the only means of defending their economic interests against the attack posed by separation.

In the years following 1905, the peasants sought to expand their control over the land which they did not possess through widespread rental and purchase. By 1914 the peasants owned and rented some ninety per cent of the exploitable land in European Russia. But this did not satisfy their land hunger; primitive farming methods and continuing debt ensured that many peasants remained unable to meet their commitments as well as produce the desired surplus on a consistent basis.

The First World War

Initially, the war had a positive effect on the peasant economy. But the basis of such prosperity was weak. The longer the war dragged on, the more difficult became the plight of peasant agriculture. Tools and implements were wearing out and could not be replaced because of the demands of the war effort. The front continued to drain manpower and animals from the farm, leading to labour shortages. The loss of animals also created shortages of natural fertilizer which, in the absence of imported mineral fertilizer, was necessary for continuing high yields. Inflation ate into the peasants' savings while the introduction of a government grain monopoly with fixed prices in late 1916 severely restricted the incomes of grain producers without at the same time imposing similar restraints on their main items of expenditure; while their cost of living rose, peasant producers found their main source of income pegged. As February 1917 approached, the economic basis of peasant agriculture was steadily eroding.

1917

The fall of the tsar stimulated peasant expectations across the country. Like all social groups, they interpreted the tsar's fall as signalling an end to the old injustices and the beginning of a period in which they would realize their long-held aspirations. Initial peasant demands focused principally on three areas: land, food supply and local administration. Peasant meetings across the country adopted resolutions and decisions calling for the passing of land into the hands of those who worked it. This constituted a direct attack on non-peasant land-ownership in principle. On food supply, both peasant producers and consumers demanded a more effective form of regulation of the domestic grain market. The effect of the government's grain monopoly had been to dry up supply as producers refused to market their grain because it yielded no profit. They preferred to hold their grain back and drive up prices; this resulted in significant grain shortages in consuming areas. The new government was expected to remedy this situation. The third area of concern was local administration, and here the peasants demanded that control over the countryside be taken out of the hands of the established urban-based authorities and passed over to the peasants themselves. Existing local authorities were seen as alien to the peasant way of life and to peasant interests, more representative of the private landowners and towns than the multitude of villages scattered throughout the Russian countryside. However the reaction of the new PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT in Petrograd to these demands produced only frustration and resentment.

On the land question, the government's approach was two-pronged. It endeavoured to increase productivity by expanding human labour power and access to agricultural equipment. It encouraged the use of refugees, prisoners-of-war, military reservists, youth and unemployed factory

workers, although in practice this had little impact in the villages. Factories were also encouraged to increase the production of agricultural machinery, but again to little effect.

The second prong of the government's land policy related to land-ownership and disposition. Here the main emphasis was on the need to avoid hasty and ill-considered change in the structure of land relations. Instead of taking the land into their own hands, the peasants were called on to leave tenure arrangements unchanged pending a detailed survey which would provide the basis for a final resolution of this question by the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. In order to carry out this policy, the Provisional Government established land committees, whose essential brief was to collect data and, as far as possible, maintain existing land relations. Although the government's attempts to freeze land relations permitted some modifications, most particularly the nationalization of imperial lands and a decision of 12 July making legal provision for private landowners to dispose of their land, the major focus of policy was to retain the status quo. But this policy was unacceptable to the peasants; not only were they being denied both legal and actual control over the land they regarded as theirs, but private landowners were being given a way of disposing of their land which, the peasants feared, could place it beyond the scope of any future reform.

The government's position on the regulation of food supply was equally unacceptable to the peasants. On 25 March the government introduced a grain monopoly whereby all grain, except what the producer needed for his own use, was to be surrendered to the state at a fixed price set sixty per cent above that prevailing at the time. Grain not surrendered was subject to requisition. The government also publicly recognized the need to establish fixed prices on those articles of prime necessity which the peasants needed, but no meaningful steps were taken in this regard. Food committees were established to implement this policy, although the responsibilities of these bodies were soon expanded to include the protection of crops against damage resulting from peasant unrest. Despite doubling the fixed price at the end of August, the government was unable to encourage producers to market their grain in the desired quantities; with grain prices fixed and no restriction on the prices of other goods, grain producers had no incentive to surrender their grain. Even the operation of food rationing could not long delay the inevitable food crisis.

On the question of local administration, the government's response was also unsatisfactory. Little effort was made to expedite the introduction of new organs of local administration. Once again, the government's intention was to conduct a holding operation until 'local organizations on correct democratic bases' could be formed, but this involved making substantial use of the existing mechanism and personnel. Such an arrangement, with its

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links with the past and staffed by people like *zemstvo* (local government) board chairmen, landowners and prominent citizens from the towns, could not gain the confidence of the peasantry. The local organs appeared to them as alien, urban outposts in the countryside.

The peasant response to the dashing of their hopes and expectations was violent and effective. The initial trust in and support for the Provisional Government rapidly eroded as its procrastination became evident. Increasingly, peasants turned towards open seizure of land, accompanied as the year wore on by higher levels of personal violence and the destruction of crops, implements and houses; if early in the year peasant control over land was established peacefully by refusal to pay rent on land they were already using, within two months of the fall of the tsar this had become insignificant compared with the open seizure of property. Levels of the seizure of timber and the placing of embargoes on people felling trees remained high throughout most of the year, while the seizure of crops was particularly prevalent from July onward. Grain producers refused to market their grain, preferring to destroy it or distil it into alcohol than surrender it to the authorities. The authority of the towns was rejected as the peasants turned inward, looking for guidance to their own village-based institution, the commune and the PEASANT ASSEMBLY. Bodies established by urban politicians, such as soviets, land committees and food committees, were ignored as the peasants looked to their own institutions for guidance.

The timetable of peasant unrest in the main followed the cycle of peasant life. Thus the lighter demands of fieldwork during the times of peak unrest compared with the lower levels of unrest during the busy times of late May and early June when many peasants were occupied in hay-making and the gathering-in of fodder, and late July and August when they were harvesting crops, preparing the soil and planting for next season.

The effect of peasant unrest was important for the course of the revolution. The process of land seizure completely destroyed non-peasant land-ownership in the countryside. Non-peasant landowners, along with those who had separated from the repartitional commune under the Stolypin reforms, were expropriated; the control of traditional peasant organs was restored throughout much of the rural areas. This was accompanied by a general equalization of land-holdings so that the processes of levelling and restoration of communal norms negated the effect of the changes fostered by Stolypin. The refusal by peasant producers to market their grain led to major food shortages in the rural consuming areas and in the cities. The resultant uncertainty and hunger were major factors in the radicalization of the popular mood in the capital which was so important for Bolshevik success (see BOLSHEVIK PARTY). A further factor was the mounting unemployment resulting from factory closures, a development to which the peasants contributed through their seizure of timber and

consequent choking off of the fuel supply to the factories. The rural areas had thrown off control by the cities. Peasant communities became a law unto themselves, looking inward to their own institutions and turning their backs on the authority based in the towns. The inter-relationship between town and country had broken down.

The Bolsheviks and the rural-urban gulf

Upon coming to power, the Bolsheviks sought to heal the rift with the countryside by placing an official seal on the peasant seizure of land. One of their first measures was the Decree on Land formally abolishing private ownership of land and passing control over it to the citizens through the district land committees and peasants' soviets pending the Constituent Assembly. Although not vesting legal title to the land in the peasants, the decree seemed to give them what they long demanded: control over all of the land. This may have won the Bolsheviks some support in the villages, although the elections to the Constituent Assembly showed how small that support was: the majority of the peasants voted for the SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES, with the Bolsheviks getting little support from the rural areas. But the new government's position on the land question may have been instrumental in the outcome of the CIVIL WAR: the bulk of peasant support seems to have gone to the Bolsheviks because to the peasants the Whites seemed to promise restoration of the old order in the countryside.

But support for the Bolsheviks was clearly qualified by the peasants' reaction to some of their policies. The most important of these was WAR COMMUNISM introduced in mid 1918. Characterized most graphically for the peasants by the armed requisitioning of produce, the elimination of the market and private trade and the attempt to foster class warfare in the villages, War Communism was bound to evoke peasant opposition. Committees of the Poor were established in June 1918 in an attempt to divide the villages between rich and poor, to build up party support among the latter, to establish party control in the villages and to assist in the collection of surplus produce. However the effectiveness of these bodies was seriously compromised by the propensity of many in the villages to unite against what was seen as the common foe from outside. The Committees of the Poor could not displace the authority of the existing village-based institutions, and were incorporated into the local soviets in November 1918. Peasant reaction to the economic policies of War Communism was predictable: they sought to sell their produce on the black market, to withhold supplies from state procurement agencies, and to reject the authority of the urban-based government. By 1920 this opposition had grown into open unrest and guerrilla warfare, with major outbreaks in the Ukraine and Tambov province.

The New Economic Policy (NEP)

The continuing rural rejection of urban authority and the

economic and social chaos to which this contributed forced the Bolsheviks to retreat from the policies of War Communism. In March 1921, NEP was introduced. Through the introduction of a stable tax in kind (later changed to a financial tax) and the restoration of market forces as the chief dynamic of the economy, the peasants were given a greater degree of certainty in their economic life and some control over their economic future. They now settled down to work within a system which gave them much of what they had demanded in 1917. As in the revolutionary year, the peasants had demonstrated to the government that its authority was more formal than actual in the countryside. An urban-based and urban-oriented party could not establish effective authority without the wholesale restructuring of rural affairs. This was not done until the end of the 1920s. GJG

The All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies

This was to be the peak organization of the peasants' soviets which emerged throughout the country during 1917. Preparations for an all-Russian Congress were begun soon after the fall of the tsar, with the Peasants' Union and the SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES playing a prominent part.

The Congress was convened in Petrograd on 4 May 1917 (OS). It consisted of 1,115 delegates elected by the lower level soviets. There were 537 SRs, 136 non-party, 329 of unknown affiliation, 103 SDs, six Trudoviks and four Popular Socialists. The SRs' strong position, buttressed by the support of many of the formally uncommitted, enabled them to exercise a significant influence on the proceedings and to gain a commanding position on the executive committee elected at the congress. Most of the delegates were not peasants from the fields, but non-peasant intellectuals who evinced an interest in rural matters.

Despite the non-peasant nature of the delegates, the congress decisions appear broadly to have reflected the state of opinion of the villages at the time. The congress resolutions also had a distinct SR flavour, and most of them were in tune with PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT policy. They gave basic support to a continuation of the war pending a just peace without annexations, and to the grain monopoly with fixed prices, rationing and the improved supply of consumer goods. On the land question, the congress was closer to the position of Agriculture Minister, V. M. CHERNOV, than it was to government policy. It favoured the abolition of private ownership in land and its distribution on an equal basis to all who worked it, with



Figure 2 1st Congress of Peasant Soviets, 4 May 1917.

The Peasant Commune

control over all aspects of the land being vested in the land committees pending final resolution of this question by the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. However while these resolutions may have reflected the peasant mood in May, in the absence of another congress prior to the Bolshevik seizure of power, this organ was out of step with radicalized peasant opinion by October.

The congress elected an executive committee to conduct its business between congresses and to represent the peasants' soviets in the capital. It consisted of thirty members, of whom twenty-five were SRs, who were mainly on the right wing of the party and therefore unsympathetic to Chernov's radical proposals. Many also had close links with the Provisional Government. The conservative disposition of this body ensured that, as the peasants became more militant, the executive committee became increasingly irrelevant to events in the countryside.

A further congress was convened after the Bolsheviks had seized power and, once the Bolsheviks had achieved dominance in it, it decided to merge with the All-Russian Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. GJG

replaced by more extreme elements, often recently returned from the front. As a result the assembly remained in the forefront of village affairs; even after the OCTOBER REVOLUTION it was usually the real decision-making body in the villages, if under the guise of the soviet. GJG

The Peasant Commune

The origins of the peasant commune (*mir* or *obshchina*) are obscure. The nineteenth-century Slavophiles argued that its origins lay in the traditions of the Russian peasants and that it was the form through which they sought to organize village life. Others have suggested that it was a more recent development, dating only from the eighteenth century when the monarchy introduced it principally as a means of gathering taxes. What is certain is that the commune was strengthened at the time of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Following emancipation, it was the major administrative body in the rural areas, being made collectively responsible for the financial obligations of its members, both in terms of the redemption dues and the state taxes. To enforce this responsibility, the commune was given sweeping powers over the mobility of its members; personal departure from the repartitional commune required the approval of both the communal PEASANT ASSEMBLY and the head of the household, while total withdrawal from the commune also required the surrender of the land and the settling of outstanding financial obligations. In the hereditary commune, withdrawal required simply the settling of financial obligations, but given the over-valuation of the land at the time of emancipation, this was rarely easy. Separation from the commune was in practice, therefore, very difficult.

There were two types of commune, the repartitional and hereditary. In the former, arable land was owned by the community and redistributed periodically by the commune as the size of the constituent households changed. In the latter land was allocated permanently to households at the time of emancipation. In both types of commune households usually also owned a kitchen garden while meadowland, pastures and forests remained in common usage. The different types of tenure made little practical difference to the physical disposition of land-holdings; even in the hereditary commune, an individual household's land was usually not consolidated. Arable land was held in strips, scattered around the village to ensure that each household got access to land of varying quality. Such an arrangement, allied to the continuing three-field system and the absence of collective cultivation (each household worked alone on its own fields) was very wasteful, while the redistribution of

The Peasant Assembly

The peasant assembly (*skhod*) was the commune or village organ of self-government. It was a non-elected body consisting of the heads of the constituent households, which resolved most issues through a process of wide-ranging debate, sometimes followed by a vote. It was the chief decision-making organ of the peasant community, and its writ encompassed all aspects of peasant life. It exercised certain judicial functions, controlled the use of communal land (including determining the timetable for fieldwork), organized certain public services and amenities (including education and welfare for the aged, orphaned and handicapped), collected and used funds for common purposes, apportioned land and taxation obligations and punished arrears. The assembly normally elected an elder (*starosta*) and a variety of other officials for a three-year period to carry out its executive functions. A similar body was formed at the parish (*volost*) level to deal with inter-communal matters.

The assembly was seen by many observers as an example of primitive democracy at work. However it rarely matched such expectations in practice. In most instances it was dominated by a few of the more active, wealthy or powerful peasants who used it to consolidate their own positions. However during 1917 it became a major forum of peasant discussion and decision making. As the peasant mood was radicalized, conservative leaders in the assembly were

plots severely reduced the incentive to innovate in the repartitional commune. The repartitional commune was the dominant form throughout most of Russia, although the hereditary commune was strongest in the newer grain-producing areas of the south-west and parts of the south-east of European Russia. It was also strong in the north-west. Commune and village did not always coincide, but most communes corresponded to villages or small peasant settlements. Early this century the typical commune had about 100 households and 2000 acres of land.

The STOLYPIN reforms constituted a major attack upon the commune but had little effect. When peasant unrest unrolled in 1917, it was fiercest in those areas dominated by the repartitional commune. This was the main vehicle of peasant action and the chief forum for general discussion and debate in the countryside. Organizations that were independent of the commune tended to wield little influence in the rural areas. One of the main results of 1917 was the reimposition of communal norms, reflected most graphically in the re-absorption of the separators into the commune. By 1920 only some four per cent of peasant households in thirty-nine provinces of European Russia were outside the communal structure. GJG

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The Workers: February–October 1917

By 1917 there were around 3.5 million workers in the factories and mines of Russia, 1.26 million workers and employees in transport, and 1.25 million workers in construction. The number of wage workers of all types totalled about 18.5 million, or 10 per cent of the population. In Petrograd and its suburbs there were 417,000 industrial workers, of whom 65 per cent were metal workers, 11 per cent textile workers and 10 per cent chemical workers. In Moscow there were about 420,000 workers, of whom one third were textile workers and one quarter metal workers. In the Central Industrial Region as a whole there were over one million workers, of whom 61 per cent were textile workers. In the Urals 83 per cent of

the 350,000 industrial workers were employed in mining and metallurgy. The UKRAINE had a workforce of around one million, of whom the main contingents were miners in the Donbass (280,000) and metallurgical workers in the southern industrial region. Other regions with sizeable concentrations of workers included the BALTIC, the Volga, TRANSCAUCASIA and SIBERIA (Omsk, KRASNOYARSK, Chita). The regional concentration of the working class in Russia was complemented by its concentrations in large units of production. In Petrograd over 70 per cent of workers were in enterprises of more than 1,000 workers; in the Ukraine two thirds of the workforce were in enterprises of more than 500 workers, and the situation was similar in the Urals. This concentration of the industrial labour force was critical in facilitating its mobilization in 1917, and gave the working class a political weight out of proportion to its rather small numbers.

The expansion of industry during the FIRST WORLD WAR and the conscription of between one fifth and one quarter of the workforce created many openings for newcomers to industry. Peasants were drawn by the prospect of lucrative work in industry (in 1917 31 per cent of workers owned land), and women came into the factories as husbands and brothers were called up (in 1917 the proportion of women workers was 40 per cent). Perhaps as many as two thirds of the workforce, therefore, were newcomers often with only limited experience of urban life and strong ties to the countryside. They were a different breed from the skilled men who had worked in industry for many years, who earned reasonably good wages, who were fairly well-educated and politically aware, and who were to be found particularly in the metal industry in Petrograd. Long experience of industrial militancy had imbued them with a strong sense of class unity and a deep antagonism to the tsarist state and the propertied classes.

Despite a rising level of strikes and revolutionary activity during the war, no one predicted the outbreak of revolution in February 1917. The revolutionary events began in the capital on 23 February (8 March NS) when thousands of women workers and housewives, angry at the bread shortage, took to the streets to celebrate International Women's Day, ignoring pleas from labour leaders to stay calm. The next day 200,000 workers came out on strike. By 25 February huge armies of demonstrators were clashing with troops, and the revolution had commenced. On 27 February the climax came when whole regiments of the Petrograd garrison mutinied. On the same day certain labour leaders, mainly MENSHEVIKS, announced the formation of a provisional executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet, and Duma leaders set up a Provisional Committee to maintain public order. On 28 February the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was formally instituted, and a soviet was also inaugurated in Moscow. The next day, after talks with the Soviet, the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT was established

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in which the Soviet Executive Committee decided not to participate. On 2 March NICHOLAS II abdicated, and six days later he was arrested. Thus was autocracy swept away and 'dual power' created.

In Petrograd a majority of workers, trusting in the Soviet as their representative and unwilling to risk dissension in the revolutionary ranks, backed the policy of the Menshevik and SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARY leaders of the Executive Committee of giving conditional support to the government 'in so far' as its policies corresponded to the interests of the revolution. They did not disguise their lurking distrust of the Duma politicians now in power. On the burning question of the war, workers also backed the policy of the Executive Committee. In the resolutions which were passed by general meetings of workers in all the major factories, the government was urged to work assiduously for a democratic peace, based on a renunciation of indemnities and territorial annexations. LENIN characterized the mood of workers at this stage as one of 'revolutionary defensism', i.e. they were prepared to continue fighting to defend revolutionary Russia from Austro-German militarism.

On returning to work after 6 March, workers in Petrograd proceeded to dismantle the autocratic structure of management in the factories. Hated foremen and administrators fled or were expelled. Factory rule books, with their punitive fines and humiliating searches, were torn up. Factory committees were created to represent workers' interests to management. The Petrograd Society of Factory and Works Owners, in conciliatory mood, formally agreed with the Soviet Executive Committee on 10 March to recognize the committees and to implement the eight-hour working day. Workers also succeeded, through localized action, in achieving increases in their monthly earnings of between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, to compensate for the wartime rise in the cost of living. Outside the capital, the employers were less prepared to make concessions, particularly in respect of the eight-hour day.

The first sign of a rift between workers and the Provisional Government came in April when MILYUKOV's note to the Allies was made public. Workers and soldiers surged on to the streets on 20–21 April and there were clashes with middle-class counter-demonstrators. Workers' resolutions demanded the immediate formulation of peace terms and the renunciation of secret treaties. When six socialists from the Executive Committee entered the government in early May, most workers welcomed this as a move which would allow greater soviet control over the 'capitalist ministers'. In Petrograd, however, a minority, mainly skilled metal workers from the Vyborg district, condemned the coalition as a 'ministry of compromise with the bourgeoisie'. From this time, too, certain metal works in Moscow, mainly in the Zamoskvorechye district, began to pass resolutions calling for the transfer of power to the

soviets. Petrograd, however, remained in the van of political developments.

As the summer progressed, wider layers of Petrograd workers, including the unskilled and women workers, became more radical, partly in response to political events, but chiefly because of the deepening economic crisis which increasingly threatened workers' livelihoods. This rising tide of militancy came to a head on 3–4 July when soldiers and workers demonstrated to force the 'ten capitalist ministers' to resign and compel the Central Executive Committee (so named since the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets) to form a government. As many as 400 were killed or wounded and leading Bolsheviks were arrested. The 'July Days' thus resulted not in a soviet government, but in KERENSKY's government taking a sharp turn to the right. While dramatizing the hostility felt by workers and soldiers towards the government, the 'July Days' also highlighted their ambivalence towards the moderate socialists who led the Soviet. The Central Executive Committee had declined to take power, as the demonstrators insisted, since it believed in the necessity of cooperating with the propertied classes, and this left workers uncertain as to the way forward. They felt isolated, and balked at the prospect of a division in the ranks of 'revolutionary democracy'.

The economic crisis engendered a mood of militancy also outside Petrograd, at first apparent among skilled workers but soon arising among other groups. In Moscow an analysis of workers' resolutions reveals that from May onwards, the economy supplanted the war as the issue which most exercised workers. Economically-based militancy was quickly politicized, however, for workers blamed the crisis in industry and the threat to jobs on capitalist 'sabotage', and condemned the Kerensky government for failing to tackle the problems of most concern to them: the collapse of the economy, the war, food supply and the land question. This militancy expressed itself in the movement for WORKERS' CONTROL and in the burgeoning strike movement.

During the late summer and autumn, strikes increased dramatically and spread outwards from Petrograd and the Central Industrial Region to all corners of the former Empire. In July the number of strikes rose to half a million and thereafter grew consistently to reach 1.2 million by October. These strikes, originally economic, acquired an increasingly political character, with the posting of armed guards on factory gates to prevent removal of goods and equipment and the occupation of factories. Surprisingly, the autumn saw a decline in the number of strikes in Petrograd and Moscow, but this was due to a recognition that they could serve as an excuse for employers to shut down unprofitable enterprises. As strikes multiplied and as workers' control of production intensified, employers everywhere began to take a tough line towards the labour movement, by locking out recalcitrant workers, by laying

off employees, cutting back on orders and investment and by clamouring for the Menshevik minister of labour, M. I. Skobelev, to quash the pretensions of organized labour.

It was above all the KORNILOV rebellion that allowed the Bolsheviks to capitalize on the growing polarization between the upper and lower classes. The spectre of a military dictatorship seemed to highlight the bankruptcy of the policy of conciliation with the propertied classes which had been pursued so earnestly by the Mensheviks and Right SRs. In the wake of the Kornilov rebellion, whose defeat in part was due to the effective mobilization of railway and telegraph workers, the BOLSHEVIK demand for power to be transferred to the 'representatives of the proletariat and peasantry' was endorsed for the first time by the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets (31 August and 5 September respectively), and by eighty other soviets during the first half of September. An examination of worker resolutions from the main industrial centres reveals enthusiastic support for Bolshevik attacks on the bourgeois-landlord government, the capitalist system and the imperialist war, and ubiquitous calls for the transfer of power to the soviets, workers' control of production and the arming of the Red Guards (see WORKERS' MILITIAS AND RED GUARDS). In Moscow, where social polarization was not as acute as in Petrograd, over 50,000 workers passed resolutions in support of soviet power, including many textile workers in the month of October. Even in Petrograd, however, it seems that only a minority of resolute, or possibly foolhardy, workers looked to the violent overthrow of the coalition government as the means to establish soviet power. Memories of the July Days had still not faded and most workers feared the prospect of political isolation and civil war.

The announcement on the morning of 25 October that the Provisional Government had been overthrown was undoubtedly welcomed by a majority of workers. It is true that some opposed what they saw to be an illegal seizure of power which threatened to engulf Russia in civil war, but such sentiments were confined mainly to printers, railway workers, postal and telegraph employees, white-collar workers and professionals. Yet though they welcomed a soviet government, most workers had no clear idea about its precise political form and functions. Some called for a 'homogeneous revolutionary democratic government', which would be based on a broader range of democratic organizations than the soviets alone, but which would rule out any attempt to cooperate with the propertied classes. More popular were calls for a 'homogeneous socialist government', which looked to the parties within the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets to form a government based on the soviets. It quickly became apparent that there was no basis for any political agreement between the socialist parties within the soviet, and the foundations of a one party state were set in place.

It is often argued that workers played an essentially

destructive and anarchistic role in the Russian Revolution, and that the Bolsheviks won their following by manipulating the base instincts of the masses. Bolshevik agitation undoubtedly played a crucial role in radicalizing the masses, but the Bolsheviks did not create popular discontent. This arose out of the workers' own experience of economic and social upheavals and political events. In the spring of 1917 most workers hoped that the Provisional Government would defend the interests of the common people, achieve a speedy peace settlement and give land to the peasants. Instead the Provisional Government appeared to uphold the interests of the propertied classes, by seeming to prolong the war, postpone a settlement of the land question and, above all, connive in the 'sabotage' of industry that was being perpetrated by the capitalist class. The contribution of the Bolsheviks was to provide an explanation of worker grievances in terms of class analysis and to relate the urgent problems of daily life to a wider social and political order. The Bolsheviks won support because their analysis and proposed solutions seemed to make sense, whereas those offered by the moderate socialists, which had commanded general assent in the early months, came to seem increasingly false. A worker from the Orudiyni (gun) plant, Petrograd, where formerly Bolsheviks were not even allowed to speak at factory meetings, said in September: 'the Bolsheviks have always said: "It is not we who will persuade you, but life itself." And now the Bolsheviks have triumphed because life has proved their tactics right.'

SAS

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Factory Committees: February–October 1917

In the wake of the FEBRUARY REVOLUTION workers throughout Russia formed factory and works committees, railway line committees and mine committees to represent their interests to management. Initially, these committees were strongest in the state-owned defence plants of Petrograd, where the flight of the former military administrators during the revolution forced the committees to take charge of the plants on a temporary basis. This also happened in a number of former state enterprises in the Urals and in the Pipe Works in Samara. In the private

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sector the committees at first functioned like trade unions, fighting to win the eight-hour day, to increase wages, to reform the internal regime of the workshops and to oversee hiring and firing of workers. Outside of Petrograd the factory owners were less than happy at the appearance of these committees, but the legalization of the committees by the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT on 23 April 1917 gave them little choice but to try to work with these new organizations.

The committees quickly developed an enormous volume of business, much of it handled by specialized sub-committees. They dealt with matters as diverse as the security of the factory, food supply, 'culture and enlightenment', health and safety, the improvement of working conditions, labour discipline, checking that workers had officially been excused conscription, campaigning against drunkenness, liaison with the local soviet or garrison. Much of their business was of a fairly trivial kind: for example, on 28 July at the Baltic works in Petrograd the committee discussed what to do with a consignment of rotting fish. Yet precisely because of the concern with everyday life, workers regarded the committees as 'their' institutions, closer to them than the trade unions or soviets. As the economic crisis began to bite, and particularly once trade unions were operating effectively, the committees turned away from matters to do with the defence of workers' wages and conditions and began to devote themselves to establishing WORKERS' CONTROL of production. The Soviet historian, Z. V. Stepanov, has counted 4,266 acts by 124 factory committees in Petrograd between 1 March and 25 October and calculates that 1,141 acts related to workers' control of production and distribution; 882 concerned organizational questions; 347 concerned political questions; 299 concerned wages; 241 concerned hiring and firing and the monitoring of conscription, etc.

Factory committee members were initially elected on a non-political basis, but as politics hardened along party lines, members began to be elected on party slates. In the early months, the moderate socialists dominated the committees as they did all labour organizations. Being the institutions closest to the mass of workers, however, the committees were the first to register the radicalization that was occurring in popular attitudes. Already at the First Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees in early June the BOLSHEVIKS were in the ascendant, winning 290 votes for their resolution on control of the economy, as against 72 votes for the MENSHEVIK resolution and 45 votes for the ANARCHIST resolution. The clear-cut support of the Bolsheviks for workers' control of production led to the moderate socialists being recalled from the committees and Bolsheviks being elected in their stead. Even before the KORNILOV rebellion the committees had become the Bolsheviks' firmest base of support within the labour movement.

It is reckoned that 2,151 factory committees were in

existence by October, of which 687 were in enterprises of more than 200 workers. To coordinate their activities in the sphere of workers' control these committees had developed higher level organizations, of which there were 95 by October. Of these 75 brought together committees on a city or regional basis, and 20 on an industrial basis. By far the most important was the Petrograd Central Council of Factory and Works Committees (CCFC), set up at the First Conference in June, which was transformed into the supreme national body after the All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees (17–22 October). The CCFC employed some 80 people by October in its various commissions, departments and sections, all vainly trying to restore order to the economy and thus preserve jobs. It was under firm Bolshevik control and played a major economic role in the first months of Bolshevik power (see DEMISE OF WORKERS' CONTROL IN INDUSTRY). SAS

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Workers' Control: February–October 1917

Workers' control of production and distribution was principally an attempt by the FACTORY COMMITTEES to dam the rising tide of economic disorder which became apparent in the summer of 1917. Although sometimes seen as an anarcho-syndicalist bid to oust the capitalists from their factories, it was in fact motivated less by ideology than by a practical concern to stave off factory closures and save jobs. Faced by shortages of fuel, raw materials and spare parts, spiralling costs, declining productivity and a heightened tempo of labour militancy, industrialists began to scale down their operations and to lay off workers. It is reckoned that 568 enterprises shut down between March and July, and a further 251 in August and September. By that month, 200 mines had been closed in the Donbass. In response to such 'sabotage', the factory committees tried to preserve jobs by imposing a measure of 'control' – in the sense of inspection or supervision – over the employers.

At first workers' control was restricted mainly to overseeing the activities of management and was defensive in character. It has been calculated that up to July workers' control was practised in 378 enterprises, with a total workforce of 832,000, mainly in the metal industries but also in textiles and mining. Two thirds of the acts of workers' control involved such things as the factory committees restructuring the internal regime of the enterprise, supervising the hiring and firing of workers, participating in the deployment and protection of labour or

organizing food supply. Already, however, committees were also seeking to procure scarce supplies and to monitor their use by management. As the economic crisis deepened, workers' control became more offensive and cut more into the rights of managers to manage. During the late summer and autumn the committees began to intervene in the technical side of production and to demand access to order-books and financial accounts. It is reckoned that by October workers' control was in force in 573 factories and mines with a combined workforce of 1.4 million (41 per cent of the industrial proletariat). It was most widespread in Petrograd, where it operated in 96 enterprises (with a workforce of 289,000), and Moscow, where it operated in 114 enterprises (with a workforce of 194,000).

In a minority of cases, workers' control developed in an extreme direction, with workers arresting or expelling managers or seeking to run enterprises by themselves. This was particularly so in the UKRAINE and the Urals, where capitalist opposition to the demands of labour was very tenacious. In the Ukraine, for example, attempts to shut down production led factory committees to take over plants such as the Gelferich-Sade, the Steam-Engine and the General Electric companies in Kharkov. And in the Donbass miners arrested managers and occupied the mines until late September when troops put an end to these activities with considerable bloodshed. Nevertheless one should not exaggerate the extent of such extreme forms of workers' control. It is reckoned that only 4.3 per cent of 2,094 acts of workers' control in the months of July to October involved factory committees actually running enterprises.

The movement for workers' control of production essentially arose independently of any political party. The MENSHEVIKS and SRs disapproved of it as a strategy for dealing with disruption in industry, since they believed that spontaneous initiatives by workers in individual enterprises could only exacerbate economic disorder. Instead they argued for 'state control', i.e. planned, centralized all-embracing control of the economy by the government, the seeds of which had already been sown during the war. The Bolsheviks, too, believed that only action by the state could restore order to the economy, but they refused any support for the initiatives of the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, since they believed that, as a government of capitalists and landlords, it would seek to restore order at the expense of the working class. The BOLSHEVIKS thus supported workers' control of production, but some in the party remained sceptical regarding its effectiveness. LENIN construed workers' control in the narrow sense of 'accounting and inspection' and sought after October to integrate it into a centralized system under government control. SAS

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Trade Unions: February–October 1917

The 1905 REVOLUTION led to a relaxation in the laws prohibiting trade unions, and during 1906–7 they grew rapidly. They barely survived police repression during the subsequent period of reaction, and their revival in 1912–14 was curtailed again with the outbreak of war. Former activists hastened to re-establish them after the FEBRUARY REVOLUTION, founding 91 unions in March and April, and by May another 30 had affiliated to the Petrograd Central Bureau of Trade Unions, and 38 to its Moscow counterpart. In far-away Irkutsk some 8,000 workers had enrolled in 20 unions by summer, and in Baku 27 unions were operating, including a seamen's union of 4,800 and an oil workers' union of 3,000. By the time of the Third All-Russian Trade Union Conference, 21–8 June, there were 976 unions in existence with a total membership of 1.4 million. The largest of these was the metal workers' union with 400,000 members, followed by the textile workers with 178,500. Trade union growth continued through the summer and autumn, so that by October 2,000 unions were said to be active with a membership of over two million.

In the early weeks of the revolution it was artisans who took the lead in creating trade unions. In manufacturing industry, particularly in metal-working, unions were rather slow to get off the ground, partly because factory committees successfully took up the defence of workers' interests. Indeed in regions such as the Donbass and the Urals unions never achieved influence comparable with that of the factory and mine committees. Many of the first unions were local in character, or else confined to a particular craft. In Petrograd, for example, foundry workers, machinists and electricians had separate organizations before combining with the metal workers' union. The policy of union leaders, however, regardless of party affiliation, was to establish a few large unions embracing all the workers in a particular branch of industry, irrespective of their trade. Despite craft resistance in some quarters (for example from wood-turners), this policy enjoyed considerable success even before the BOLSHEVIKS came to power.

The coexistence of unions and factory committees led to clashes regarding their respective spheres of competence. At the First Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees (30 May–5 June), to the chagrin of committee activists, trade union spokesmen argued that there was not room for two organizations, and that the committees should become the primary cells of the unions. At the Second Conference (7–12 August) the Bolshevik trade-union leader, A. L. Lozovsky, was more conciliatory. His resolution, passed by conference, proposed that trade unions defend the wages and working conditions of their members, whilst the

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committees regulate production. After the OCTOBER REVOLUTION, however, this division of labour once again became an issue of contention, when trade unions claimed the right to regulate production.

By the summer the factory committees had largely withdrawn from wage bargaining, and it was left to the unions to try to repair the depredations of price inflation, by negotiating collective wage contracts, or 'tariffs', with the employers' organizations. Twenty-five contracts were signed in Petrograd up to October, the most significant being that between the metal workers' union and the metalworking section of the Society of Factory and Works Owners, which was signed only after two months of protracted and bitter negotiation. These tariffs were, however, a depressing failure, for no sooner had they been signed than inflation rendered the wage increases nugatory. Nevertheless in these contracts the unions sought to strengthen the position of the low-paid and to overcome sectionalism, and this helped to increase the prestige of the unions in the eyes of their members.

Nationally, the MENSHEVIKS were the most influential party within the trade union movement, but the Bolsheviks built up their influence at the expense of the moderate socialists in the course of 1917, as they did in other mass organizations. At the Third All-Russian Trade-Union Conference in June, among the delegates were 73 Bolsheviks, 36 Mensheviks, 31 non-aligned Social Democrats, 35 SRs etc. Conference elected a Temporary All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, consisting of 13 Bolsheviks, 13 Mensheviks and three SRs. In some unions Bolshevik fortunes rose from the late summer, as the politics of conciliationism became more discredited. Of the delegates to the first national conference of textile workers in late September, 48 were Bolsheviks, 10 Mensheviks, four SRs and two belonged to no party. At the first national congress of metal workers in January 1918 75 delegates were Bolsheviks, 51 were non-party, 20 were Mensheviks, seven were Left SRs, six Right SRs etc.

'Bolshevization' was, however, by no means universal within the trade unions. The printers' union remained a redoubt of Menshevism, and unions such as those of chemical workers and glass workers remained under moderate control. The All-Russian Executive Committee of Railway Workers, representing a federation of largely autonomous line committees and unions based at the principal intersections, was dominated by white-collar employees of right-wing socialist views. In spite of being politically less reliable than the factory committees from the Bolshevik point of view, it was nevertheless the unions rather than factory committees which the Bolsheviks sought to utilize after October. SAS

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Workers' Militias and Red Guards in 1917

Workers' militias were established on a local basis during the February Revolution to protect factory property and to uphold law and order in the working-class districts. They arose spontaneously, without the intervention of political parties, though inspired in part by the socialist ideal of a citizenry-in-arms. They clashed with the new all-class, non-partisan militias which were set up by local authorities under the auspices of the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. In the next months, the authorities, with the backing of the moderate socialists on the Soviet Executive Committee, sought to disband the workers' militias, but in Petrograd, at least, the latter continued to compete with the new civil militia, in a microcosm of 'dual power'.

As the unpopularity of the government grew, more politicized formations – the Red Guards – were created, committed to struggling against counter-revolution and to defending the gains made by workers since March. These Red Guards were backed by the factory committees and more militant city-district soviets and had the support of the BOLSHEVIKS. In the teeth of fierce opposition from the Soviet leadership, the development of the Red Guards was slow, and the failure of the July Days set them back considerably. Their rapid growth came with the KORNILOV rebellion which spurred workers to obtain and learn to use weapons. By October there may have been as many as 200,000 Red Guards throughout Russia.

During the OCTOBER REVOLUTION, in contrast to February, masses of workers did not come out on to the streets to clash with armed soldiers and police. The armed forces of the Provisional Government in Petrograd had already been won over to the SOVIETS, so the task of the insurgents was merely to occupy key centres and disarm the last supporters of the old regime. The Bolsheviks actually discouraged mass participation in the insurrection, but they did rely on the powerful network of Red Guards. These consisted mainly of young men who, though by no means solidly Bolshevik, were determined to establish soviet power. Nevertheless, within a few months, the new government concluded that the Red Guards were unsuitable as the core of a regular army. Their spontaneous and local character and their paucity of numbers seemed incompatible with the apparent need for a centralized, disciplined and efficient army. By the spring of 1918 the Red Guards had either dwindled away or been absorbed into TROTSKY's new RED ARMY. SAS

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Workers and the Bolshevik State: October 1917–March 1921

Contrary to their expectations before coming to power, the BOLSHEVIKS discovered that, far from being able to utilize the power of the state in order to bring some order into the economy, the galloping economic disorder threatened to destroy their tenuous hold on state power. The crisis in the economy, already severe before October, grew steadily worse. The collapse of fuel and raw materials supplies, the exhaustion of plant and plummeting labour productivity, the disruption of the transport system, the loss of territory and the decline in grain marketings not only added hugely to the problems of the Bolshevik government in defending itself against external aggression, but engendered a level of peasant and worker disaffection which threatened the security of the regime from within.

From the moment the Bolsheviks seized power their slender social base of support began to disintegrate. On suing for peace, they began to demobilize the war industries and this, together with the more general decline of manufacturing and extractive industries, led to a rapid increase in the number of workers laid off and a sharp fall in the number in employment. By the autumn of 1918 there were fewer than 2.5 million industrial workers in Russia, and only 1.2 million by the middle of 1920. The dissolution of the proletariat went further, however, in precisely those centres where the working class had played a key political role in 1917. In Petrograd the industrial workforce shrank in size from 384,600 in 1917 to 101,840 in mid 1920. In Moscow it shrank from 205,900 to 89,000 in the same period. In the Urals the workforce fell from 339,600 in January 1918 to 154,714 in January 1921. Moreover the cutbacks were unevenly distributed by branch of industry. The metalworking industries, where labour militancy had been most pronounced during 1917, suffered a huge haemorrhage of workers in the first months of 1918, but thereafter this slowed considerably. In contrast, the number of textile workers held up for most of 1918, but by mid 1920 had fallen to 27 per cent of its 1913 level. In other industries, such as tailoring, leather or food, numbers remained stable or even increased.

In the winter of 1917–18 the speedy demobilization of the war industries and the acute food shortages caused tens of thousands of workers to leave the towns and return to the countryside in search of land and food. To some extent, the working class which was left behind was less proletarian (*'déclassé'*, in Soviet jargon) than in 1917, since the number of urbanized, skilled and literate workers, i.e. the more class-conscious elements, had fallen considerably. Nevertheless a core of such workers remained in all industrial centres (to a greater extent in Moscow than in Petrograd),

and this was particularly so in regions such as the Central Industrial Region or the Urals, where the traditional ties of industrial workers to the land, paradoxically, helped to preserve the working class. As we shall see, however, workers failed to maintain that unity as a social group and power as a political force which they had achieved in 1917.

The CIVIL WAR brought worsening working conditions and plummeting real wages. The Bolsheviks sought to introduce rationality into wage policy, but the catastrophic fall in the value of the ruble rendered their efforts futile. The Second All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions (January 1919) opted for a national tariff for all categories of labour, dividing all employees into three categories, each subdivided into twelve grades. The maximum for a technical specialist was fixed at 3000 rubles; the wage of the highest-paid skilled worker was fixed at 1150 rubles, and that of the lowest grade of unskilled labourer at 600 rubles. This five-to-one ratio was actually an attempt to uphold wage differentials, which had been much eroded by this stage, but the decreasing importance of money wages reinforced trends towards wage equalization. By the end of 1920 the real value of the money wage was only 2.3 per cent of its 1913 level, but if one includes food rations, work-clothes and free communal services, then the real value of the 'wage' was about one third its prewar value. The economist, S. G. Strumilin, reckoned that the money element accounted for 52.6 per cent of the average 'wage' in 1918; 20.7 per cent in 1919; 7.4 per cent in 1920.

During the Civil War workers came to rely on the authorities for the fulfilment of their most basic needs. The government, however, was unable to meet these at anything like an adequate level, particularly in the sphere of food supply. In the autumn of 1920 a factory worker received on average per month between roughly five and seven pounds of bread, instead of the norm of 27. And the attempt by the government to give preferential rations to strategically important sectors created further problems, by encouraging all workers to press for the better rations. In late 1918 one-quarter million workers in 250 defence plants, were put on a military ration; in the next year this was extended to many non-defence plants. By the end of 1920 some 2.7 million workers qualified for special rations. Yet on average only one fifth or one quarter of this special ration could be met. Workers had no choice but to engage in illicit trade or barter household possessions for food.

The constant search for food, the necessity of doing sideline work to supplement family income and the higher rates of illness as a consequence of a deteriorating diet, resulted in staggering levels of absenteeism in industry and exacerbated the already acute problem of low productivity. It was reckoned that one third of all working days in 1920 were lost through absenteeism. The government introduced a panoply of tough measures to combat absenteeism and low productivity, though their effectiveness seems to have been limited. By 1920 piece rates, which Lenin had

been urging since the spring of 1918, were once again ubiquitous.

The steady deterioration in the workers' economic position created severe political problems for the Bolshevik government, as many of the same economic discontents that had helped propel them into power were by the spring of 1918 strengthening opposition. In Petrograd it was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which proved to be the turning-point. The MENSHEVIKS gained a new lease of life by giving political shape to labour disaffection regarding job losses and food supply. Arguing that the SOVIETS no longer represented worker interests, since they were subject to manipulation by the ruling party, the Mensheviks set up conferences of worker deputies which, in addition to lambasting the economic policies of the government, criticized its growing habit of suppressing those not compliant with its wishes. Similar conferences were created in Moscow, Nizhni Novgorod, Kineshma, Tula and elsewhere. In Petrograd the active core of opposition to the government came from metal workers hardest hit by unemployment, especially those in the state defence plants, from printers and from the Nevsky district of the city, long a bastion of the SRs. The shooting of workers, in nearby Kolpino, who demonstrated against the shortages of food and jobs, unleashed a wave of protest not only in Petrograd but in numerous provincial towns. This particularly dramatic example of official brutality and the expulsion of Mensheviks and SRs from the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets in mid-June strengthened the anti-Bolshevik mood in sections of the Petrograd working class. The Mensheviks sought to capitalize on this by planning a general strike for 2 July, but a combination of repression by the authorities and indifference in the working class ensured that it did not actually take place.

Outside the former capital, the spring and early summer of 1918 also witnessed a revival of the moderate socialists. In new elections to 19 provincial city soviets in the Central Industrial Region (Kaluga, Kostroma, Ryazan, Tver, Tula and Yaroslavl), in the southern black-earth provinces (Orel, Kursk, Tambov), in the Volga basin (Nizhni Novgorod, Kazan, Saratov) and in Penza, Vologda and Archangel, Bolsheviks lost control to the moderates. Aware of the precariousness of their power and fearing, with some justification, that victories for the moderate socialists would open the gates to White counter-revolution, the Bolsheviks proceeded to root out opposition with ruthless despatch. Their determination was strengthened by the assassinations of the popular agitator, V. Volodarsky, in Petrograd on 20 June, and of the German ambassador, Count von Mirbach by the Left SRs on 6 July. Recalcitrant soviets were disbanded, and authority vested in executive committees, the VECHEKA or special emissaries.

In the course of 1918 political opponents within the trade unions were also gradually brought into line. The printers' union continued as a stronghold of Menshevism well into

1920 in Moscow and Samara. In the glass workers' union and chemical workers' union the Bolsheviks gradually wrested control from the Mensheviks in the course of 1918, although the Moscow branch of the chemical workers' union was dominated by non-party elements and Mensheviks until 1921. In the communication workers' union, Left SR and Menshevik influence was undermined with difficulty, particularly among post and telegraph workers and in Moscow. The declining fortunes of the opposition parties within the trade-union movement can be seen in their falling representation at national trade-union congresses. Between the First Congress in January 1918 and the Third in April 1920 the proportion of Menshevik delegates fell from 16 per cent to 3 per cent and the proportion of delegates from other socialist parties from 10 per cent to 4 per cent. The proportion of non-party members, however, rose from 8 per cent to 18 per cent.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the decline of the socialist opposition to the Bolsheviks was due to government repression or to their inability to consolidate working-class support once full-scale civil war had flared up in June. It is beyond dispute that the Bolsheviks made it difficult for the opposition parties to operate in the soviets and trade unions, even though they were not illegal. On the other hand, it is apparent that, even before the onset of major civil war, opposition to the Bolsheviks was largely economic in its roots and, in Petrograd at least, there seems to have been little enthusiasm for the overthrow of the soviet system and the re-convening of a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, as advocated by the SRs, or the more nebulous political objectives of the Mensheviks. Once civil war was in full spate, although the majority of the Mensheviks and Left SRs opted for the Reds as the lesser evil, it was not easy for them in practice to dissociate themselves from the Right SRs and the minority of Mensheviks who were pledged to bring down the Bolshevik regime by force, nor to refute Bolshevik allegations that their encouragement of labour protest gave comfort to the Whites. The outbreak of civil war may well have served not to foster working-class disaffection for the Bolsheviks but, initially at least, to rally already discontented workers to the regime, in its life-and-death struggle against the Whites.

While many thousands of workers continued enthusiastically to support the Soviet regime during the Civil War in spite of all hardships, it is difficult to gauge the extent and meaning of such support. It is nevertheless manifest in several forms. Tens of thousands of workers volunteered to enlist in the RED ARMY, to join food detachments or to take up responsible positions within the government or party apparatus. In August 1920 a census of the five million-strong Red Army and RED NAVY showed that workers comprised 15 per cent of army units and 29 per cent of naval units, and metal workers comprised by far the largest element among them. There are no global data on the numbers who took part in seizing grain, as this was very

much a seasonal operation, but in the second half of 1918 and first quarter of 1919 at least 20,000 workers took part in the food detachments. Finally, although the proportion of workers within the Communist Party fell between 1918 and 1921 from 57 per cent to 41 per cent, the absolute numbers rose from 65,400 to 240,000 (these were, of course, workers by origin, and not necessarily by current occupation). In Petrograd 12,697 workers, or 11 per cent of the industrial labour force, were party members at the end of 1920. In Moscow and Perm the corresponding figures were 8.8 per cent and 8.7 per cent; party saturation was lowest on the railways and in areas of light and small industry, such as Vladimir and Tula.

Given the disastrous industrial conditions under WAR COMMUNISM, it is hardly surprising that there were periodic outbursts of worker unrest; yet little is known about them. The spring of 1919 saw a bout of short strikes in Moscow (centred on the Bogatyr chemical works), Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Tula, where strikes at the state armaments plant halted production for five days, and where the authorities distributed grain, arrested leaders and launched a party recruitment drive. At the Putilov works in Petrograd striking workers demanded free trade in grain, and the authorities intervened to dismantle the shop committees which were said to be led by SRs. An investigating commission reproached management for its 'inability to approach the worker as a teacher to a pupil and, where necessary, as an administrator to a subordinate'. The most serious strike of this period, however, occurred at Astrakhan in March, in the wake of a rebellion by the local garrison. As many as 2,000 people may have been killed by troops sent to quell the uprising. After the spring of 1919 there were sporadic strikes such as those that broke out in the workshops of the Moscow-Kursk railway in December 1919 and January 1920, in which Left SRs were implicated. Most industrial disputes in 1919–20, however, did not issue in stoppages; they no longer concerned wages in the main, but complaints of inadequate food rations or demands for release from work in order to search for food.

Not until the severe winter of 1920–21 did the bottled-up tensions of three years of civil war finally explode in a wave of labour unrest, peasant rebellion and acrimonious in-fighting within the Communist Party (see BOLSHEVIK OPPOSITIONS). On 22 January 1921 the government announced yet another cut in the bread ration after food trains were held up in Siberia and the Northern Caucasus. Three weeks later strikes and demonstrations broke out in Moscow, the key demands of which were for higher rations, 'free trade' and the abolition of grain requisitioning. Some calls were raised for civil and political freedoms. No sooner had the unrest in the capital subsided than it spread to Petrograd. On 23 February workers at the Pipe Works demanded an increase in rations and an immediate distribution of shoes and winter clothing. Their demands

were taken up in other enterprises. As the local party leader, ZINOVIEV declared martial law and strikers at the Pipe Works and the Laferme tobacco factory were locked out. The Mensheviks put out leaflets which called for freely elected soviets and independent trade unions, the restoration of civil liberties, and an end to terror and the release of political prisoners; SRs called for a Constituent Assembly. Regular troops and officer cadets broke up demonstrations and made widespread arrests, but the authorities also distributed extra rations and allowed workers to leave the city to search for food. By early March nearly all the strikes had been suppressed, but a greater threat loomed in the shape of the uprising at KRONSTADT.

Labour protest during the Civil War failed to dent government policies, reflecting weakness of a working class both diminished in numbers and lacking the social cohesion and organizational strength characteristic of 1917. Labour organizations had been instrumental in bringing the Bolsheviks to power but had quickly been incorporated into the new regime. They could thus no longer serve as a fulcrum for a protest movement directed against that regime. The factory committees had been absorbed into the trade unions, the unions were threatened with 'statization' and the power of the soviets had been supplanted by party and military formations. Labour unrest certainly embarrassed a government that claimed to represent proletarian interests but it did not seriously impede the policies of that government. In fact, the passive (and sometimes active) resistance of the peasants was probably a much greater constraint on government action than worker opposition, for the war could not be won without food.

The weakness of labour protest was due partly to small numbers, partly to lack of organization and the fact that the collapse of industry had sapped the economic strength of the working class, but chiefly due to its very nature: the collapse of the economy, by pitting one group of workers against another in the competition for jobs and food, encouraged particularism and localism in worker resistance and discouraged the kind of class-wide activities which had been so much a feature of 1917. Finally, the political context fostered a kind of 'economism'. In 1917 it had been possible to blame the economic ills of the working class on the capitalists or the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. Now there was no longer a clear target for labour protests nor a clear political solution to the economic ills of labour. Certainly, workers saw their woes springing from the policies of War Communism and demanded their abandonment, but they balked at the prospect of a head-on clash with the architects of those policies. The Mensheviks and SRs, within the limited arena permitted them, urged just such a confrontation, but workers remained sceptical that the political panaceas offered by the moderates could deliver food and jobs. In the last analysis, they felt that Bolsheviks alone provided a bulwark against the restoration of the capitalist order, and this belief deflected any attempt

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to develop a new political solution to labour's economic ills.

Meanwhile, faced with the dissolution of that class which had brought it to power, the Bolshevik party consoled itself with the thought that the proletarian revolution could be saved only if the party exercised a dictatorship on behalf of the idealized proletariat, and over the actual one. In 1921, however, most Bolsheviks still perceived the threat to the revolution as external; few could see the danger of a corrosion of the revolution from within, via the atrophy of independent labour and popular organizations and the bureaucratization of state and party. SAS

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The Demise of Workers' Control in Industry

One of the first measures enacted by the Bolshevik government was the Decree on Workers' Control published on 14 November 1917. This recognized the right of workers in all enterprises to control all aspects of production, to have access to all spheres of administration, and the right of the lower organs of workers' control to make their decisions binding on the employers. The Decree did not spell out in precise detail the scope of workers' control, and this quickly proved to be a bone of contention between the Central Council of Factory Committees and the short-lived All-Russian Council of Workers' Control, set up by the Decree, in which the trade unions had the loudest voice. The CCFC urged that workers' control no longer be seen as mere 'inspection and accounting', but as active intervention in production, as a measure leading to eventual workers' self-management within a system of state-owned industry. For their part, the trade unions advocated a much narrower interpretation of workers' control and urged that enterprise control commissions be strictly subordinate to the control-distribution commissions of the relevant trade unions and to central direction generally.

At the grass roots, FACTORY COMMITTEES and their control organs quickly discovered that escalating economic problems forced them to adopt ever more radical forms of workers' control. Many factory owners began to run down their operations, to refuse new orders and sell off stock. Such acts of 'sabotage' caused the control organs to

intervene decisively in all aspects of administration and production, and desperately to seek out scarce supplies of fuel, raw materials and spare parts, new orders and funds to pay wages, in a vain effort to stave off closures. Where owners did abandon or seek to close down their enterprises, the control organs attempted to take over the running of them. Such takeovers were, in general, motivated more by a practical concern to save jobs than by anarcho-syndicalist ideology. In Petrograd province between November and March 1918, only 27 factories were taken over, and in nearly all cases, this was seen as a temporary measure until the enterprises were taken into state ownership. Factory seizures were more common where workers took over small light-industrial enterprises, especially food-processing plants, for example in the Middle and Lower Volga, Vyatka, the Western provinces and the central black earth region.

Many leading BOLSHEVIKS, particularly in the trade unions, looked askance at the 'syndicalist' excesses of the factory committees, pointing out that, in the competition for scarce resources, factory committees ended up defending the interests of their particular enterprise against those of others. By the end of 1917 the party leadership was generally agreed that the trade unions alone, as organizations embracing whole branches of industry, could tackle the mammoth problems of regulating the economy. It was thus agreed at the First All-Russian Trade Union Congress in January 1918 that the factory committees should cease to exist separately from the trade unions, and that the committees should become the basic cells of the unions within each workplace. Although the CCFC was hardly enamoured of this shot-gun marriage, the factory committees consented to be absorbed into the unions, since they recognized that there was no room for two organizations vying to restore order to the economy. Nevertheless throughout the CIVIL WAR, trade-union leaders continued to complain periodically about the aspirations of some factory committees to independence of the unions.

If the factory committees lost out to the unions in less than six months of Bolshevik power, they could yet be satisfied that one of their major objectives was realized far sooner than they dared hope in October. For the CCFC, from the first, had urged the government to move rapidly towards a planned socialist economy, by undertaking sweeping nationalization of industry and full state regulation of the economy. Most of the Bolshevik leaders, however, favoured a system of 'state capitalism', i.e. state control of strategic sectors with extensive private ownership of industry under government supervision and workers' control. This proved unviable, for a tide of 'nationalizations from below' welled up in response to deepening turmoil in industry. Factory committees, local soviets and local national economic councils (*soznarkhozy*), having taken control of enterprises threatened with closure, tried to force the authorities to take them into state ownership. Between

November and March 1918, 863 warrants were issued to dispossess owners of industrial enterprises, many of which were in the Urals, and of these, 775 were issued by local bodies (mainly soviets). In the face of such pressure from below, the resistance of the Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh) to nationalization began to weaken, and on 23 June, sweeping nationalization of industry was announced.

At the Sixth (and final) Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees on 25 January 1918 a resolution calling for the immediate nationalization of industry argued for workers' management of enterprises under state ownership. At the First Congress of Sovnarkhozy (25 May–4 June 1918), however, a resolution to ensure that two thirds of the members of the management boards of nationalized enterprises were elected by the workforce was defeated, in favour of one allowing only one third of the members to be directly elected, and emphasizing strict subordination of management boards to the central organs of VSNKh. Even this limited form of workers' collegiate management was unacceptable to LENIN who, in the interests of raising labour productivity, was now preaching the virtues of dictatorial management by one person. Up until the end of 1919, however, he met with stiff resistance from trade unions and factory committees. In 1919 only 10.8 per cent of Russian enterprises, for which there is information, were run by individual managers; by the autumn of 1920 this had risen dramatically to 82 per cent.

By the end of the Civil War not much was left of that vigorous movement for workers' control which had been spearheaded by the factory committees in 1917. Talk of workers' control was not entirely absent, but it was now deemed to be institutionalized in the form of workers' inspectorates (trade-union bodies responsible for monitoring affairs in critical sectors such as rail transport and food supply) and state control organs, charged with auditing the affairs of government departments. Within the workplace an authoritarian structure of management had been restored – though not without considerable resistance – in which professional managers and technical specialists held the upper hand over labour organizations. It is tempting to see this as a consequence of the Bolsheviks' deep-rooted preference for centralization and technical expertise, and to see in their support for workers' control in 1917 little more than political opportunism; but although ideological predispositions undoubtedly played a part in bringing workers' control to an end, the principal causes of this outcome must be located in the terrifying difficulties wrought by economic collapse and civil war.

SAS

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The Militarization of Labour and the Role of Trade Unions

With the outbreak of full-scale civil war industry was converted into a supply organization for the RED ARMY, and industrial policy became a component of military strategy. Centralized direction and planning of industry, which was the hallmark of WAR COMMUNISM, had significant consequences for labour, in particular, because increasing efforts were made to place workers under military discipline. It was the policy of labour 'militarization' which served as the catalyst for a fierce debate within the Bolshevik party from 1920–21, which came into focus on the question of the role of the trade unions in a workers' state.

The Code of Laws on Labour promulgated in December 1918 imposed the 'duty to work' on all the able-bodied between the ages of 16 and 50 (see SOVIET LEGAL SYSTEM). In the course of 1919 the acute shortage of labour, especially of skilled labour, in such critical sectors as transport, fuel production and defence production, led to growing numbers of workers being put on a military footing: in April 1919, for example, coal miners were prohibited from leaving their jobs. On 29 January 1920 SOVNARKOM proclaimed the introduction of general labour conscription: all were now liable to be called up for stints of work in food and fuel procurement, road construction, cartage etc. It was also decreed that military and naval units could be mobilized for civilian reconstruction, and 'labour armies' were formed. It is estimated that in the first half of 1920 nearly six million people were drafted to work in the timber industry. The militarization of labour was a response to problems of labour supply, labour turnover and labour indiscipline. It may not in fact have been as widely practised as the plethora of decrees would suggest, but even when it was successfully implemented it may not have solved the acute problems of the regime in ensuring an adequate supply of efficient labour. Labour turnover, for example, continued to run at a high level: data on 35 defence plants show that between September 1919 and August 1920 whilst 38,500 workers were taken on (mainly conscripts), 35,000 left their jobs.

The Chief Committee for General Labour Conscription of the Council of Defence, together with its local organs, was principally responsible for labour mobilization, but labour unions were also encouraged to play an active part. Although some rank-and-file trade unionists may have welcomed militarization as a solution to their intractable local difficulties, union leaders generally regarded it with suspicion. For they were neither convinced that militarization was effective, nor that it was for them as trade unions to implement it. It was the attempt to execute far-reaching militarization of labour on the railways that brought trade-union opposition to a head.

By the winter of 1919–20 the situation on the railways

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was chaotic, with individual lines competing for scarce supplies of fuel and food, local bodies ignoring central directives, and absenteeism running at 20 per cent to 40 per cent between January and March 1920. In March 1920 TROTSKY took over the commissariat of transport with a view to centralizing control of the transport system and intensifying labour discipline. As the railway workers were already under military discipline, his first act was to reorganize the party's activities on military lines, by creating the Chief Political Administration for Lines of Communication (Glavpolitput), an organization of the 'political department' type. Trotsky got the wheels turning, but only at a cost of enormous friction with the leaders of the railroad union. In August, with the backing of the party leaders, Trotsky ousted the heads of the union, and established the Provisional Central Committee for Transport (Tsektran), a combination of commissariat, labour union and political organ, responsible for the entire rail and water transport system. This body not only short-circuited the leadership of the railroad union, it undercut the authority of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and thus brought the trade unions as whole into confrontation with the party leadership.

Opposition to government policies had been growing within the trade unions for a considerable time, initially over the question of one-man management, and then over the issue of militarization of labour. At the root of this opposition was a sense that party leaders were riding roughshod over the rights of the unions. At the Ninth Party Congress in March 1920 SHLYAPNIKOV's call for a 'separation of powers' between party, soviets and trade unions was rejected and, subsequently, BUKHARIN and RADEK were installed in the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions to represent the party leadership. Increasingly the conflict came to centre on the role of the trade unions within a workers' state. (See BOLSHEVIK OPPOSITIONS.)

This issue had arisen as early as the First All-Russian Trade Union Congress in January 1918 when the Mensheviks had vigorously defended the independence of the trade unions from the state. It resurfaced at the Second Congress in January 1919, which endorsed the notion of a gradual 'statization' of the trade unions, as their functions broadened and merged with those of the state industrial administration. In the meantime, however, the trade unions' functions and powers remained unclear. If the state, as the principal employer, also represented the interests of labour, did the unions have any functions left? If so, did these functions include defending the material interests of their members, or were they confined to implementing government industrial policy? And what degree of independence from the state should the unions enjoy? Trotsky gave forthright answers to these questions: the task of the unions was to raise labour productivity and they should abandon any pretensions to autonomy. This provoked the wrath of trade-union leaders, for example

M. P. Tomskey, and at the conference of trade unions in November 1920 an acrimonious debate broke out, which increasingly became public.

In the three months preceding the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, a number of 'platforms' were circulated concerning the role of the trade unions. Trotsky, Bukharin and six other members of the Central Committee accused the railroad union of acting like a capitalist trade union and called for the 'planned transformation of the unions into apparatuses of the workers' state'. The defenders of the trade unions accused their opponents of wanting to emasculate them altogether, whilst on the far left, a group emerged under the name of the 'Workers' Opposition', which linked the issue of trade-union autonomy to a far-reaching critique of bureaucratization within the state and party. Its leaders were Shlyapnikov and KOLLONTAI and they went so far as to advocate that the administration of the economy be carried out through the trade unions. The Lenin-Zinoviev 'platform of ten' was essentially a compromise, though there is some evidence that Lenin was basically in favour of the Trotsky-Bukharin proposals. This platform rejected the rapid statization of the trade unions, arguing that they should serve as a link between the party and immature masses and as 'schools of communism'. It was this platform which was adopted by 336 votes, against the 50 cast for Trotsky's platform and the 18 cast for the Workers' Opposition, at the Tenth Party Congress. SAS

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The Women's Movement before 1917

First developed during the early reforming years of Alexander II's reign, the women's movement had two sources of inspiration: feminist ideas which had slowly been taking hold in western Europe and North America in the previous two decades and the wave of enthusiasm for social change which arose among educated Russians after Tsar Nicholas I's death in 1855.

The ideas behind the women's movement in Russia, as elsewhere, derived from the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the egalitarian and libertarian ideology of the French Revolution, though it took half a century for the implications for women to become apparent. The radical proposals of the utopian socialists in France caused a flutter in the 1830s and 1840s, and George Sand's novels, with their sexually emancipated heroines, were widely read and emulated; but outside small socialist communities the concept of female equality was generally lampooned as outlandish and contrary to nature until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Precisely why attitudes began to change is still not entirely clear. In western Europe and North America, the rapid growth of an urban middle class, the formation of a female proletariat, the expansion of education, increasing mass participation in politics, the development of liberal and socialist ideologies, and possibly demographic factors, all contributed to disturb prevailing conventions.

In Russia, the catalyst was the abrupt political change after Nicholas I's death and the reforms which ensued. The government's declared intention of freeing the serfs unwittingly encouraged dreams of other forms of emancipation: of children from parents, women from fathers and husbands, and ultimately, of society from the patriarchal state. The government further stimulated women's aspirations in 1858 by extending the gymnasium system of secondary education to girls (with some restrictions), thus unintentionally establishing the grounds for women's higher education.

The issue of sexual equality became an integral part of the current political debate: the 'woman question' was treated at length by male radical publicists (Chernyshevsky, Mikhailov, Pisarev, Dobrolyubov, Lavrov) and by some liberals (notably N. I. Pirogov in his 'Questions of Life'). Few women in the 1850s and 1860s gave public utterance to their discontents and aspirations though by this time they had taken the first steps to organize. Their absence from the journals is not easily explained. Financial resources were a significant factor: one woman who did find her way into print, Mariya Vernadskaya, co-edited a journal with her husband. In true *laissez-faire* spirit, she told women to stop being dependent, stand on their own two feet and go out and earn a living.

The women's movement in Russia had much in common with women's movements in the West. All made a critical break with past assumptions by asserting the equality of the sexes in intellect, moral worth and social value. In practical terms, they helped to create new opportunities for women outside the home, promoting higher education, professional training and access to paid occupations. But correspondingly, they contributed to new concepts of child-development, emphasizing the importance of schooling and the mother's role, thus initiating a potential conflict between the urge towards female autonomy and the consciousness of a need for self-sacrifice in the interests of the next generation. The radical solution to this conflict was to make society collectively responsible for child-rearing. It is noteworthy that in the entire course of the women's movement, in Russia as elsewhere, the potential role of fathers in child-care was hardly explored.

As in the West, those involved in the movement were mainly educated women from the privileged classes – in Russia, more often from the gentry than from the less-significant merchant class, but also including women from clerical families, and a few of peasant origin. As in the West, they shared the intelligentsia's 'repentant' response

to society's ills in the wish to serve society, expressed in outlets ranging from philanthropy to radical politics.

The distinguishing feature of the Russian movement was the sharp division between radicals and reformers. The reformers used restraint and compromise. Working within the law they raised petitions, lobbied ministers and exploited personal connections to reach influential figures. Concentrating on philanthropy and higher education they may have achieved more than with a more comprehensive programme, given tsarist conservatism. Philanthropy was already an acceptable form of public activity for women, while in higher education they could count on support from individual professors and even from university administration (in 1863 all but Moscow and Dorpat favoured women's admission). From the end of the 1860s, feminist lobbying resulted in public lectures, preparatory courses and finally university-level courses for women (1872 in Moscow), all existing on public goodwill, organization and funding. Women were admitted to courses for 'learned midwives' at the Medical Surgical Academy in St Petersburg (1872), extended to full-length medical courses in 1876. In 1878 the first formally constituted higher courses for women opened in St Petersburg followed by Moscow, Kiev and Kazan. Though outside the university system and not giving rights to state service and rank which men enjoyed, these courses were in practice women's universities.

The feminists' philanthropic enterprises were intended both to help the beneficiaries become self-sufficient and to give their organizers practical experience of administration and public life. They were run, as far as was then possible, on democratic lines and minimum regulations. The most successful venture was a Society to Provide Cheap Lodgings (founded in 1861) which in twenty years became a major charity in St Petersburg. Other charities included a society to raise funds for women attending the higher courses (1878) and refuges to save poor women from prostitution.

While for many the 'woman question' could be resolved by the attainment by peaceful means of the right to study, work and live independently, for others the issue of emancipation had an entirely subversive significance. Both for radicals and for their extreme conservative opponents, the 'woman question' was associated with the destruction of the existing social order. Arch-conservatives predicted the collapse of the family and social disorder if women were admitted to university; radicals, too, saw the liberation of women as only the beginning of a transformation of society. Up to the mid 1860s, the revolt of radical women was primarily a personal one: rejection of parental authority and social convention. Numerous young women arranged 'fictitious marriages' with men sympathetic to the cause, in order to leave home; they cut their hair short, wore simple, unadorned clothing, smoked in public, went out unchaperoned, and experimented with communal living arrangements and collective workshops (*arteli*), as much for

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practical as for ideological reasons. Such communes and workshops became a veritable fad after Chernyshevsky popularized and idealized them in his didactic novel, *What is to be done?* (1863).

Within a few years, this personal, 'nihilist' rejection of cultural norms became more overtly political. As the fragile tolerance of unorthodoxy, which marked the early years of Alexander II's reign, gave way to increasing hostility and extremism on both sides, nihilist women (if they did not retreat from public activity altogether) tended either to gravitate towards more moderate feminism or, more commonly, to move into active revolutionary circles. The point of departure in many cases was the desire to train for a profession which could be of use to 'the people'. The most popular choices were teaching and medicine. Some attended the courses which started during the seventies in Russia; others went abroad, particularly to Zurich (104 by 1873, one third of the Russian colony) where many became involved in radical and revolutionary émigré politics. Although at first they tended to cluster in women's discussion circles, where they could study political texts and learn to 'think rationally', most then joined mixed groups and left the 'woman question' behind. Radical men (and increasingly women) in the seventies felt either that it was irrelevant to the revolutionary struggle or that it would be resolved after the revolution, with other social questions. In their own circles, sexual equality was taken for granted.

Several hundred women became involved in POPULISM, forming a sizeable minority of all activists (15 per cent of all those arrested). But though some began their revolutionary work among female factory workers, none addressed the specific needs or grievances of women and explained this failing in terms of these women's backwardness. From the early 1870s to the late 1890s, revolutionary thinkers and propagandists (Populist and later Marxist) paid minimal attention either to the 'woman question' or to female workers and peasants, and even after 1900 their response was marked by ambivalence.

Like all reform movements in Russia, feminism occupied an uneasy position between two warring extremes, and was given short shrift by both. In the increasingly restrictive environment of Alexander II's reign, every manifestation of independent initiative came under suspicion: not only the Populists' 'going to the people', but entirely non-political enterprises like a publishing cooperative initiated by three pillars of the feminist establishment in the mid-sixties, fund-raising activities, proposals to form women's groups, and so forth.

The highly publicized involvement of women in revolutionary politics reinforced existing prejudices against feminism. While this might have unintentionally beneficial effects – notably the government's decision to expand women's higher education in Russia to stem the flow of radical women to Switzerland, and its subsequent decision to establish the higher courses on a formal basis under the

Ministry of Education – its negative effects were insidious. Both the government's restrictiveness and the revolutionaries' loss of interest meant that the issue of women's equality was reduced, in essence, to the expansion of secondary and higher education, the entry of women into the medical and teaching professions, some limited rights to state service, and carefully supervised philanthropy.

The split between feminists and radical women became complete. After 1878, radicals were totally committed to the terrorism of People's Will. Women occupied a unique position in the movement, prominent not only in numbers (one third of the organization's executive) but also in the reverence with which they were held. Though much of the women's work in the terrorist campaign was routine, if still dangerous, a few women were involved in planning and carrying out the final attempt which killed the tsar on 1 March 1881.

The susceptibility of the women's movement to fluctuations in the political climate was graphically illustrated after the assassination. The expansion of higher education for women was halted: medical courses were suspended for over a decade, and only the St Petersburg higher courses remained open. For most of the 1880s, the movement lay dormant; after the death of Alexander III (1894) and the revival of public initiative, feminists began tentatively to organize again, though even their modest proposals collided with bureaucratic obstruction. However, government support for women's education permitted the higher courses to re-open, followed in 1897 by a newly established Women's Medical Institute.

Even by 1900, however, the women's movement still signified little more than education and philanthropy. Its appeal was limited to educated women of moderate views, who were hampered either by personal aptitude or official restriction in grappling with the social and economic changes that had brought thousands of women into the proliferating factories, and exacerbated the already acute problems of low pay (between half and two thirds the men's rates), dangerous working conditions, appalling housing and poor diet, ill-health, high infant mortality, abandoned children, alcoholism, prostitution, etc. And given the suppression of all open political life, Russian feminists had not yet embraced political and civil rights in their programmes.

Women in revolutionary organizations were hardly better equipped to make a popular appeal to women. Though committed to sexual equality and considering themselves equals of their male comrades, they had inherited the Populists' disdain for 'narrow' separatism and piecemeal reform, and found confirmation in Marx's hostility to class-divisive strategies. Seeing women workers effectively disabled by their lowly status in the hierarchy of skill and pay, their poor literacy rates, their dual burden of work and family, and their psychological and physical subordination to men, few revolutionaries could detect any revolutionary

potential there, and women's apparent lack of responsiveness to propaganda only confirmed this view.

However, a small number of working-class women had broken through these prejudices, and through the hostility of their own men, to participate in workers' circles in various industrial centres early in the 1890s. Although the Marxist agitational circles which succeeded them in the mid-nineties were far less welcoming, these women's experience, combined with female participation in industrial strikes (some initiated by women) provided evidence that the female proletariat was not the uniformly inert mass their male counterparts often insisted. Even so, Russian SOCIAL DEMOCRATS made little effort to win over women. A pamphlet by KRUPSKAYA, 'The Woman Worker' (1901) inspired by Bebel and by Clara Zetkin's work in Germany, was the sole contribution on women to the social-democratic literature until 1905, and only then did the party's tactics in relation to women's organizations become a live issue. However, both Social Democrats and SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES included equal political and civil rights of men and women in their programmes (1903 and 1904 respectively) without apparent discord, unlike some socialist parties abroad, and unlike the constitutionalist groups of the liberation movement in Russia.

The 1905 REVOLUTION brought about a transformation in the women's movement. For the first time, political rights were put on the agenda and political organization was employed to win them. The cause of this abrupt change was the political crisis precipitated by the Russo-Japanese war and the eruption of demands for a constitution by the liberation movement, of which feminists counted themselves a part. Sharing its goals, they assumed that its demand for a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY extended to both sexes. Their discovery that this assumption was false and that proposals for women's suffrage met resistance and ridicule (as well as strong support), led a group of liberationists to found a Union of Equal Rights for Women, which became one of the founder members of the Union of Unions in spring 1905. Their goals were diverse: to unite women of all classes, nationalities and religions in defence of their rights; to press the liberal and socialist opposition into a commitment to female equality; and to force the government to grant political and civil rights, to increase protective legislation for women at work, give peasant women equal rights in land distribution, introduce coeducation in schools and universities, and give women access to state and public employment.

The union made a striking impact during 1905. Its membership, 6,000-8,000 by the autumn, included liberals and moderate socialists, as well as some SDs and SRs. It had sections in St Petersburg, Moscow and 17 provincial branches, reaching peasant and working-class women, and attempting to organize domestic servants. Its principal achievement was to force liberals to make a commitment to women's suffrage which survived the defeat of the 1905

Revolution. However, the union's propaganda elicited no response from the government, which consistently refused to consider the issue right up to 1917.

The 1905 Revolution had a galvanizing effect on other women's groups, and simultaneously revealed the schismatic tendencies inherent in the women's movement. At the end of 1904 a new journal, *Zhenskii vestnik* (Women's Messenger, 1904-1917), appeared, edited by M. I. POKROVSKAYA, a feminist highly critical of the liberation movement, who espoused separatist tactics. A year later she founded the Women's Progressive Party which was weakened at its inception by the breakaway of a still more separatist group.

Feminist activity among working-class women in the major industrial centres provoked Social Democratic women to think more seriously about the separate organization of women. A few, notably KOLLONTAI, were alarmed by the interest which female factory workers were displaying towards such organizations. Particularly significant was the women's section set up in Father Gapon's Assembly of Russian Factory Workers at the end of 1904, and four working women's clubs which attracted large attendances in St Petersburg during 1906, before being closed down by the police. In addition, women had called for separate female representation on the Shidlovsky Commission early in 1905, and took an active part in the strike movement during the year.

While a perceptive observer would have recognized that even the Union of Equal Rights, the first feminist organization to make a direct appeal to working women, had only tenuous links with the factories, the absence of any social-democratic organization for women raised the serious possibility that feminists might fill the vacuum and entice women workers into activity hostile to the male-dominated labour movement. Since social-democratic influence even among male workers in 1905 was unstable, Kollontai and her colleagues argued that it was doubly important to give women a reason to identify with party work. The argument attracted little support from either MENSHEVIK or BOLSHEVIK organizations. Kollontai's group was accused of promoting feminism, an accusation particularly galling to Kollontai herself, one of the most virulent critics of feminism from 1905 to 1917. In 1907, without official party approval, her group set up a legal Mutual Aid Society for Working Women in St Petersburg, which thrived for several months before falling victim to quarrels between its intelligentsia and its working-class members. She was also largely responsible for assembling a working women's delegation to the first Russian women's congress in 1908, a major event sponsored by feminist organizations, which attracted much publicity and debate. Kollontai was forced to go abroad immediately afterwards and did not return until 1917.

The party organizations continued to ignore working women until the revival of the labour movement, following

Women in 1917 and After

the Lena massacre in 1912, prompted a new interest. Why this change occurred has still to be agreed: perhaps a delayed response to the sharp increase of women in the labour force from 1905; the rise in the number of strikes initiated by women, beginning in 1910; the intervention of LENIN, prompted by Krupskaya and Inessa ARMAND, who sensed both the potential support which women might offer the revolution, and their capacity to hinder it if their interests were threatened or their needs unmet. The influence of SD and SR women, both on factory women and on their respective parties, is also a matter of disagreement: some historians have argued a decreased female influence in revolutionary parties, especially as the RSDRP became more 'proletarianized'; this must be balanced against the new awareness among many SD and SR women of female factory workers' special interests, and these revolutionaries' subsequent initiatives to organize working-class women.

In 1913, International Women's Day (inaugurated in Germany in 1910) was celebrated for the first time in Russia, and again in 1914. That year saw the publication of a Bolshevik and Menshevik journal specifically aimed at women, neither of which survived more than a few issues. In addition, both factions' newspapers began to give more space to women's issues and to letters from women.

Meanwhile, the threat of a feminist takeover of factory or peasant women had disappeared, when the liberation movement disintegrated in 1906-7. The Union of Equal Rights survived until 1908, succeeded by a more narrowly feminist League of Equal Rights which remained the main women's organization until the OCTOBER REVOLUTION. The achievements of the women's movement after 1905 were to keep women's issues before the public and to sponsor legislation in the Duma. Using the greater scope for public assembly between 1906 and 1914, women's organizations staged three major congresses: the 1908 congress, one in 1910 on prostitution, and the last in 1912 on women's education. They also used their well-wishers in the Duma (Kadets, Trudoviks, and a few Octobrists) to get legislation passed on inheritance, legal separation of spouses and a married woman's right to her own internal passport. All attempts to introduce legislation on women's suffrage failed.

On the outbreak of the FIRST WORLD WAR most feminists became patriots, like the liberal intelligentsia generally; any pacifist sentiments remained strictly private. As in the West, middle-class women volunteered for war work in military hospitals and at the front; feminist organizations contributed by setting up their own hospitals. There was some substitution of men by women in white-collar jobs and the professions, but less than feminists expected and much less than occurred in manual occupations. In Petrograd, the proportion of women in industry rose from 25.3 per cent in 1913 to 33.3 per cent in 1917; in Moscow, from 39.4 per cent in 1914 to 48.7 per cent in

1917. A comparable or greater increase took place in the agricultural labour force.

The war saw little intensification of the revolutionary parties' interest in working women, despite their increased significance in the WAR ECONOMY. But in the final crisis of tsarism, goaded by severe food shortages and rocketing prices, they proved to be a spontaneous revolutionary force, independent of feminists or Social Democrats. On International Women's Day, 23 February 1917, women workers came out on strike and, joining crowds of women impatiently queueing for bread, set off the chain of events which led to the tsar's abdication. Thus working women, the 'inert mass', the 'backward stratum' of the proletariat, inadvertently led workers and soldiers into the February Revolution.

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Women in 1917 and After

The immediate goals of the feminists were first attained in 1917: equal political rights; belated recognition by the Bolsheviks that working women were actively involved in political protests and strikes; the unofficial establishment of women's sections in the Bolshevik organization; and, after the Bolshevik coup, the appropriation of the symbols of women's liberation by the Soviet regime and the disintegration of the 'bourgeois' women's movement.

The February Revolution did not in itself guarantee women's political rights: both PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT and SOVIET were willing to temporize on the issue until the war ended. Feminists gave them no chance to do so. They launched a barrage of propaganda which culminated on 19 March (NS) in a procession to the Tauride Palace of 40,000 women, who refused to disband until women were promised the vote. Resistance crumbled and the marchers went home satisfied. Four months later, the electoral law for the Constituent Assembly was ratified, giving equal voting rights to all men and women over twenty (excepting convicts, deserters, the insane and the imperial family). Women were also given full voting rights in local elections.

Legislation was passed equalizing women's rights in the civil service, the legal profession, schools and higher education. Welfare legislation was hardly begun, but night work for women and children was restricted. Changes in the laws on marriage and the family were indefinitely postponed.

Feminists, untouched by Leninist defeatism, now channelled their energies into the war effort. They proposed labour conscription of women and applauded WOMEN SOLDIERS; leading feminists played host to Mrs Pankhurst, sent to Russia by Lloyd George to promote the Allies' cause. Existing feminist societies re-grouped into the Republican Union of Democratic Women's Organizations, a coalition of liberals and non-socialist radicals, which also drew in Mensheviks and SRs.

The extent of non-Bolshevik influence on working-class

women during 1917 is impossible to gauge. Given the subsequent eclipse of the women's movement and the disappearance of feminist records, it is hard to shift the later Soviet interpretation which portrays an unbridgeable gap between the bourgeois, pro-war feminists and the angry, unsatisfied mass of women workers. In any event, the feminist campaign for the vote in March coincided with meetings and demonstrations of working women also calling for rights. Kollontai saw this as evidence that the feminists had 'captured the minds of working women', and immediately renewed her pressure on the Petrograd party to pay attention to women's issues.

Others, Bolshevik and Menshevik, had already arrived at the same conclusion. On 13 March, Vera Slutskaya, an erstwhile opponent of separate sections, proposed and won the creation of a Bureau of Women Workers in the Bolshevik organization, and the revival of *Rabotnitsa* (The Woman Worker), founded in 1914. For the rest of the year, Bolsheviks competed with Mensheviks, SRs and 'bourgeois' feminists for the allegiance of working-class women (factory workers, servants, laundresses, soldiers' wives), most successfully in Petrograd, less so in Moscow. Mensheviks and SRs benefited from the sharp reaction against the Bolsheviks after the July Days; otherwise, the surviving evidence points to an increasing influence of a better-organized Bolshevik party apparatus for urban working-class women. None of the organizations, feminist or revolutionary, paid much attention to peasant women.

Bolshevik activity among women in Petrograd reached a peak in October, in preparation for a conference of working women, scheduled for 27 October (OS) but held early in November. In the meantime, Bolshevik medical students had been training factory women for medical brigades, which on the night of the armed uprising were despatched around the city. A number of women had also joined the Red Guards and took part in the storming of the Winter Palace, during which a few were killed.

Women and Bolshevik rule

The central issue preoccupying those involved in the Bolshevik organization of women during 1917 was how to use them in the revolutionary struggle. This was complicated by a disagreement among activists as to the purpose of agitation among women. Was it to raise the consciousness of a backward element in order to neutralize its hostility and give it a reason to identify with the Bolsheviks, or was it to bring under party control an already active proletarian women's movement? The official party line emphasized women's backwardness; female activists stressed their revolutionary potential. In reality, an effective Bolshevik strategy had to take account of both. But even if this were successful, the result would always be an instrumental approach to the 'woman question': to use the particular needs and particular oppression of women for the sake of the revolution. The more idealistic aspect of

women's liberation (epitomized in Social Democracy by Kollontai and Armand) was subordinated to the struggle for power.

An additional problem was the very existence of women's sections. Separate agitation among women had been reluctantly agreed by the party in the spring of 1917, but it was repeatedly stressed that such work should under no circumstances lead to autonomous sections. Slutskaya's proposal for a bureau was not fully realized; instead, *Rabotnitsa* became the focus of Bolshevik work with women. Thus from the very beginning of Bolshevik rule there existed a noticeable ambivalence towards the 'woman question': a theoretical commitment to women's liberation via socialist revolution, but a distaste for separate organization and an unwillingness to accept that women's interests were not always identical with, or protected by, men's interests. There was also the inherited and often unconscious assumption that issues relating to women were always of secondary importance. These factors combined with the insecurity of Bolshevik power, of foreign intervention and the CIVIL WAR, desperate shortages and economic collapse, to push the dream of women's liberation into the remote future. In the circumstances it was remarkable that the new regime honoured its commitment to women, to the extent of issuing decrees which, on paper at least, affected the everyday lives of millions of women.

Political and civil rights: Already guaranteed by the Provisional Government, these were confirmed with some modification by the Soviet government: women of the former privileged classes were actually deprived of citizenship, and the concept of citizenship itself was widened to include economic and social rights and responsibilities. Women as well as men thus became liable for labour conscription, though in practice it was not imposed equally on both sexes. Correspondingly, the right to work was enshrined by law; in reality, women's unemployment rose disproportionately in the twenties, after the introduction of NEP. Women were guaranteed equal pay for equal work, but violations of the principle were widespread. Similarly, women were to enjoy (with men) an eight-hour day, and were additionally banned from night work, overtime and underground labour. In practice, these restrictions were frequently ignored.

Family and marriage legislation: Here the impact was greater. The remaining disabilities which restricted women's freedom within marriage were swept away, women were given equal rights to hold land, to enjoy full membership of the rural commune, and to act as head of the household. Civil registration of marriage, replacing ecclesiastical marriages, gave equal authority to husband and wife and removed discrimination against illegitimate children. Restrictions on divorce were lifted. Abortion was legalized in 1920 to reduce mortality from illegal abortions,

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rather than from a belief in a woman's freedom of choice.

Indeed, the assumptions made by revolutionary policy-makers, even those like Kollontai who considered themselves sexually emancipated, were remarkably conservative. While they made heroic efforts to protect the health of mothers and children in a period of social upheaval and scarcity, they hardly questioned the assumption that all women should have children and that these children should be cared for by women. Exceptions to this rule might be made for individual heroines too engrossed in the fight for the revolution's survival to think of personal relationships, but the mass of women were expected to fulfil their social duty and reproduce. Bolsheviks talked grandiloquently about the emancipation of women from household drudgery and childcare, but their solution was to place these functions in the hands of a female collective – nurseries, kitchens, refectories, laundries, etc., all run by women. The socially more radical possibility that men might take on traditionally female roles at home (as women were expected to take on men's at work) was never explored.

To a considerable extent this social conservatism reflected the outlook of the 'masses' whom the revolution was intended to serve, but this cannot be the sole explanation, in view of the Bolsheviks' determination to mould a new Soviet citizen and their lack of squeamishness about trampling on old prejudices and customs.

Women's party organization: The long-running battle within the party over the existence of separate women's sections was resolved in 1919 by the formation of the Women's Section of the Central Committee Secretariat, otherwise known as Zhenotdel (or, derisively, Tsentrobaba). Local sections were established throughout the country, with the task of breaking down women's hostility to the new regime's measures, and organizing them under the wing of the party. Zhenotdel performed many functions during its early years, combining propaganda and political recruitment, with social services. Its staff set up communal dining rooms, crèches and kindergartens, cared for thousands of orphans and abandoned children, promoted women's literacy, and carried the sexual and social revolution into the Muslim communities of CENTRAL ASIA. During the twenties its importance dwindled, especially after the death of Armand and Kollontai's removal from the political scene. In 1930 it was suddenly closed down.

The liberation of women was proving far more complex than any pre-war Bolshevik had ever envisaged. The introduction of NEP resulted in sharply increased female unemployment and further cuts in the welfare provisions which had already been trimmed by the Civil War. Paradoxically, it was only with STALIN's forced industrialization that women were fully mobilized into the workforce, a double paradox, since this period also saw the reversal of the emancipatory precepts of the Bolsheviks. Stalinist

policies resulted in full female participation in the economy and simultaneously the resurrection of traditional, 'bourgeois' concepts of home, family, good wives and self-sacrificing mothers. LE

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Women Soldiers: 1917–1921

Russia has a tradition of women soldiers, such as Nadezhda Durova, who served as a Cossack during the Napoleonic Wars. In 1917, the idea of volunteer women's battalions came from Sergeant Maria BOCHKAREVA. Her own 300-strong Women's Battalion of Death was designed to shame the men into continuing the war. It attracted the support of M. V. Rodzyanko, General L. G. KORNILOV and Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst. It saw action on the South-West Front, capturing 2,000 prisoners, but was disbanded in the face of BOLSHEVIK hostility. Other women's battalions formed by the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT carried out guard duties in Moscow and Petrograd. The 1st Petrograd Women's Battalion remained with the Provisional Government in the Winter Palace until its capture by Bolshevik forces on 25/26 October 1917. Allegations that the Bolsheviks then raped them were probably unfounded.

Women served on both sides during the CIVIL WAR. The Soviet government conscripted women doctors and recruited Communist women volunteers for guard duties in the rear. By 1920 there were 66,000 women in the RED ARMY; the combatant minority serving alongside men. In 1919 Nina Rostovtseva was awarded the Order of the Banner of Labour for saving her comrades from capture by White forces. RA

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The Russian Orthodox Church

Historically and canonically the Orthodox Church is made up of autonomous dioceses, a group of which usually forms a national or local church with a senior archbishop at the top who often bears the title of Patriarch. The Patriarch administers the local church with a council of bishops and periodic local councils, and in a close 'symphonic' cooperation with the king or emperor of the given state.

Peter the Great overturned this by forbidding the election of a new patriarch after the death of Patriarch Adrian in 1700, and abolishing the institutions of local councils and bishops' councils, replacing all this in 1721 by a synod, technically under the emperor himself. But the virtual head of the Synod from then until 1917 became the Over-Procurator, a lay bureaucrat – in fact a military officer for most of the first 120 years of the system – responsible only to the tsar, not to the church. The Synod members were not elected but appointed by the tsar and the Over-Procurator, and had no power prerogatives whatsoever in this strange new department of the state where on each level of administration the real power was in the hands of lay bureaucrats responsible to the Over-Procurator, not to the diocesan bishop or the 'supreme' Synod of Bishops. As a state department the church also lost the traditional prerogatives to disapprove of certain government actions or policies and to plead with the tsar on behalf of the oppressed.

Thus in the eyes of the nation, and particularly of the growing radical intelligentsia – atheistic as a matter of course and therefore disinterested in investigating the real situation – the church was seen as a reactionary institution condoning serfdom. Consequently, with the growth of the influence of the radical intelligentsia on Russian society at large in the last four decades of the nineteenth century, the moral prestige of the church declined.

In this growing radical secularism the church's struggle for the restoration of autonomy and conciliarism found very little response or sympathy in the lay liberal elements and, in contrast to society, the church failed to gain much from the reformist era of the 1860s.

It would be wrong to see the whole synodal period as total stagnation. The church achieved considerable gains in its missionary endeavours among the natives of Siberia and Alaska, as well as in Japan, China and Korea. The nineteenth century revival of the monastic elderhood had not only a great moral impact on the population and especially on leading figures of Russian culture (for example Dostoevsky, Gogol, Leontiev), but also, in cooperation with the early Slavophiles, it brought about a revival of the original Orthodox theology of the Church Fathers, all but buried by the Roman and Protestant theological onslaughts of the previous two centuries. On the eve of the 1917 revolution the church ran some 37,000 primary schools, 58 seminaries, thousands of orphanages, old age homes, hospitals and other charitable and educational institutions.

1905

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed the return to the church of some leading members of Russian radical (mostly ex-Marxist) intelligentsia, bringing the church somewhat out of its isolation. The liberal Metropolitan ANTONI (Vadkovsky) of St Petersburg supported a moderate workers' movement including the one led by Father George Gapon which was to end so tragically in 'Bloody Sunday' 1905. Supported by S. Yu. WITTE and the liberal neophyte intelligentsia, Metropolitan Antoni appealed to NICHOLAS II to restore the patriarchal-conciliar system and a self-governing church infrastructure. Nicholas reacted only by permitting a pre-conciliar commission whose sessions of 1906-7 gave full support from the envisaged reform. But the tsar refused to grant permission for a constituent local council. Having the example of the hostile Duma, particularly the first two assemblies in which a considerable number of the elected deputies from the ranks of the parish clergy (in contrast to the bishops) joined or supported the radical parties, Nicholas may have feared that a more democratic church, less dependent on the state, would to some extent dissociate itself from the monarchy. Instead, his edicts of toleration (30 April 1905 and 30 October 1906), granting the non-Orthodox religions in the Empire freedom of activities, conversions, and the status of legal person, further disadvantaged the Orthodox Church. It alone now was prevented from running its own affairs having no legal person status and thus remaining under the complete control of the tsarist government. Yet in the eyes of the masses the Orthodox Church appeared as a mighty institution basking in the sun of the Empire. This was the image cultivated by the propaganda of the radicals to undermine the prestige of the church.

Their devotion to RASPUTIN showed that the last royal couple was attracted to pseudo-mystical charlatans rather than to the traditional Orthodox sainthood personified in the *starsy* (holy men). Every clergyman, every bishop who dared to criticize Rasputin was penalized, mostly by

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removal from his see and banishment to a distant monastery. Eventually the Synod was filled with either Rasputin's protégés or bishops who kept silent out of cowardice. Thus with the growing radical anti-Rasputin propaganda the prestige of the church was also suffering.

The other aspect that lowered the moral authority of the church on the eve of the 1917 revolutions was its support for the Russian and Serbian cause in the FIRST WORLD WAR. As the war grew ever more unpopular among the common masses, so did the church and its clergy.

Having been precluded by Nicholas II from organizing itself as an autonomous self-governing body on all levels of its internal life – from the parish to the central administration – being held together administratively only by the state, and formally headed by the emperor, the church was decapitated and internally disorganized, once the tsar had abdicated and the old state collapsed. The church faced the revolution in a most disadvantaged situation created by the stubbornness and petrification of the old regime and its crowned head.

1917–1922

The tsar's blockage of church reform attempts alienated even his hand-picked Synod, so that on the eve of his abdication it rejected the Over-Procurator's request to appeal to the nation to support the monarchy. Moreover, on 16 March it advised the Grand Duke Michael to refuse the crown unless elected by a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. On 4 August the Synod acclaimed the democratic revolution as 'the hour of the general freedom of Russia . . .'

As early as March 1917 local spontaneous diocesan assemblies of clergy and laity adopted resolutions supporting the PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT and requesting that the Synod permit the election of bishop-candidates by such assemblies.

The Synod and, after 28 August 1917, the All-Russian Local Council (*Sobor*) consistently supported the Provisional Government. It appealed to the armed forces to ignore the BOLSHEVIKS' anti-war propaganda, and to the nation to avert the threatening CIVIL WAR by keeping civic peace and order. The only major dispute between the church and the Provisional Government was over the nationalization of parochial schools (Law of 3 July 1917).

The Synod, on 12 April 1917, restored the right of diocesan assemblies to elect diocesan bishops. Such assemblies confirmed popular bishops but removed the most reactionary, Rasputin-connected ones, replacing them with particularly popular arch-pastors, notably in Moscow and Petrograd.

The FEBRUARY REVOLUTION at last allowed the church to convoke the cherished *Sobor*, which opened in Moscow on 28 August with 588 delegates representing all ranks of clergy and the laity. Reflecting the prevailing anti-monarchist mood, the Council wavered between a reformed synodal system (but independent of the state) and a

patriarchal-conciliar one. As the Bolshevik threat became real, the pro-patriarchal support began to grow, culminating in the election on 13 November of the Moscow Metropolitan TIKHON as Russia's first patriarch since 1700. The pro-patriarchal party argued that the church should have a personified leader to face the new militantly atheistic dictatorship. Once it had become clear that the pro-patriarchists were winning, the opposition walked out and would eventually evolve into a pro-Marxist schism under the name of Renovationists or the 'Living Church'.

Continuing its sessions, the *Sobor* reformed the church into a hierarchical federation of self-governing dioceses, based on a network of self-governing parishes and a graduated electoral system. It passed by-laws on the regularity and prerogatives of diocesan, metropolitan and local councils; stressed the importance of the sermon, introducing the institution of lay ministry to assist the clergy, particularly with preaching and teaching. The *Sobor* restored autonomy and internal democracy of the monasteries. The seminaries that would be created in place of the ones being closed by the Bolsheviks were to be established in monasteries, which would have become catalysts of a Christian identity of the nation in the theomachistic state (along the lines of Poland after the Second World War). Had it not been for a near-total destruction of monasteries by the Bolsheviks in the first decade of their rule.

Other acts of the *Sobor* broadened the role of women on parish and diocesan level. Deliberation was begun on reintroducing a female diaconate, when the *Sobor* had to disperse in September 1918. The Bolshevik state had confiscated all assets of the Church and the very building in which the sessions had been taking place.

Had the church been allowed to convoke the *Sobor* at least ten years earlier, it would have had the time to brace the church for the trials to come. At this late hour the chaos of the Civil War and the mounting anti-church terror precluded the implementation of most of the *Sobor's* acts. Yet, the new responsibility granted to the parish councils saved the church from disintegration upon the almost total collapse of the central Church administration caused by periodic arrests of bishops and the state-supported subversive schisms.

The *Sobor* and the Patriarch took no sides in the encroaching Civil War, appealing only for an end to the bloodshed. Tikhon categorically refused to give even a secret blessing to the White Armies: the church could not support fratricide, especially since its members fought on both sides. Upon the Bolshevik victory in the first stage of the Civil War the *Sobor* appealed to the victors for clemency and forgiveness (24 November 1917 NS). On 1 February 1918 the Patriarch anathematized the Bolsheviks for the Red Terror, instructing the parish clergy and laity to defend their parishes by peaceful resistance and mass public prayers. On 21 July 1919, at the height of the White victories, the Patriarch appealed to the Orthodox flock to

be merciful and forgiving to 'the persecutors of the church'.

On 8 October, when the Whites were only about 200 miles from Moscow, Tikhon called on the clergy not to take sides, to keep aloof from politics and political parties. The Church, he stressed, was not placing its hopes in any foreign intervention or any military force. None of them could save Russia until the nation repented and turned to God. The encyclical freed the clergy from any political obligations as the Soviet 1918 CONSTITUTION had separated the Church and the State; but as citizens, all Christians owed civic duty and loyalty to the powers that be.

LENIN's Government, however, chose an open offensive against the Church, beginning with the 5 February 1918 (NS) Decree on the Separation of Church from the State and School from the Church which totally disenfranchised the Church, depriving it of legal person status, of all real estate (including the temples for worship), of the right to own any property or hold bank accounts. It forbade the teaching of religion in any general schools, even in private ones, whether to children or adults. Adults could learn theology only in seminaries training potential clergy.

In this first stage of his struggle against religion, Lenin acted in the full Marxist faith that religion, as part of the superstructure, would die away once deprived of its material base.

The result was the very reverse of Lenin's expectations. Churches that had stood almost empty only a year before, began to be filled to bursting in 1918-19. Mass public church processions attracted hundreds of thousands of worshippers, up to 30 per cent of the population of Petrograd, for instance. In response to the Government's campaign to nationalize church property, which began with the creation of a special Liquidation Department of the Commissariat of Justice on 19 April 1918, parishioners reacted by forming church defence groups and intensifying public processional worship.

The regime, which had already fired on many a church procession killing hundreds of people, now responded with organized arrests and executions of clergy, monastics and leading lay church activists. According to incomplete data released by the Church, in the course of 1918-20 no less than 28 bishops, several thousand parish priests and monastics and over 12,000 lay men and women were murdered. As the Civil War front fluctuated, clergy and lay believers were shot for blessing the Whites or offering prayers for their victory. Such acts did not meet the Patriarch's approval as clearly spelled out in the above-cited encyclical of 8 October 1919.

Meanwhile in the territories occupied by the White Armies, autonomous Higher Church Administrations were formed by means of local Church Councils. The most important was the Provisional Higher Church Administration of South Russia. Tikhon recognized that body's appointments and ordinations, but not its politics. Realizing the impossibility of maintaining regular contacts with

the periphery in the growing chaos and terror, the Patriarch in his encyclical of 20 November 1920 permitted peripheral groups of bishops to form temporary autocephalies, should contact with Moscow be lost or become impossible. The encyclical could relate only to the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, not to the territories of the Patriarchs of Constantinople or of Serbia, where most of the White émigrés would find asylum by 1921 and where, falsely claiming legitimacy on the grounds of the above encyclical, a group of émigré bishops organized in 1921 a Higher Russian Church Administration Abroad, renamed the Bishops' Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1922. This body claimed to be a free representative of the captive Patriarch, and thus proclaimed, implicitly in his name, purely political aims of an anti-Bolshevik crusade (appealing to the western allies to undertake one), restoration of the Romanovs, among other things. This greatly aggravated the fate of the Church in Russia.

All the Patriarch's attempts to dissociate himself and the Russian Church from the acts of the 'Karlovcians' (so called after the town of Karlovci in Serbia where the émigré 'Synod' installed itself) by calling on them to dissolve themselves (encyclicals of 5 May 1922 and 1 July 1923, and his posthumously published Testament of 7 April 1925) failed to impress the Lenin Government. Having failed to destroy the Church by depriving it of its material base, the Soviets were now using the tactic of 'divide and rule' by singling out the Orthodox Church for attack, claiming that it was being persecuted not as a religious faith but as a counter-revolutionary institution of the tsarist past bent on restoring the monarchy. A link with the monarchist 'Karlovcians', however flimsily construed, could not have provided a better pretext for the persecutions.

In line with this argument the regime stimulated a split in the Church. In 1921-22 the most convenient pretext was the great famine when, according to an internal secret memo by Lenin, an opportunity availed itself to place the Church in such a situation as to make it possible to present it to the nation as a heartless, greedy institution. Indeed, first the government cut short and banned all Tikhon's initiatives to organize aid to the famine-stricken. Instead, the government ordered all Church valuables to be forcibly confiscated. The Church agreed to give up all remaining valuables voluntarily, except the vessels used in the Eucharist. It proposed instead to collect from the parishioners their worth in voluntary donations. But the government wanted a confrontation, as outlined in Lenin's memo, which ordered forced confiscations of the Eucharistic vessels as well, causing 1,414 armed clashes and the murder or subsequent executions of at least 8,100 clergy and monastics of all ranks and several times as many members of the laity.

The alleged refusal of the Church to aid the famine-stricken was the excuse for the leftist clergy to create the

The 'Living Church' or Renovationist Schism

'Living Church' (Renovationist) schism after the convenient imprisonment of the Patriarch by the GPU (see VECHEKA) on 6 May 1922.

While refusing the Patriarchal Church any form of regular existence (for example the right to publish, to have seminaries), the government granted these rights to the schismatics, as well as the Protestants and Muslims, though not to the Jews (see JEWISH RELIGION). The Soviet law issued in 1922 permitted the internal exile of unwanted persons for up to three years without trial, arrest of almost all bishops loyal to the Patriarch, and most prominent parish priests; and the handing over to the Renovationists of over two thirds of the churches. But the laity remained mostly loyal to the Patriarch. The Renovationists became an administration with clergy and temples but without flock. The Patriarchals were a Church of the people and packed churches, but without an administration.

Under direct international pressure, the government was forced to release the Patriarch from prison in June 1923, whereupon most of the clergy returned to him. Seeing the Renovationists' failure to attract the masses, the government eventually lost interest in them. When the holocaust of collectivization and terror of 1928-39 (with some breathing spells in between) began, the regime ceased to differentiate between religions and their loyalties. The Renovationists eventually fell victim to the terror as much as the Patriarchals and members of all other religions. Renovationists would not reappear among the Churches revived in the Second World War, but this is beyond the scope of this essay. DP

The 'Living Church' or Renovationist Schism

The immediate predecessor of the Renovationist Schism was the St Petersburg Union for Church Renovation whose founders, thirty-two married priests, presented a memorandum to Metropolitan Antoni (Vadkovsky) of St Petersburg, requesting wide-ranging reforms within the Church, including abolition of the monastic monopoly of episcopal consecrations. They argued that the function of monasticism was contemplation, not administration, and that bishops should be chosen primarily from among regular, although well educated, married clergy. They opposed the institution of a Patriarch, preferring conciliar mixed bodies of bishops, lower clergy and laity. The programme also included the usage of the spoken Russian instead of Church Slavonic, liturgical reforms, broader participation of the Church in social activism and various collectivist-socialist concepts.

Although the liberal Metropolitan accepted their memorandum as one of the working programmes for the future Sobor agenda, the authors' open sympathy for the 1905 REVOLUTION, explicit anti-monarchism and support for the leftist parties in the first two Dumas, forced the Synod to ban the group once the revolution was suppressed.

After the OCTOBER REVOLUTION the vast majority of believers, common masses as well as the intelligentsia, turned away from any prospect of cooperating with or approving of the Bolsheviks as irreconcilable militant atheists and Church persecutors. In contrast, the revived Renovationists proclaimed Lenin a great liberator of humanity from exploitation and social injustice, and argued that Marx's atheism was merely a reaction to the bourgeois adulteration of religion in the nineteenth century. Once the Church has purged itself of its internal and psychological ties with the past, they argued, the Bolsheviks would cease persecution, finding in the renovated Church an ally and co-worker in building socialism.

The movement found very little response in the nation, because one of the chief motives for the post-revolutionary religious revival was disappointment with and reaction to Bolshevism. A Church praising the Bolsheviks was unacceptable to most believers, especially those returning to the Church after 1917. Finding no support in the nation, the Renovationists were forced to rely on Bolshevik (in the final analysis VECHEKA) support for their existence. Once this was provided it would be the less principled, security-seeking elements who joined it, often those priests who had participated in the extreme right and anti-Semitic organizations under the tsar, and whom now the Cheka could easily blackmail. The other founding elements of the movement were power-ambitious married priests, because the schism opened to them the road to episcopal consecrations and leadership. Since the Renovationists allowed divorce and remarriage of the clergy, they attracted also compromised clergy. All these factors further lowered their prestige and forced them into ever greater cooperation with and dependence on the Cheka. This in turn led to a near-complete isolation of the movement from the mass of believers, sealing their fate but compromising also the healthy part of their original reform programme. The consequence of the Schism is an extremely conservative Church of today's Soviet Union, in place of the reform-oriented dynamic Church conceived by the 1917-18 Sobor. DP

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The Imperial Army in War and Revolution

Between 1914 and the beginning of 1918 Russia mobilized over fifteen and a half million men, a number far in excess of the operational army's capacity to deploy or properly to arm and supply. Total losses are estimated at over seven million, including over one million dead, four million wounded and almost two and half million taken prisoner.

As in 1905, apart from the fear of being despatched to the fronts, the miserable conditions of army life, exacerbated by war, and concern for the well-being of their families and farms, were the major causes of discontent among the troops. Even in January and February 1917 political protest in the army had not reached the proportions of that of the civilian population. In Petrograd during the last days of February soldiers comprised a minority of demonstrators and their sympathies were expressed in their widespread refusal to fire upon the crowds. As late as October over six million men were serving in the trenches and the incidence of desertions, mutinies and demonstrations against further offensives which had begun to occur at the end of 1916 accelerated only in July, August and September 1917 and was most marked after the OCTOBER REVOLUTION.

The army changed radically in the course of the war. Professional officers continued to occupy the more senior positions but the carnage of 1915 resulted in platoon and company commands passing increasingly to reserve officers or ensigns hastily trained in special six-months courses. Though for the most part patriotic and proud of their new status, few, like their men, had any respect for the old regime.

The ranks also underwent a profound transformation. The regiments and garrisons of the rear, where the soldiers' revolution first took root, were swamped by an influx of raw conscripts as basic training was progressively reduced to a mere six weeks by 1917. The sixteen reserve Guards infantry battalions stationed within the city of Petrograd, for example, contained almost 100,000 men. Three quarters of these conscripts were peasants, eighty per cent were at best semi-literate, a fact to which the revolutionary

parties attributed the low political awareness of the common soldier.

Veterans and evacuees, who naturally resisted attempts to return them to the fronts, constituted a particularly disruptive element in the garrisons and played a key role in spreading opposition to the war among their colleagues and in the countryside. The Petrograd and Moscow military districts alone contained at least 133,000 evacuees and in some units for which data are available like the volatile 62nd, 183rd and 185th reserve infantry regiments of the Nizhni Novgorod garrison they comprised between one quarter and one third of the total complement.

Moreover, in 1915 the war ministry had begun to call up many older men who had received deferments or exemptions before 1914 and in 1917 after the summer offensive forty-year-old troops were no longer released in significant numbers to work on their farms. These measures caused much resentment and contributed to the increasing rate of desertions.

Estimates of the number of reservists ordered to the fronts between March and October 1917 vary from 1,500,000 to over three million. Some units refused to move until forced to do so and many individuals deserted in transit. Of the 12,000 men of the 57th and 204th reserve infantry transferred in June 1917 from the Moscow district, for example, front line staffs were reportedly able to account for the arrival of only half. Such exaggerated desertion rates were, however, the exception rather than the rule. In spite of widespread war-weariness the numbers of inexperienced and reluctant conscripts sent to the fronts massively increased between June and September and fatally weakened such resilience as the active army still possessed.

Democratization and collapse: The course of the Russian army's disintegration passed through a number of distinct stages. On 1 March the executive committee of the newly constituted Petrograd soviet issued its first order to the garrison in response to soldiers' demands that their relations with their officers should be formalized on a democratic basis. The news of the emperor's abdication broke the following day. These events destroyed at one stroke the basis of officer authority. Henceforth, officers had to appeal to patriotic sentiment or to the dubious legitimacy of the Provisional Government to secure the obedience of their men.

Order No. 1 instructed all units of the garrison to elect soldiers' committees and delegates to the soviet on the basis of one per company or cavalry squadron. Officers were to treat their subordinates with respect as befitting citizens. Later in the year the exact definition of which matters were to be resolved by the committees and which by officers became the subject of a succession of codicils issued by the Provisional Government and the Stavka (High Command), none of which had much practical effect.

The Imperial Army in War and Revolution

The order was meant to apply solely to the Petrograd garrison but its provisions were rapidly copied in other garrisons and at the fronts. The Provisional Government and the Stavka unsuccessfully resisted the committees' demands that officers should be elected, but realized that the spread of committees throughout the army could not itself be prevented. On 30 March the commander in chief, M. V. ALEXEEV, sanctioned the election of committees in companies, regiments and armies on the basis of a draft prepared by General A. A. POLIVANOV in consultation with the Petrograd soviet three weeks earlier. The higher committees were to be elected in a ratio of one officer to two soldiers, a move evidently designed to re-establish officer control. As a result officers actually came to preside over a large proportion of the soldiers' committees.

Alexeev's instructions were, with minor amendments, confirmed by war ministry order no. 213 of 16 April, which attempted to limit the role of company committees to determining the economic welfare of the unit. On the other hand officers lost many of their disciplinary powers to company and regimental courts.

Such stability as Alexeev's scheme had brought to the army was shattered in May and June by a combination of political crisis in the Provisional Government following P. N. MILYUKOV's note on Russia's war aims and the mass re-inforcement of the fronts for the impending summer offensive. The influx of reservists brought in its wake the wholesale re-election and radicalization of the committees. In addition, in order to boost his own popularity among the troops, the new war minister, A. F. KERENSKY, had extended Polivanov's earlier definition of soldiers' rights. These now included the freedom of political discussion and persuasion and the right to join political organizations. Kerensky thus removed any legal foundation upon which commanders might have stemmed the flood of BOLSHEVIK and ANARCHIST propaganda sweeping the army. In April alone the Bolsheviks printed 150,000 copies of *Soldatskaya Pravda* (Soldiers' Truth), half of which found their way to the fronts.

Although the offensive failed and defeatism and fraternization became more widespread, the slogan of 'revolutionary defencism', to which Kerensky, the liberals and moderate socialists as well as the right adhered, was still sufficiently persuasive to enable the government to suppress the Bolshevik-inspired armed demonstrations in Petrograd and elsewhere on 16 and 17 July (NS). The garrison was undecided and in spite of pervasive grass-roots Bolshevik agitation a mass of individual soldiers rather than entire units came out on to the streets of the capital.

The prospect of a military dictatorship, the extension of the death penalty to the rear and the curtailment of soldiers' liberties implicit in General KORNILOV's abortive expedition against Petrograd strengthened support for the Bolsheviks during September but to an extent which was uneven and difficult to determine with any exactitude. In June the

Bolshevik leadership had reported the existence of forty-three garrison organizations of the party with a further ten in which Bolsheviks and MENSHEVIKS were co-operating. The number of party members among the troops was estimated at 26,000. By October there were at least ninety-five organizations in the rear and over four hundred were claimed to exist at the fronts giving a membership of 50,000 with perhaps 40,000 sympathizers.

Estimates such as these should be treated with caution. Some Bolshevik military organizations in the rear, like that of Mozhaik near Moscow, contained almost as many workers as soldiers. The distribution of seats on garrison soviet executive committees is also an uncertain guide: while in August and September Bolsheviks, left SRs and Menshevik Internationalists became dominant, the desire to give all revolutionary parties minimum representation regardless of the size of their following, was still evident. Bolshevik support in the active army was unevenly spread. Party influence was strongest on the northern and western fronts, particularly in units like the XII army with its two brigades of LATVIAN RIFLEMEN, within which the Bolsheviks established a so-called 'left bloc' in co-operation with Latvian social democrats. On the south-western front the Bolsheviks were much less popular and they commanded minimal support on the Rumanian front as the election returns for the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY of January 1918 demonstrate.

The overwhelming majority of troops expressed no party allegiance or at least until the autumn of 1917 accepted the leadership of the SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES. Officers similarly tended to support the defencist right wing of the SR party and among senior officers sympathy for the Kadet party was fairly common, demonstrating that the majority had readily assimilated the idea of a national democratic army. All attempts by officer organizations to unite with their worker and soldier counterparts were, however, rebuffed. The left, while accepting the right of individual officers to stand for election, did not hesitate to portray officer soviets such as those in Petrograd, Moscow, Kazan and Novgorod and patriotic officer unions as potential centres of counter-revolution.

In the case of soldiers' organizations the opposite was often true. In major industrial towns the trend throughout 1917 was for soldiers' soviets to become 'sections' of their worker counterparts and thus to concede civilian control over the affairs of the garrison. A similar pattern emerged on the northern and western fronts. In April the first congress of the western front resolved that it should become part of 'the all-Russian organization of soviets' together with the Minsk city soviet. In the same month a similar meeting of the Pskov city soviet organizations presented an immense advantage to parties like the Bolsheviks. Whichever party succeeded in dominating the key industrial soviets commanded an influence over the army out of all proportion to its actual following. In

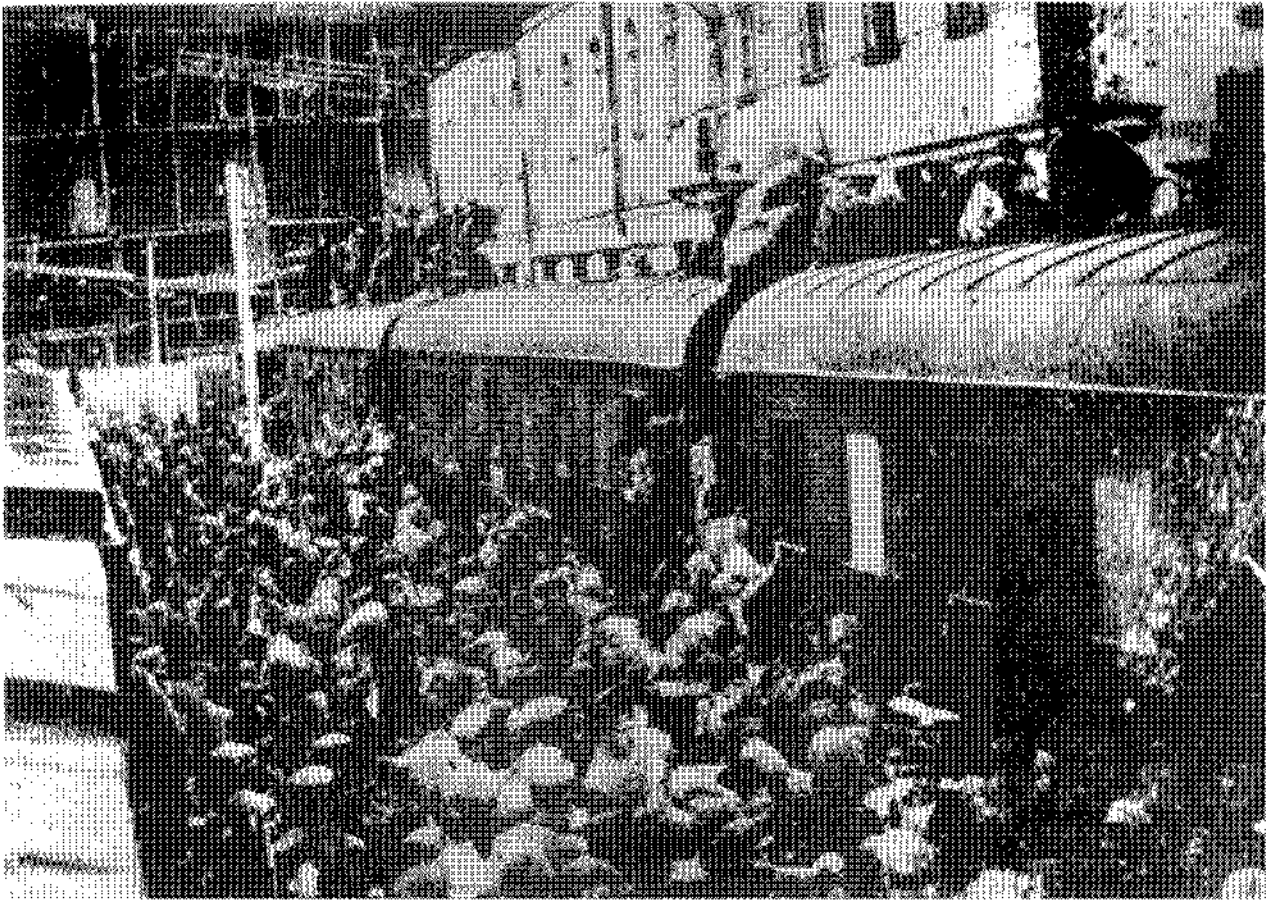


Figure 3 The end of the war: 'The soldiers vote with their feet.' (Lenin)

contrast among the hundreds of small rural garrisons and on the south-western, Romanian and Caucasian fronts far removed from Russia's industrial centre, the Socialist Revolutionaries and to some extent the Mensheviks held sway until the final collapse of the army in the first months of 1918.

Kerensky's attempted suspension of order no. 213 after the summer offensive, his connivance in restoring discipline by punitive measures and subsequent *volte-face* during the Kornilov affair and his formation of a supreme 'directory' in September, destroyed his credibility, already at a low ebb, among the troops. This did not mean, however, unqualified support for the new Soviet regime, in spite of the obvious attractiveness of slogans for bread, peace and land. LENIN's coup in Petrograd and similar action in other centres under the direction of soviet military-revolutionary committees were carried out by a well-organized but mixed bag of Red Guards, armed workers and small pro-Bolshevik army and naval units. At the fronts, despite some token resistance to the enemy, mayhem and desertions rendered very many units incapable

of either opposing or effectively supporting the soviet Bolshevik-Left SR coalition. In the rear, any garrison units (much depleted after the mass re-inforcement of the fronts) which opposed or were ambivalent towards the new regime were disarmed or disbanded. After the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918 armed opposition to Lenin's government was frequently tolerated by the local troops until it was ruthlessly suppressed by pro-Bolshevik detachments drafted in from other areas.

The soldiers' revolution of 1917 was largely anonymous, anti-belligerent and libertarian to the point of licence. The key to Bolshevik success lay not so much in winning the army's active support for the party's supremacy but in exploiting its latent political neutrality.

Politicization of the General Staff: 1904-1914

The experience of 1904 and 1905 gave renewed impetus to the reform movement within the Russian officer corps, exemplified in a flood in 1906 of official and unofficial pamphlets, articles and books critical of past military deficiencies. The focus of the movement naturally became

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the State Duma, reluctantly conceded by NICHOLAS II in 1905 in order to pacify liberal opinion and empowered to fund government programmes including almost all areas of military expenditure.

The first and second Dumas were quickly dissolved for their obstruction of government policy but the third, elected in November 1907 on an illegally altered franchise, was dominated by an unstable patriotic centre-right coalition sympathetic to the army's requirements. From its inception the most prominent of the members of this coalition, A. I. Guchkov, leader of the Octobrist party and chairman of the Duma defence commission, set out to cultivate political friendship among reformist officers serving in the ministry and General Staff. Among Guchkov's confidants were the war minister, A. F. Rediger, Generals Polivanov, A. S. Lukomsky, assistant war minister 1915-1916, V. I. Gurko, later commander of the western front, and G. N. Danilov, from 1910 to 1914 quarter-master general and a close colleague of General Alexeev, chief of staff from 1915 and commander-in-chief from February to May 1917.

Throughout 1908 and 1909 Guchkov openly attacked the bureaucracy and departmental intrigue which characterized much of Russia's military administration. Not least, he condemned the unwarranted interference of members of the imperial household in the army's professional business and used the Duma's control over credits to bolster the influence of his military friends, collectively known as the 'Young Turks', in the policy deliberations of the ministry.

Guchkov's ulterior motives were probably to secure the military's practical accountability in the Duma, leaving the emperor as little more than a figurehead, but he was careful not to impugn Nicholas personally and never publicly questioned the principle of monarchy. Nevertheless, his criticisms infuriated Nicholas. In 1909 Rediger was replaced by cavalry General V. A. Sukhomlinov, a firm supporter of the prerogatives of the emperor and of the undivided authority of his ministers.

Disgraced in 1915 and subsequently tried for his allegedly criminal negligence, Sukhomlinov worked for the progressive removal or transfer of officers whom he suspected of 'Young Turk' sympathies from the ministry, general staff and its academy, culminating in Polivanov's dismissal in 1912.

The FIRST WORLD WAR, however, enhanced the fortunes of the 'Young Turks'. The huge losses and the shortages of rifles and artillery which the Russian army experienced early in 1915 served to discredit their opponents and to open the way to positions in the high command for the erstwhile reformers. In spite of the fact that Guchkov's power base in the Duma had disintegrated in 1910 through defections and later in the loss of seats, the associations which he had formed in the army were to endure and, against the background of a rising chorus of liberal demands for a GOVERNMENT OF PUBLIC CONFI-

DENCE which bound the Duma leadership and the high command together in persuading Nicholas to abdicate in 1917.

The generals and the abdication of Nicholas II

The strikes and demonstrations which took place in Petrograd between 23 and 26 February 1917 were joined on 27 February by troops of the garrison. None of the civic and military authorities was prepared and there were few if any reliable units to resist the movement. Most officers were unwilling to risk disciplinary action and the military district command was isolated and demoralized.

On the same night the council of ministers convened for the last time and issued an appeal to the emperor at general headquarters in Mogilev to prorogue the Duma and despatch troops from the fronts to suppress the disturbances. The president of the Duma, the Octobrist M. V. Rodzyanko, simultaneously sent a proposal that the emperor's brother, Grand Duke Michael, should be appointed plenipotentiary in the city with a view to forming a cabinet responsible to the Duma. Nicholas refused to grant that authority and having announced his intention to return to Petrograd to take charge of affairs himself, prorogued the Duma and instructed General N. I. Ivanov to proceed with a punitive force to the capital.

Both Ivanov and the chief of staff, General Alexeev, were uneasy about the prospect of armed repression and although Alexeev continued to draw loyal troops from the fronts to reinforce Ivanov's expedition, he was persuaded that political concessions offered the best chance of pacifying the discontent.

Nicholas departed for Tsarskoe Selo by a circuitous route on 28 February (OS). In Pskov on 1 March he was met by General N. V. Ruzsky, who, faithfully reflecting the views of Alexeev, attempted to convince Nicholas that he should appoint a liberal Duma ministry. By midnight Ruzsky was under the impression that he had succeeded, Rodzyanko was briefed and Ivanov's troops were halted at Tsarskoe Selo.

Rodzyanko, however, now somewhat disingenuously claimed that matters had got out of hand. He told Ruzsky that he had ordered the arrest of the majority of the council of ministers and that only the emperor's abdication in favour of a regency under the Grand Duke Michael would save the dynasty and ensure the smooth transfer of power to a new administration.

On the morning of 2 March Alexeev transmitted to the commanders of the fronts and the Baltic and Black Sea fleets a summary of Ruzsky's consultations with Rodzyanko, citing his own fears for the cohesion of the army, were Nicholas not to abdicate. The construction of Alexeev's message left little possibility that the response would be negative. Confronted with what amounted to a breach of their personal oath of allegiance on the part of his most senior generals, Nicholas resignedly agreed and

Rodzyanko and Alexeev were informed, though not without an attempt by members of the emperor's immediate suite to persuade Nicholas to reconsider and to delay the telegrams.

In the evening Nicholas received two prominent Duma representatives, A. I. Guchkov and V. V. Shulgin, who similarly urged him to abdicate. However, having been given no assurance that he might remain with his son, Nicholas suddenly stated his intention of abdicating both for himself and his heir and produced a signed antedated decree to that effect. In spite of the dubious legality of this act, any prospect of a regency or the monarchy's survival in Russia collapsed at a stroke. The implications for the legitimacy of all government authority, including the military high command, were profound and unforeseen.

Unlike the socialists of the Soviet and the radical elements of the Duma, Rodzyanko, Alexeev, Ruzsky and their military colleagues had not initially sought the emperor's abdication. Fearful of precipitating unnecessary bloodshed and isolated from Petrograd, they accepted too readily Rodzyanko's interpretation of events and they were, moreover, largely ignorant of the rivalries and divisions within the Duma leadership, which coloured his statements. Nicholas and his entourage were genuinely unpopular, in many quarters hated, but much of this was the result of the court scandals of 1916 which had been exploited in a persistent campaign of denigration by Duma liberals and to which the generals had turned a blind eye or, in individual cases, tacitly supported.

They and the majority of the Duma leadership underestimated the degree to which Nicholas despised the elective institution which he had been forced against his instincts to concede in 1905, nor had they bargained for the sense of personal duty, however incompetently executed, and devotion to family which informed his actions. As a result, with the Duma prorogued never again to re-assemble, the generals had perforce little to fall back upon but to recognize a Provisional Government which enjoyed neither popular trust nor accountability to an elected body.

That Alexeev and his fellow commanders had consciously chosen to put considerations of patriotism and the preservation of the army above those of personal loyalty is beyond dispute, but in many respects they had both deceived themselves and had been deceived by others. Their adventure into the world of dynastic and party politics, for which their experience had hardly prepared them, served only to precipitate the destruction of that national unity of effort which they had hoped to bring about.

The Petrograd garrison and the Bolsheviks

At the beginning of 1917 the provisional committee of the Duma estimated that the Petrograd garrison contained 171,000 officers and men with a further 152,000 stationed in outlying towns which could be considered part of the

Petrograd conurbation, such as Tsarskoe Selo, Pavlovsk, Gatchina and Oranienbaum. To these should be added perhaps 100,000 wounded and evacuees.

The core of the garrison comprised the 200,000 men of the Guards and army reserve infantry, 20,000 artillerymen and a cavalry force numbering 8,400, most of them COSSACKS. Although proportionately fewer workers were drafted into the army from Petrograd than from other industrial centres, they accounted for a significant destabilizing element, especially in technical and specialist units. In addition, 11,000 skilled worker-soldiers were employed in the artillery and munitions factories of the city.

Given the symbolic importance of the capital for the rest of the country, the attitudes of the garrison were vital to the extent to which governments, tsarist, Provisional, or Soviet, were able to cope with the revolutionary train of events. The 1st machine-gun regiment, the greater part of which Kerensky had ordered to the front, initiated the disaffection among the troops on 2 and 3 July. In the mass demonstration of the following day they were joined by sections of the Finland, Moscow, Grenadier and 180th army reserve infantry regiments in which the Bolsheviks were most strongly represented, the 6th sappers battalion and one or two artillery training companies.

However, the demonstrators did not succeed in attracting the Guards infantry battalions nor anything more than a minority of army reservists. Only some 1,300 turned out, for example, of the 10,000 strong 180th. The demonstration involved over 50,000 servicemen but a significant proportion of these were sailors.

Despite the allure of Bolshevik slogans, party membership among the troops was relatively weak. By the end of July the party's military organization in Petrograd numbered some 1,800 and there were another 4,000 followers organized in the so-called 'Pravda club'. In October there were perhaps some 6,000 members and the party had managed to establish nuclei in thirteen of the sixteen Guards battalions which had hitherto been largely impervious to its influence.

At the meeting of the Petrograd Bolshevik committee on 15 October one of the party's military organization, V. I. Nevsky, claimed the garrison would come out 'squarely for the Soviet' against Kerensky though he doubted the support of other troops in the environs of the city. However, N. V. KRYLENKO, member of the Bolshevik military bureau and subsequently commander-in-chief, reported to a meeting of the central committee immediately after that there was a sharp division of opinion among the party's military representatives concerning the soldiers' readiness to take up arms against the Provisional Government. In spite of this, Lenin insisted that active preparations for an armed uprising should be undertaken by a special party 'centre'.

On 16 October, at TROTSKY's suggestion, the Soviet set

The Milyutin Reforms

up a military-revolutionary committee ostensibly to organize the defence of the city. Four days later the committee's first plenary session, of which the Bolshevik 'centre' was part, resolved to create a network of commissars throughout the garrison. Most of these proved to be Bolsheviks and on 23 October they were endowed with full power in the name of the Soviet. The committee thus usurped the authority of the Petrograd military district commander, Colonel G. P. Polkovnikov, and by-passed the SR and Menshevik dominated military section of the Soviet central executive committee.

The existence of commissars in fifty-one units was reported on 24 October. In reality, commissars had taken over in about a third of the 380 military units, institutions, parks and arsenals identified in Petrograd by the Duma committee in March and by the beginning of November over three hundred had been appointed.

For several weeks after the demise of Kerensky's government THE MILITARY-REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE became the effective government of the capital but Bolshevik control over the garrison remained precarious. The Semenovskiy Guards and 2nd machine-gun regiments, for example, sent resolutions to the committee, proposing a government composed of all revolutionary parties. Others refused to obey N. I. Podvoisky's order to move out against General P. N. Krasnov's punitive expedition or to undertake active duty until the immediate convocation of a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, a demand which also found a ready response among troops at the front.

On the other hand, any specifically anti-Bolshevik sentiment within the garrison was neutralized by the party's public commitment to peace and demobilization and, subsequently, by the short-lived coalition with the left SRs which held out for the troops the prospect of a more broadly based democratic socialist order. The garrison's neutrality gave Lenin the initial breathing space he required. MP

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The Milyutin Reforms

Russia's misfortunes in the Crimean war demonstrated that her army was seriously deficient in leadership, administrative competence and up to date weaponry. The tenacity and courage of many of its officers and men were unable to compensate for antiquated methods of conscription and training, which had never managed to yield sufficient numbers of experienced reservists, and for a supply system which inadequately fed, clothed and armed its men.

Taking advantage of the new Emperor Alexander II's reformist mood, the newly-appointed war minister, Dmitry Alexeevich MILYUTIN embarked upon a seventeen-year programme of military reforms in the teeth of a persistent traditionalist opposition. In 1862 Milyutin introduced the first of a system of military districts, each of which possessed its own semi-independent commander, staff, military council and specialist departments (engineers, artillery, medical, etc.). The military districts were of two types: districts having a common border with another power (Warsaw and the Caucasus, for example) contained in peacetime the bulk of active units, and their commanders, designated governors-general or viceroys (*namestniki*), were also often the head of the local civilian administration. The primary function of the internal districts was to maintain and train reserved units for the reinforcement of border districts and their commanders fulfilled a largely supervisory and administrative coordinating role.

The advantage Milyutin perceived in his system of districts was a reduction in the costly over-centralization of military administration combined with great flexibility in mobilization and deployment. Although the system collapsed in 1917, the efficacy of Milyutin's ideas was demonstrated by the fact that the BOLSHEVIKS resurrected it in 1918 and it remains the basis of Soviet internal military organization to this day.

Two further reforms were, however, of potentially revolutionary significance, although the implications were not widely realized at their inception. The poor quality of many Russian officers Milyutin attributed to their low level of both general and technical education, and to the fact that traditionally they had been inducted from a restricted social base. Consequently, he introduced a system of military schools designed to furnish the army with a cohort of professional officers of mixed social origins. In May 1863 the specialist senior classes of all but four of the elite cadet corps were reorganized into separate military schools, while the lower classes became general high schools (*gimnazii*), the intention being to transfer them to the civilian sector, although this never in fact took place.

Of greater significance was Milyutin's expansion of the network of officer (Junker) schools based in the military districts. These offered a specialist two-year military course to candidates who possessed general secondary educational qualifications and provided the bulk of regular officers for regiments of the line. Their expansion, together with a policy of promoting more non-commissioned officers, meant that by the end of the century officer service had become an essentially 'middle-class' occupation. Although poor conditions of service continued to discourage the most gifted or idealistic young Russians from pursuing a military career, the reform contributed to an improvement in both the numbers and professionalism of Russian officers. In 1874 the army had 29,000 officers, by 1894 almost 37,000 and by 1904 over 41,000.

Small groups of students who were familiar with the texts of revolutionary writers had existed in the cadet corps in the early 1860s but their influence was negligible. Strict discipline prevailed in both the military and Junker schools and the discussion of political issues was forbidden. Even during the upheaval of 1905 there is little evidence of revolutionary activity among the officer corps despite their widespread demoralization. If, however, the professionalism of the Russian officer engendered political inertia, it lay at the root of a long-term fundamental shift in the relationship between the autocracy and its military servants. The principle of personal service to the emperor, accompanied by a patriarchal and religious ideology, which had for centuries sustained the omnipotence of the ruler, began to be eroded in favour of a primary allegiance to the nation state. The political developments which followed the 1905 revolution accelerated the process. When in 1917 the autocracy collapsed with the abdication of NICHOLAS II, few officers greeted its demise with the same concern and regret as they were later to witness the disintegration of their regiments and what they considered the humiliation of their country.

Milyutin's crowning achievement was the introduction in 1874 of universal male military service. Hitherto the ranks had been filled through annual levies upon the lowest orders of society and the system was as inefficient as it was inhuman, for it did not provide any significant reserves. From 1874 all twenty-year-old men became liable for six years active service in the armed forces and nine years in a civilian reserve (the period of active service was later reduced to three years) with more generous arrangements for volunteers and those with secondary or higher education. Exemptions and deferments could be granted on the basis of family impoverishment, physical disability or occupation.

Universal military service met with stubborn resistance from the landed gentry and the traditionalist military establishment. That the new system of conscription persisted is testimony to the persuasiveness of Milyutin's argument that it was essential to Russia's survival as a

power. In 1874 the army contained 742,000 troops of whom some 186,000 were local militia or auxiliaries. During the 1880s the figure varied between 820,000 and 850,000 and had reached just over one million by 1898. This increase was accompanied by the creation of a viable reserve of second-line units in the military districts and an ever-expanding reservoir of trained civilians upon which to draw.

Albeit a convinced monarchist, Milyutin had little sympathy for unmerited privilege. His vision of a new bond between autocrat and a more equal nation, which the 1874 reform exemplified, could not, however, be translated into reality as long as Alexander II and his successors sought to preserve the old social hierarchy and to bolster the pre-eminence of the gentry. The reform implied that soldiers had citizens' rights commensurate with their duties, rights which the autocracy was reluctant to concede.

Under Alexander III and Nicholas II the war ministry ceased to be the engine of social change that it had been in the 1860s and 1870s. Preferment continued in the army to fall to those of gentry origin, the ordinary population never came to regard military service as a necessary duty and harsh discipline, petty restrictions and vestiges of the old patronizing attitudes of the military establishment towards the common soldier served as a constant source of aggravation.

The army in 1905: A wave of major demonstrations and illegal meetings swept through the garrisons and mainly second-line units in the last months of 1905 and continued on a lesser scale into the spring of 1906. No part of the empire was unaffected. Incidents of mass insubordination occurred among troops stationed as far apart as Brest-Litovsk, Grodno, Ekaterinoslav, Chita, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Tiflis, Batumi, Sukhumi, Kars and Kerch. Specialized units like sapper, artillery, telegraph and railway detachments were particularly vulnerable to the influence of political propaganda since they were usually located in the vicinity of fortresses or urban settlements. Mutinies in Tashkent and Baranovichi and the mass political demonstration of the 3rd brigade of sappers in Kiev in November 1905 probably owed their origins to civilian revolutionary agitation, but overall specifically political revolutionary activity among the troops was remarkably limited and the army did not collapse into anarchy. The Guards, cavalry, Cossacks and front-line regiments continued on the whole to obey orders and most incidents of disaffection in the army were quelled without bloodshed.

There are several explanations why political protest was less prevalent in the army than among sections of the civilian population. Conscripts as a rule were posted to areas far removed from their home towns or villages in order to minimize the risk that they might develop a community of interest with the local population. The

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majority of ordinary soldiers were of peasant origin, many barely literate, and without ready access to the liberal or oppositionist press, probably had little understanding of political developments. Although the 1905 October manifesto and the prospect of elections to a State Duma evoked in some units considerable interest, rarely did a political programme emerge from their meetings. The troops had little love for the autocracy and the government but they as yet could conceive of no alternative order.

Conditions of service and the unsavoury duties they were called upon to perform figured prominently in the petitions and slogans thrown up in the course of the unrest. The Russo-Japanese war had literally impoverished the army and it is therefore not surprising that demands for the better provision of tea, sugar, food and linen were commonplace. Other causes of complaint were the brutality of individual officers, inadequate leave and restricted recreational facilities (public theatres, for example, were out of bounds for privates but not for officers) and the tedium and harshness of barrack life.

Two issues in particular posed an immediate threat to the cohesion of the army as the last remaining bulwark of the regime. Indiscriminate over-conscription to raise the Manchurian armies had resulted in large numbers of reservists stranded in the Far East and Siberia or swelling the volatile garrisons of European Russia. With the end of hostilities their natural desire was to be returned to civilian life, but logistical difficulties and the tendency of the civilian authorities to call out troops at the least sign of popular unrest meant that their return was frequently seriously delayed. This, together with the widespread use of field courts-martial, proved a major cause of resentment and the idea began to take root that these duties were neither honourable nor strictly legal. During 1905 almost 125,000 men were called out to combat strikes or agrarian disorders and at least 18,000 were posted to guard public buildings and institutions. 1906 witnessed only a minor improvement. The war ministry under A. F. Rediger recognized the danger of using troops as a substitute for an inadequate police but was overruled in the council of ministers until the revolutionary wave had subsided.

The shock of defeat at the hands of the Japanese, whom most officers had regarded with condescension at the beginning of the war, had led to many hundreds of resignations. Normal peacetime deployment of the troops continued for three years to be disrupted by the internal security requirements of the regime and for two years proper field exercises and manoeuvres were severely restricted.

According to most contemporary military observers, Russia was incapable of waging war until 1909, by which time the deleterious effects of the Russo-Japanese conflict and the revolution were being overcome. MP

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The Russian Navy

Russia's position as the world's third largest naval power was lost in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. At Tsushima and Port Arthur the Russian navy lost eleven battleships and fifty-eight smaller ships. Naval reconstruction received a high priority and contributed to the industrial boom of the late Imperial era (and to the weakness of the Russian Army). But the other powers were building ships even more rapidly, and when war broke out again in 1914 Russia was still far behind her rivals.

One factor leading to revolutionary conditions in the fleet was increased mechanization. This made the fleet a conscript force with a significant (if not predominant) factory-worker component and an unusually large number of literate men. There was inevitable tension between this rank and file and the aristocratic officer corps; the shortage of career non-commissioned officers was a related problem. Harsh discipline was used to keep control, but if this failed the results could be disastrous. A second factor was the concentration of sailors in ships and naval bases; this made explosions, when they came, very violent. Two new elements in 1905 were the general growth of the revolutionary movement and the naval disorganization which followed the Pacific defeats.

The most spectacular event was the mutiny of the battleship *Knyaz Potemkin Tavricheskii* in June 1905, but there were also riots and rebellions at Kronstadt (October) and Sevastopol (November). In July 1906 the socialists were able to set off uprisings at Sveaborg (near Helsinki) and aboard the cruiser *Pamyat Azova*. The authorities had to resort to extreme measures to regain control. These, and the revolutionary experience of 1905-6, contributed to the future volatility of the lower deck.

Imperial Russia entered the war much inferior to the German Navy in the Baltic. The cruisers and destroyers achieved success in a mining campaign against the German coast, but the Baltic battleships, including four new dreadnoughts, were tied up in harbour, where their morale deteriorated. The situation was better in the Black Sea, despite the arrival of the German battle-cruiser *Goeben*.

Two dreadnoughts commissioned in 1915 gave the Russians superiority and kept the Black Sea Fleet active.

1917

With 1917 it quickly became clear that the Baltic Fleet was one of the most revolutionary forces in Russia. One hundred officers and men were killed in the February Revolution. There was a massacre of officers at Helsinki, the base of six of the fleet's seven battleships. Things were even worse at the Kronstadt training base, near Petrograd, where the authorities lost all control.

The mutinies had many of the same causes as in 1905, but there was also the wartime extension of service, the Baltic-German origins of many officers, and the demoralizing inactivity; the least active ships and bases were more rebellious than those that had been directly involved in the fighting. The small SR and Marxist underground had been rounded up in 1915-16 by the tsarist police, so the mutinies were a spontaneous response to the February Revolution rather than an organized revolt; the best evidence of this is the weakness of the revolutionary parties, especially the BOLSHEVIKS, in the months after February.

One strand of events in 1917 was the demand for more democratic control of service life. The PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT and even some of the more realistic officers tried to compromise by making concessions, but more and more power was claimed 'from below' by the naval committees, first at ship level and then on a wider basis. Some Bolshevik leaders saw democratization primarily as a means of weakening the Provisional Government; most of the sailors, however, believed that the fleet could be run on ultra-democratic lines. Throughout, the Baltic Fleet was the most affected. Radicals like P. Ye. Dybenko dominated Tsentrobalt, the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet, from an early stage. Democratization weakened the fleet's combat readiness, and when the Germans attacked the islands in the Gulf of Riga they met little effective resistance.

The other (related) development was the spread of political parties and the sailors' participation in the base soviets. The Bolsheviks were weak at first; the SRs were the strongest faction in the battle fleet at Helsinki, and even at Kronstadt there was a large 'non-partisan' element. Nevertheless the Bolsheviks, thanks to active party workers like P. F. RASKOLNIKOV, made headway, especially in Kronstadt, and even the sailors who belonged to other parties were on the extreme left.

In June there was a crisis about whether or not Kronstadt would obey the orders of the Petrograd government. In the July Days, the demonstrations following the June offensive and the ministerial crisis, the Kronstadters played a conspicuous part; government counter-measures did not resolve the problem and led to greater alienation. Then the

KORNILOV affair destroyed what little authority remained to the officers.

By October the Bolsheviks were able to manipulate much of the Baltic Fleet. They would win 58 per cent of the fleet vote in the November CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY elections (compared with 39 per cent for the SRs), and they controlled the key democratic naval institutions. The Kronstadt sailors helped capture the Winter Palace, the cruiser *Aurora* fired a blank shell, and men and ships that arrived from Helsinki helped fend off KERENSKY's weak attempts to counter-attack. The sailors were probably not decisive in the armed uprising of the OCTOBER REVOLUTION, but they were highly visible and gave important moral support.

The other fleets were less radical than the Baltic Fleet, given different conditions and their distance from civilian revolutionary centres. In the Black Sea Fleet, much the largest force after the Baltic Fleet, the Bolsheviks would in November take only 21 per cent of the vote, compared with 42 per cent for the SRs and 25 per cent for Ukrainian nationalists. Democratization made much less progress in the early months, but the energetic KOLCHAK was eventually forced to resign command in the Black Sea. Similar developments took place in the small Northern Flotilla (in Murmansk and Archangel) and the Siberian Flotilla (in Vladivostok).

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The Okhrana

The term is popularly applied to the tsarist political police in its entirety, although institutionally it constituted but one factor of several in charge of internal security under the directorship of the Police Department. Established in stages since 1880, the Sections for Safeguarding Public Security and Order came to be known simply as Okhrana or Okhranka.

The other main investigative body under the Police Department was the Separate Corps of Gendarmes which was established in 1826 following the Decembrist uprising, when an urgent need for a permanent police force seemed to emerge. The Third Section, founded by Nicholas I as part of His Majesty's Private Chancery, was invested with broad but vague powers, charged with supervising all areas of life, not only the arrest and interrogation of criminals who engaged in anti-state activity, but also to take preventive measures. For this purpose its operational arm

The Okhrana

consisted of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes and a network of a relatively small number of spies. The Corps of Gendarmes was a prestigious, autonomous elite unit, imbued with a strong sense of *esprit de corps* and answerable to its chief only. Its officers were recruited from among the best Guards cadets and offered a rapid advancement course. The Corps continued to maintain its autonomy even after 1880 when, for reasons of efficiency, it was resolved to unify the political with the general police apparatus under the Ministry of the Interior, while a newly created Police Department was to direct the amalgamated bodies. The Third Section was abolished, its tasks were transferred to the Special Section which was to handle all undercover activity throughout the Empire.

The Corps of Gendarmes, however, remained the operational arm of the police. In the course of its existence it had acquired its own institutional interests. As civilians the Minister of the Interior and the Director of the Police Department encountered difficulties in exercising their authority over the Corps of Gendarmes, whose officers adhered proudly to military tradition. The extensive autonomy granted to the Corps of Gendarmes by law restricted the authority of the Director of the Police Department to interfere in its affairs, especially as the Corps of Gendarmes came under the budgetary aegis of the Ministry of War. The problem of hierarchical discipline was further aggravated by the remoteness from St Petersburg of the Corps' area of activity.

A centralized anti-revolutionary struggle led by the Police Department was becoming essential with the growth of the revolutionary movement; the mere administrative abolition of the Third Section while preserving the autonomy of the Corps could not suffice. Additional investigative bodies were required, whose subordination to the Police Department could be ensured. At this point the Okhrana sections were set up. Their activity was also co-ordinated by the Special Section.

The Okhrana sections were first established in the industrial centres of St Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw, thus reflecting the growing concern of the authorities at the fast developing movement of the urban workers, who were increasingly becoming a target for revolutionary propaganda. New Okhrana sections were opened parallel to the spreading of the revolutionary activity, until 1907 locally and later also at district level, for closer supervision and co-ordination of the investigative operations. They consisted mostly of organizing an elaborate network of undercover agents in all social sectors.

Since both the Corps of Gendarmes and the Okhrana sections were now fulfilling the functions of a political police force, the duplication necessitated a formal division of their tasks. Thus the Okhrana was to expose political crimes before they were committed, while the Corps was to investigate the crimes after their perpetration.

The formal definition notwithstanding, the division of

authority remained to a large extent theoretical. Competition and friction which had previously characterized relations between the Third Section and the Ministry of the Interior, now dominated the relations between the Okhrana sections and the Gendarmerie, deteriorating rapidly to the level of fierce rivalry and sometimes reaching the point of outright enmity. Nor could the division of responsibility prevent a considerable overlap between the spheres of activity and the two bodies. Gendarmes were engaged in the Internal Agency (as undercover activity was officially known) almost to the same extent as the Okhrana. Their agents were active at times in the same organizations and used by their respective employers to scuttle each other's achievements. Nevertheless the Okhrana sections and their undercover agents had become the main arm of the Police Department in its attempts to penetrate the revolutionary movement.

Since underground conditions forced most party centres to function outside Russia, the Okhrana section that was established in the Russian embassy in Paris in 1885 acquired the utmost importance. It was in charge of all surveillance of revolutionary activity in Europe, as well as in North America; including party conferences, which for the most part were held abroad, banned literature and most importantly, weapons smuggled from Western Europe into Russia (see THE SCANDINAVIAN CONNECTION). Many émigré colonies existed in West European cities, since a good many revolutionaries fled from Russia to avoid arrest.

At the head of each Okhrana section stood a chief who had several case officers under him, each in charge of directing a number of undercover agents. The case officer was their contact man, he received their information and dealt with them personally. A few very important undercover agents were allowed to operate under the personal directive of the chief and in direct contact with him only. In the large Okhrana sections the agents were grouped according to their organizations and handled by a special officer for each party.

Apart from undercover agents who constituted the Internal Agency, an Okhrana section normally also had an External Agency, i.e. detectives whose surveillance of the revolutionaries was not carried out from within their organizations, but rather from outside by tailing the suspects. The External Agency included several kinds of detective. Most of them tailed revolutionaries on the basis of daily directives. Others were 'supervisors' – top detectives who usually supervised events in a specific region. They examined passports of suspects and assigned surveillance units as required. They kept an eye on people who frequently entertained strangers and they watched students' and workers' apartments.

Particular tasks were assigned to the St Petersburg Okhrana which necessitated special groups of detectives not to be found elsewhere. The security of the Imperial family, ministers and other high-ranking figures was entrusted to

the 'Protection Unit'. The Special Detachment specialized in identification by sight of important revolutionaries. Detectives of this detachment were sent abroad in groups from time to time to spot revolutionaries under the guidance of the Foreign Agency. The St Petersburg Okhrana also employed detectives whose task was to locate strangers who were staying in hotels or in furnished rooms in the capital, without having registered with the police, as required by law.

A bureau and archives were also the main components of each Okhrana section. In St Petersburg there were two of each: a general bureau and archives which dealt with all attendant aspects of the Police Department's activity and a secret bureau and archives which covered all clandestine matters pertaining to revolutionaries and undercover agents. The archives assembled physical data on revolutionaries, while the library amassed illegal revolutionary literature.

While the working conditions of the Okhrana Foreign Agency differed from those inside Russia, its basic organization and working arrangement were similar to those in other sections. The Foreign Agency also had permanent representations in key centres like London or Berlin. The latter was considered especially important, since it served as a transit route for revolutionaries travelling to and from Russia.

The External Agency was the most vulnerable point in the operations of the Okhrana Agency abroad. By its very nature more overt and more easily exposed, time and again it served the French socialist opposition as an instrument with which to attack the government for allowing and co-operating in the infringement of French sovereignty by a foreign power. To conceal and camouflage this activity, and so as not to conflict formally with the law, it was reorganized in 1913 as a private detective agency. Two French nationals ran it as partners, their chief client being the Foreign Agency in Paris. Finances originated entirely in the Police Department in St Petersburg. Beside surveillance, the detectives were often given the task of tailing revolutionaries on their way to Russia, and identifying them to the Russian police at the moment of crossing the border.

From 1906 to 1907 the detectives of the External Agency abroad were engaged in observing and monitoring arms smuggling from Europe to Russia. Special detectives, stationed in European ports in England, France, Belgium, Holland and particularly Copenhagen, reported by telegraph directly to the Police Department in St Petersburg on the departure of any ship carrying arms.

Each Okhrana section in Russia had several secret retreats where case officers could meet their agents. Employees of the sections rented the flats and were responsible for their maintenance. They had to be particularly reliable, since they met the agents and knew some of them personally. The meetings themselves took

place in the guest room. The tenant was to receive both the undercover agent and his officer and leave when they began to talk. Though similarly organized the sections varied greatly in their importance and size, those in the capitals naturally playing the leading role. However, their relative weight depended significantly on their chiefs and on the use to which they chose to put the information and power that they had amassed.

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Agents Provocateurs

This was a general term applied by the revolutionaries to people who furnished the authorities with information on subversive actions while they themselves took part in it; a formal distinction between members and non-members of revolutionary parties in the service of the police. By contrast, in police usage an agent provocateur was only a person in their service whose loyalty was not exclusively to them i.e. a person suspected of serving in the OKHRANA for revolutionary purposes. Thus neither of these meanings necessarily implies the dictionary definition of 'tempting to overt action'.

The formal emphasis notwithstanding, the term refers to a wide police penetration of the revolutionary movement as well as other public sectors from top to bottom. There were, however, significant differences in types of police agents: party members who maintained permanent and regular contact with the police were officially termed 'undercover agents'. They usually received a steady monthly salary, supplemented at times by special bonuses for information of particular value. They took part in the entire range of the revolutionary activity sometimes reaching positions of leadership in their organizations. Most prominent among them were E. A. AZEF, head of the SR Combat Organization and R. V. MALINOVSKY, a confidant of LENIN, member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and head of their faction in the fourth Duma.

On the other hand, informers who for the most part were not members of any party or organization, did not pass on information regularly and systematically. They reported on matters which had come to their knowledge indirectly and

Agents Provocateurs

were known in the police as 'auxiliary agents'. They were poorly and irregularly paid, usually in a piecemeal fashion and according to the value of each single report. They might have overheard at work the time and place of a workers' meeting, or they might be on the fringe of a revolutionary circle and were occasionally or partially informed about revolutionary activity.

Cases are known, however, of undercover agents who, while not affiliated to any specific party, had access to abundant valuable information which enabled them to report on several organizations at one and the same time. They were labelled by V. Agafonov as encyclopedists. B. Barushansky was one such. As a dentist especially popular among revolutionaries, his clinic became a kind of political centre, making it possible for him to report about the local intelligentsia, the Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries.

Instances of revolutionaries who, as part of an anti-police method of struggle, penetrated its ranks with the consent and knowledge of their organization, are extremely rare. In fact the only known example is that of N. Kletochnikov. He became a clerk in the St Petersburg police, and for two years supplied his party with names of undercover agents operating within its organizations. Contacts with the police on one's own initiative were strictly forbidden though several people did claim to have done so. D. BOGROV, the anarchist who murdered P. A. STOLYPIN at the theatre in Kiev in 1911, is a case in point. The true nature and circumstances of his action are controversial to this day. In 1910 A. Petrov, a Socialist Revolutionary, assassinated A. Karpov, the St Petersburg Okhrana chief, causing an uproar in the party over the role played by the Central Committee in this affair.

No exact data exist on the overall numbers of the Internal Agency, as the agents were collectively known to the police. It is thought that their number ran into the thousands reaching a peak in 1912 with 26,000 informers. It is clear, however, that most of them were not members of any party or organization, but adventurers of various sorts who offered to sell or barter to the police information that they had come by. An analysis of partial data suggests that the group of salaried agents active in the revolutionary movement constituted about one third of the overall number and did not exceed a few thousand. The deep impact that they had left on all parts of the revolutionary movement, however, which all the available documentation attests, is therefore due not so much to their numbers as to their moral, social and political effect.

Between 1905 and 1912 the agents' value for the police was measured in terms of their connection with terrorist activity in general and with central terrorism in particular, and in terms of how close an agent was to the centre of organizational revolutionary activity. For this reason the police directed most of their material and human resources toward penetrating the ranks of the SRs and ANARCHISTS.

It was only prior to 1904 and again towards 1912, when the SR and anarchist threat was much in decline, and subsequently when virtually no targets remained for infiltration by the Internal Agency, that the police were able to give deeper thought to revolutionary activity in industry. In 1906, a year of peak revolutionary activity, the highest concentration of undercover agents was among the anarchists, where the number was three times that of the SR agents and more than six times the number among SDs. However, undercover agents in the SR party earned three times the amount earned by their SD counterparts, while the latter's salary was less than half that of the anarchist agents. The data testify to the fact that centralized terror was the main target for police activity and finances, although peripheral terror of the anarchist sort acquired wider penetration. This also accounts for the great number of anarchist agents and their relatively low pay.

Most of the undercover agents in the revolutionary parties were coerced into cooperation with the police in the course of their imprisonment. The police sought to turn to their own advantage the fear felt by the prisoner under interrogation, and they therefore found it more productive not to concentrate on experienced veterans who fell into their hands, but rather on those who had not yet been hardened by daring revolutionary acts. Members of socially or economically weak groups seem to have felt more insecure and therefore more vulnerable to police intimidation. Thus although the general social profile of the undercover agents is similar to that of their respective parties, there seems to be an over-representation of Jews and workers among them.

Fear and shock cannot of course serve as an exclusive explanation, additional conditions were required to tip the scale, 'the characteristic permitting the deal' in the words of one police chief. Those who were seduced into becoming informers were described by Agafonov as being of weak character and insufficiently resolute faith, individuals who felt that they had been wronged and persons who sought an easy life. Pay was manifestly of major significance. The wages of workers in St Petersburg in 1913 ranged from 20 to 100 rubles a month. The police paid their undercover agents on a much wider scale, starting at about 40 rubles, averaging around 100 rubles, but going as high as 150 and 500 (see ZHUCHENKO), and rocketing to 2000 in the case of Azef. Notably the most valuable undercover agents were not those who were coerced into treason but those who volunteered to serve on their own accord, agents like Azef, Ya. Zhitomirsky, B. Dolin or Z. Zhuchenko, all of them considered among the finest of the Okhrana agents who remained in service for many years. S. Beletsky, a former Director of the Police Department (December 1912–January 1914), maintained that most of the prisoners whose previous revolutionary activity had been marked by a deep commitment rarely provided information of any value, because their new role as undercover agent weighed heavily upon them.

When a prisoner expressed his readiness to become a paid collaborator he was handed over to the Okhrana personnel, who took down his confession and his statement of repentance. The prisoner was then pardoned and released, the confession serving as a guarantee that he would not change his mind. To dispel suspicion of party comrades or of other prisoners, an escape was often staged. In one case an escape was so convincing that a policeman and a warder were tried in its wake and sentenced to hard labour!

Some police chiefs tried to affect the promotion of their agents in their parties to gain them access to important sources of information. Various ways were chosen to raise an agent's prestige in the eyes of his comrades, most commonly by providing him with funds to further certain party goals. M. Gurevich initiated and published the first legal Marxist organ *Nachalo* (The Beginning) with police money. In the case of Malinovsky, police falsified documents in order to provide him with the clean past he needed in order to stand for election to the Duma on behalf of the Bolsheviks, and they arrested anyone who stood in his way.

It had been assumed that the police made use of their undercover agents to influence intra-party developments. A few attempts were indeed made, notably by Belitsky who, on his own admission acting on the principle of divide and rule, employed Malinovsky to widen the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks to avoid any prospects of reunification (see MALINOVSKY). The same approach typified the Police Department in 1905 *vis à vis* the SRs and the MAXIMALISTS. It seems, however, that these are isolated instances. Apart from the fact that, due to its structure, the Police Department was ill-suited for such widely concerted manipulations, its overriding interest was to gain information that would lead to immediate liquidation, very often at the expense of long-range benefits. The capture of a battle squad, the seizure of an explosives laboratory, or the discovery of a printing-press were regarded as especially noteworthy achievements, attracting most efforts of police chiefs who would often share the prize with the agent who made their success possible.

Making arrests based on an agent's information, or providing him with funds for particular purposes, had to be done very cautiously, as these served as the most common triggers of suspicion. Failure to explain financial resources could constitute proof of a member's contact with the police. In case of such rumours or suspicions a commission of inquiry would be set up. Sometimes the inquiry was based almost exclusively on the testimony of the suspect himself. Sometimes evidence was obtained from comrades who had known him for long periods in the revolutionary movement. Inquiries usually focused on financial questions, escapes from prison, knowledge of secret details which became known to the police, or a person's survival from his group's downfall. No aspect of a suspect's life

remained unexposed. Standing for party investigation was a severe personal ordeal, for it required the suspect to reveal and explain every detail of his private life without contradicting either his own previous statements or evidence given by other persons whose testimony remained secret. He was not permitted to evade any question. Normally he was suspended from all party activity for the duration of the inquiry. It was extremely difficult for anyone to clear his name. Once accused, even when not found guilty, rumours and suspicions continued to circulate. Furthermore, new evidence, unavailable earlier because of the nature of underground activity, was always expected to emerge. If, on the other hand, guilt was proved, it was made public throughout the revolutionary press. In many cases suspects escaped before they were tried, some committed suicide to avoid being exposed. Bela Lapina took her own life because she was unable to prove her innocence. Deliberate false accusations were not uncommon, the inquiries dragging on for years and reopening every time new evidence came up. The anarchist Nikolai Rogdaev fell victim to such slander for more than ten years. The anarchists and the Polish Socialist Party usually executed their traitors. The SRs did so in Russia but not abroad, and many of their agents, Azef included, were allowed to escape. NS

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The Zubatov Movement

Also known in its time as 'Police Socialism', Zubatovshchina denotes an experimental effort by the tsarist autocracy to mobilize a labour movement that was to be non- or anti-socialist and possibly even counter-revolutionary. The word is derived from the name of Sergei Vasilyevich ZUBATOV, the principal and most successful advocate of the theory and practice of this idea during his tenure as head of the security police (OKHRANA) of the Moscow region at the turn of the century.

The experiment consisted of a three-fold mobilization of workers: in Moscow on the basis of industrial dispute, in the Jewish Pale (chiefly Minsk and Odessa) as a political party to compete with the BUND, and in St Petersburg on the basis of leisure-time activity. It was throughout envisaged as a competition with the dangerously successful social democratic mobilization of workers; it was therefore premised on working-class activism, organization, and leadership, all engendered by the workers themselves, and

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manipulated rather than imposed by the State. It thus amounted to sponsoring a labour movement, but one with a non-socialist ideology and leadership: as such it was almost revolutionary in the context of tsarist practice. The experiment began in 1900 and petered out in the revolution of 1905-7.

The factory dispute: The reform was launched in Moscow under Zubatov's immediate control, with the support of his immediate superior D. F. TREPOV, the police chief of Moscow city, and under the patronage of the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, the governor-general of Moscow and the tsar's uncle. The police would first encourage workers to submit complaints of violations of the law and of the contract without extending to demands for changes in either. Trepov would then contact the factory manager or the inspector on the telephone or through a worker emissary to negotiate and have the grievance redressed at once if possible. Workers responded enthusiastically, and this phase lasted until May 1902 when Yuli Guzhon of the Guzhon and Mussi plant of the Association of Silk Mills, challenged Trepov, complained to S. Yu. WITTE, the finance minister, and had Trepov restrained in St Petersburg. A group of workers, leaders in their own constituency, were selected to handle the complaints, ensure their legality, and negotiate with managers and factory inspectors. They were Fedor Slepov, Mikhail Afanasyev, and Nikifor Krasivsky, all non-socialists but respected nonetheless. They were each paid a monthly maintenance by the police in sums ranging from 20 to 100 rubles (i.e. about the range of a worker's monthly wage). They were not police spies, however (see AGENTS PROVOCATEURS). They did not supply intelligence leading to arrests, indeed they refused to do so when later asked, and their subsidies were publicly acknowledged. This group then formed the core of the Society for Mutual Help for Workers in Mechanical Production, set up in May 1901 with Trepov's approval. Between 1902 and 1904 a series of similar bodies were set up in other trades such as textiles, tobacco, engraving, confectionery etc. But the core group remained the same, and constituted another body informally and later formally called the *Sovet* (Council) of Workers of the City of Moscow. This body, led by Slepov and Afanasyev, in effect came to represent the Moscow workers under Zubatov's influence. It was extensive enough for him to use 50,000 workers to demonstrate on 19 February 1902, the anniversary of the peasants' emancipation, and to lay a wreath at the foot of Alexander II's statue in the Kremlin; for the rest they disputed with and challenged socialist agitators among workers. Such was mobilization on the basis of industrial dispute, through which a major all-city organization of workers in Moscow was created and acted as a rival to any socialist group.

The Jewish experience: In the Jewish Pale of Settlement

workers were ideologically mobilized against the Bund, which was then most active in the area, and organized into a rival political party. This time the leaders were found by Zubatov's personal evangelism among arrested Bundists, the most significant converts being Alexander CHERISKY, Manya VILBUSHEVICH, and Yosif Goldberg in Minsk, and Meer Kogan and Khunia (Genrikh Isaevich) SHAEVICH in Odessa. Their conversion was genuine, not venal as much subsequent and post-revolutionary testimony has asserted. They mobilized workers against the Bund, concentrating on the single 'Economist' charge (see ECONOMISM) that the Bund had sacrificed the material interests of the workers to its own political ambitions. They were then encouraged to demand proper enforcement of the law, to hold mass meetings and conduct strikes for the purpose, by the chief of the gendarmes in Minsk, Colonel Nikita Vasilyev, and by the local administration in Odessa, all on instructions from the Department of Police in St Petersburg. Finally they were brought together in the Independent Jewish Labour Party (IJLP) in Minsk in July 1901, and in its Odessa branch, the Independent Labour Group, with a manifesto and political programme that was clearly 'economist'. These bodies conducted strikes in both cities until the summer of 1903 when the experiment was called off, in Minsk because it was getting dangerously close to Zionism, and in Odessa because it was unable to neutralize the general strike of 17 July of that year. It differed from Moscow by being a political party (the first official one in Russia, and long before the revolution of 1905), rather than an organization to handle industrial disputes.

Leisure activities: The third facet of the reform was the mobilization of workers' leisure time. Begun in 1901, it became the residue in Moscow from the Guzhon crisis of 1902 to the revolution of 1905, but it was the substance in St Petersburg, from autumn 1903 under the stewardship of Father Grigory Gapon until the radical mobilization of December 1904. Since both industrial dispute and party politics were fraught with serious consequences, this was found to be the safest area of workers' activism. It consisted of popular enlightenment (not training) and rational recreation. Enlightenment, chiefly in Moscow, consisted of public lectures on bread-and-butter issues such as working hours, labour law, insurances, and so forth by the academic intelligentsia, most notably Professor I. Kh. Ozerov of Moscow University. From the Guzhon crisis of 1902 even this was deemed too radical, and the topics were strictly limited to history, literature, science, and religion, by conservative scholars and churchmen. In St Petersburg, Gapon provided the same, both before and after the registration of his Assembly of Russian Factory Workers of the City of St Petersburg in February 1904, but in an altogether unsystematic and dilettantish manner. Rational recreation, the other aspect of the mobilization of leisure,

consisted largely of weekly social events, for example family dance parties, musical soirées, an occasional excursion etc., in both Moscow and St Petersburg. In Moscow it was very closely supervised by both Zubatov and Trepov, with written applications and permission being required for each event; in St Petersburg Gapon was not so supervised by either Major-General Fullon, the governor of the city, or by Prince P. D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, the Minister for Internal Affairs. Recreation in Moscow therefore remained innocuous, even in 1905; in St Petersburg on the other hand it became the means to the radical mobilization from the autumn of 1904.

Results: The whole experiment is customarily described as a failure, but it could as well be seen as an uncertain beginning. In Moscow it was withdrawn, or rather modified, after Guzhon protested; only leisure management remained, if in a conservative vein. Unlike in St Petersburg, these unions and gatherings did not become the basis of a radical mobilization even in 1905, and these Zubatovite unions continued their meetings into at least April of that year before fading out. The IJLP in Minsk was abruptly terminated, not for anything that it had done, but because the new Minister for Internal Affairs, V. K. PLEHVE, was apprehensive of the Zionist, and therefore separatist implications of an explicitly Jewish workers' body. In Odessa, the Independents were dissolved in July 1903 for their failure to avert the general strike of that month and not for any sin of commission. Only in St Petersburg did the experiment turn about face with Gapon switching sides and mobilizing the workers to the point of a confrontation with the Autocracy, even if behind icons and royal portraits, in the petition and the march to the Winter Palace on 9 January 1905 (see 1905 REVOLUTION).

Ideas: The general system of ideas which informed these experiments may be examined through the book lists supplied to workers, through Zubatov's statements and through the theoretical exercises of his publicist collaborator, L. A. TIKHOMIROV. The books were the standard reading of the radical intelligentsia, with a markedly left-liberal to reformist-socialist orientation. The authors were Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Werner Sombart, S. N. Prokopovich, and Eduard Bernstein, all socialists of the Fabian, 'Katheder', legal-marxist, and evolutionary strains. The other authors were the contemporary industrial relations experts of Europe, Wilhelm Kulemann from Germany, and Paul de Rousiers and Louis Vigouroux of France. Their theories were derived from the experience of developed, not developing capitalism, of political democracy, powerful labour movements, and unified working classes in each of the advanced capitalist countries of USA, England, France, and Germany. They saw these features as the sole protection from the menace of social democracy, which was Zubatov's reason for choosing their

works. The ideology thus presented in these readings was not in the least conservative, nationalist, theological, xenophobic, or proto-fascist; it was instead highly radical in tsarist conditions with implied extensive liberal reforms and stopping short only of revolution itself. Zubatov's own ideas reflected the same, but less explicitly so. He spoke throughout as a loyal servant of Autocracy and extolled the virtues of monarchy; but for the rest he spoke of the equilibrium of classes in conflict, of the competitive struggle for power, of social forces rather than conspiracies, and finally even of his desire for an evolutionary and progressive capitalism, with the Autocracy merely mediating conflict. Only his idiom tended to conservative apologia for Autocracy, but his message was modern and reformist. As for his publicist collaborator, L. A. Tikhomirov, the renegade member of People's Will and later editor of the conservative *Moskovskaya Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), his principal theoretical concern was to see the working class as another *soslovie* (social estate), and pillar of Autocracy in the manner of the gentry and peasantry, and to integrate them fully through corporate status, for example in unions, co-operatives etc., all amounting to a distinct and recognizable variety of European conservatism. The thrust of this reform therefore was radical, rational, secular, and limitedly pluralist, but not revolutionary, and equally not nationalist, chauvinist, religious, or corporativist, save in the lecture programme in Moscow after 1902. Only Father Gapon seemed to make concessions to Christian and national feeling, but even so more to provide for himself as a priest in the movement and to satisfy the police; yet eventually the most radical events occurred under his leadership.

Conclusions: The general significance of these events may be examined with regard to the labour movement, and to the state. In the history of the labour movement it signified the tentative acceptance of the fact by the Autocracy, and of its necessity and inevitability; it marked the shift from the repression of the movement itself to that of the social democratic leadership of the movement, which was characteristic of the years 1907-14. Further, it witnessed the birth of the soviet form of labour organization, a uniquely Russian contribution to labour history. The soviets, as they emerged in the revolution of 1905-7, were essentially non-party, non-doctrinal, general representative bodies of the working class of a city. As such, the Council or soviet of the Workers of the City of Moscow and Gapon's Assembly of Russian Factory Workers of St Petersburg were just such city-wide soviets, undifferentiated representations of the working class of the city rather than of just an industry or a craft as unions necessarily are. These were non-revolutionary or counter-revolutionary soviets; and the Gaponite body became something very like a revolutionary soviet also in its final days as it championed the Putilov strike, conducted the general mobilization of the workers of the city, and took

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them on the march to the Winter Palace. In the history of the tsarist state, Zubatovshchina signified the first full-scale attempt by the Autocracy to mobilize a class in modern fashion, to the extent of resorting to party politics, as in Minsk and Odessa, and as in the electoral and party politics of the Duma years, 1906–17. It marked the shift from the traditional reliance on the historic institutions of the Autocracy to seeking mass legitimacy, but as yet only in the particulars of unionism and not in the universals of an electoral system. This kind of an Absolutism seeking a democratic legitimacy is called Bonapartism, especially in Soviet historiography; the Zubatovite reform thus adumbrated the inauguration of the Bonapartist state of the inter-revolutionary years, 1906–17. The importance of this reform lay in this dual aspect, in its fashioning a new and

unique form of labour organization, the soviet, and in its launching the Bonapartist State.

MRP

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