CHAPTER NINE

Triumph and Tragedy

IF THE BOLSHEVIK VICTORY in Petrograd had been almost bloodless, there was bitter fighting in Moscow. There the forces of the Provisional Government barricaded themselves within the mighty walls of the Kremlin and surrendered only after days of intensive shelling. Telegrams had gone out from Petrograd to cities and villages all over Russia announcing the overthrow of the Provisional government and the transfer of power to the Soviet. These telegrams sparked off local uprisings and, in some cases, bloody strife. Al-

though the overwhelming majority of the provinces followed the Bolshevik lead, there were notable exceptions. Thus, in Kiev, ancient capital of the Ukraine, the people, seeing at last a chance to escape from Russian domination, began to form a separate government. The same independence movements were noticeable in certain areas of Siberia and the Caucasus. The position of the Cossacks was far from certain. And what of the many hundreds of thousands of German and Austrian prisoners of war, scattered all over Russia? In many areas they outnumbered the local population—and they were experienced soldiers. Now that central authority seemed to be tottering, they might seize the opportunity to rebel and escape. Besides, there was the problem of what the Allies would do now that a government committed to end Russian participation in the war had come to power.

In Petrograd itself things were far from clear. During the Bolshevik uprising and in the days immediately afterward high government officials had been arrested along with bankers, officers, and other upper-class leaders, but in most cases they had been released immediately. Now they, in combination with the outcast conservative socialist leaders, began to organize Committees for the Salvation of the Fatherland in Petrograd and throughout the country. And, taking their cue from their former employers, all the government clerks, the skilled telephone and telegraph technicians, the bank clerks, and the post office workers went on strike. Decrees issued by the new government could not be processed through the normal channels, messages could not be delivered, no money could be issued. Besides that, and more important, the railroad workers' union (dominated by conservative socialists) declared itself opposed to the Bolshevik takeover. As yet, in spite of the defection of the regiments Kerensky

had ordered from the front, the front-line armies had not spoken. If those armies came out against the Bolsheviks, then nothing could save them. It was on this possibility that the Committees of Salvation and the clerks based their struggle.

Lenin's means of handling this sort of opposition was simply to refuse to recognize that it existed. He acted as if the Bolshevik government had, in fact, all the power to do that which it proclaimed. Decrees and laws now flooded out of Petrograd in a torrent. Nothing like it had been seen before. Private ownership of land was abolished; banks were nationalized; all industrial enterprises were nationalized; the merchant marine was nationalized; the stock market was simply abolished; the right of inheritance was abolished; gold was declared a state monopoly; all governmental debts were declared null and void. The old criminal courts were replaced by revolutionary tribunals in which any citizen could act as judge or lawyer; the old strict marriage and divorce laws were replaced by very lenient civil codes. The church was not abolished, but its lands were seized, and religious teaching was forbidden in the schools. The old Russian calendar was discarded in favor of the Western calendar, and the Russian alphabet was modernized. All the old titles of aristocracy and rank were swept away to be replaced by *Citizen* or, more commonly, *Comrade*. A law was passed which suppressed the conservative newspapers "temporarily."

Elections to a Constituent Assembly were set for November twenty-fifth. A note was sent to the governments of all the warring powers proposing an immediate armistice. But the Allies ignored this message and refused to recognize the new Bolshevik government.

On November eleventh a group of officers made an attempt to storm the Petrograd telephone exchange.

They succeeded in penetrating the building, and even in cutting Smolny's communications. But detachments of Red Guards forced them out after a day of heavy fighting. The question of what to do about the strike of government and bank employees was serious. If the Bolsheviks could easily seize buildings and replace workers, they could not train people overnight to carry on the complicated business of government. "All were against them," John Reed recalled, "—businessmen, speculators, investors, landowners, army officers, politicians, teachers, students, professional men, shopkeepers, clerks, agents. The other socialist parties hated the Bolsheviks with an implacable hatred. On the side of the Soviets were the rank and file of workers, the sailors, the undemoralized soldiers, the landless peasants, and a few—a very few—intellectuals."

Meantime, Trotsky had hurried off to the front to ascertain the feelings of the divisions and regiments on which the Committees of Salvation were basing their hopes. After a whirlwind tour, during which he tested the feelings of the troops, he was able to report: "The night of November 12th–13th will go down in history . . . Kerensky is retreating. We are advancing." In fact, those huge armies of landless peasants and revolutionary city workers expressed almost unanimous support for the Bolsheviks. Smolny was now able to issue an order: "To all army corps, divisional and regimental committees, to all soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants' deputies, to all, all, all: we demand that Kerensky be arrested." This order, however, was too late. Disguised as a sailor, Kerensky had already slipped through the Bolshevik net. Later, with the help of a British secret agent, he made his way to London and finally to the United States.

On November twenty-fifth the countrywide elections to the Constituent Assembly took place. The idea of a

Constituent Assembly—an elected congress representing the wishes of all the people who would draft a democratic constitution for Russia—had been at the core of Russian revolutionary thought for centuries—not Bolshevik thought, to be sure, but the hopes and dreams of thousands of revolutionary martyrs had been centered upon it. Out of nearly forty-two million votes cast the Bolsheviks won about 30 percent, the Social Revolutionaries (representing the peasants) won about 58 percent, while the conservative and middle-class parties won only two million votes between them. It has been held by Trotsky and other of the Bolshevik leaders that this Assembly was in fact a counterrevolutionary body. This claim is largely based on the highly disputable fact that the Social Revolutionaries, who held an overwhelming majority of the delegates, did not truly represent the broad masses of the peasantry. And here the Bolsheviks were running up against the problem which was to plague Soviet governments for decades to come—the peasantry. There was no doubt that the peasantry was revolutionary at that moment; estates burning all over Russia testified to the fact. But the peasant, led by the Social Revolutionary party, was fighting for *ownership* of the land. The Bolsheviks intended to *nationalize* the land. During the early days this conflict was not apparent, and there is some truth to the Bolshevik contention that under the immediate circumstances they better represented the interests of the masses of poorest peasants than did the Social Revolutionaries. Nonetheless, it was the Social Revolutionaries who had been elected.

The Bolshevik answer to this electoral defeat was ruthless. When the Constituent Assembly gathered in Petrograd on January 18, 1918, the delegates and their crowds of supporters had to fight their way through

ranks of Bolshevik soldiers and sailors to enter the Tauride Palace. Inside, the Bolsheviks carried on an uproar that made orderly proceedings all but impossible. At last Bolshevik troops forcibly ejected the delegates from the Palace and thus brought to an end all idea of formal democracy in Russia. Many of the delegates escaped abroad; others joined the gathering forces of those who opposed the Bolsheviks by force of arms.

The Bolshevik reaction to the Constituent Assembly brings us face to face with the central problems, both historic and psychological, of the Bolshevik power in Russia. If, as they claimed, the Bolsheviks enjoyed the support of the overwhelming mass of the people, why did they find it necessary to use the methods of czarism to disperse an assembly elected by those people? If, even though in a formal minority, "history" was to drive the peasants into their ranks very quickly, why did the Bolsheviks find it necessary to use rifles and bayonets to prod history along? The answers offered by the Bolsheviks—that in the midst of a gathering civil war there is no time for formal debate, that the Constituent Assembly was outdated even before it met, that it was to be used by a counterrevolutionary conspiracy, and so forth—do not ring true. Historical answers—for example, the fact that it was the French peasantry who undermined and finally destroyed the French Revolution—only serve to bring into question the entire Bolshevik conception of historical "inevitability." These are questions Marx and Engels did not evade. It was because of this very problem of peasantry that they had predicted the socialist revolution would have to begin in those countries in which industrialization had eliminated the peasantry. Events in Russia were to prove them correct—and no amount of Bolshevik wordage has ever been able to obscure this

fact. Russia was a land of peasants. The peasants wanted only the land. The Social Revolutionaries represented them perfectly in this respect. The Bolsheviks, who enjoyed overwhelming support among the city workers and among the armies in which millions of peasants had been divorced from the land and organized under worker leadership, would have to short-circuit their own Marxist view of history to force socialism onto a nation which had not yet emerged into capitalism. This had been behind the struggle with the conservative socialists. It was a problem which was to prove insoluble—except at a fearful price, much later on. The Bolsheviks were prepared to pay this price. But this in turn brings into question the entire psychology of the Bolsheviks. That they fought courageously and nobly to bring to an end an intolerable regime no one would deny—so did many other groups in Russia. That they clearly saw the inconsistencies of their enemies and were swift to take advantage of them is also true. That under the circumstances they represented the interests of the city workers and soldiers seems indisputable. But in arguing and fighting against czarism, against the most reactionary type of semicapitalism, against the fraud represented by Kerensky and his followers, the Bolsheviks were tilting against straw dummies. Just as they themselves would have said, their true judge was "history." How, then, could a group of men who had devoted their lives to a struggle for freedom, who had loudly proclaimed their submission to "historical inevitability," find themselves compelled to abolish freedom and defy "history"? It has been said that all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. But the first indications of Bolshevik ruthlessness in command came long before they had won absolute power.

For many years the Bolsheviks had been forced to

operate underground in an atmosphere of conspiracy and violence. Most of the leaders of the party had become indifferent to violence, had slowly developed the psychology of the conspirator who sees enemies everywhere, who cannot afford to trust even his closest associates. Besides, they had for years held aloft in isolation the banner of the "one true faith." There is about them something of the psychology of the religious fanatic. With "history" elevated to the place of God, they can do no wrong—neither murder, the suppression of freedom, nor even the betrayal of "history" itself can be wrong to the possessors of the only truth. The closest historical parallel to the psychology of the Bolshevik leadership is in some respects that of the Holy Inquisition which plagued Europe centuries ago. The fact that such a psychology may have been forced upon them by events cannot excuse its fearful results.

Trotsky has suggested that Lenin, Kamenev, himself, and others of the Old Bolshevik leadership escaped this psychology. He has pointed out the relative freedom of debate within Bolshevik ruling circles during the early years, the high intelligence of some of the leaders, their humanity. He has blamed the subsequent horrors of dictatorship upon Stalin and others who had "betrayed" the revolution. But the inner contradictions, the external disasters, and the rigid terror of Bolshevik rule became apparent long before Lenin's death and Trotsky's exile. To explain them in terms of immediate struggle begs the question. Perhaps the fundamental truth from which the Bolsheviks could not and cannot escape is that any man or group of men who seek to define Man in their own rigid terms—no matter what those terms may be—and who then try to force him into the mold they have conceived are reduced at last to violence and terror as their chief weapons. This has been true throughout history and remains true today. Man is entirely too complicated, elusive, and sublimely chaotic a creature to fit anyone's preconceived patterns.

But in 1918, with world war raging, with the Bolsheviks preparing for a bitter civil war against the forces of counterrevolution, there was little time for such reflections. The Bolsheviks had come to power on the promise of immediate peace, and this promise they now proceeded to honor.

Trotsky had been in contact with the Germans regarding peace since the end of November 1917. Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership still hoped for a general, worldwide peace conference in which no indemnities or annexations would be demanded. But the Allies had no intention of entering such a conference. Instead they sent a note to General Dukhonin, who commanded the Russian armies, warning him against entering into any negotiations with the Germans. Caught between the Bolshevik demand for an immediate armistice and the Allied demand for continued fighting, with his armies going to pieces all around him, Dukhonin defied the Bolshevik order. The Petrograd Soviet immediately dispatched a naval ensign, Nikolai Krylenko, who had been active in the revolutionary movement in Kronstadt, to take over supreme command of the Russian armies. Krylenko arrived at headquarters on December third. The soldiers at once arrested Dukhonin and, in spite of Krylenko's attempts to save the old general, lynched him.

On the same day a Russian delegation arrived at the city of Brest-Litovsk to negotiate an armistice with the Germans. After brief discussion it was agreed that fighting should be suspended for two weeks to allow both sides time to prepare their peace terms.

To the Germans peace with Russia was now a necessity. American troops were pouring into western

Europe, and Germany could no longer wage war on two fronts. Besides, Germany suffered heavily from the British blockade and needed the raw materials and food which trade with a peaceful Russia might provide. They were disposed therefore to make a quick peace —but one which would insure them against any further attack from the east and give them control of the resources they needed. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, hoped to draw out the negotiations as long as possible. They had great hopes for the revolutionary movements in Germany and Austria, and they also realized that it was only a matter of time before the Allies won on the Western Front. They issued numerous orders to Russian troops to fraternize with the Germans facing them, hoping to ignite a rebellion in the German army—and contact was made with German socialists who, it was hoped, would force the Kaiser to make a liberal peace.

With the Russians employing every possible delaying tactic, the negotiations dragged on for weeks. Trotsky at last went so far as to tell the Germans that the Russians would neither fight nor sign a peace treaty. In any event, the German General Staff brought things to a decision by the simple expedient of ordering their troops to advance. Against little opposition from the ruined Russian armies, German forces swept forward all along the front. At Kiev they signed a separate armistice agreement with the anti-Bolshevik Ukrainian government which had seized control. German patrols were now almost within sight of Petrograd. By March third the Russians could delay no longer. They signed a peace treaty with Germany at Brest-Litovsk.

By the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia lost about one third of her population to the Germans and one quarter of her territories, more than half of her industries, and a huge portion of the national income. It was

one of the harshest peace treaties in history, and if it crushed Russia, it alerted the Western Allies to the necessity of fighting through to complete victory against the Kaiser.

With the collapse of Russia as an ally in the war against Germany, England, France, Japan, and the United States had now to consider what steps they could take to prevent Allied arms and equipment from falling into German hands. There were very large munitions dumps both at Archangel and at Vladivostok. But if the fate of these supply depots, with their hundreds of thousands of tons of war materiel, worried the Allied governments, this was not their only motive for intervening directly in Russian affairs.

The ruling circles in both France and England viewed with horror the Bolshevik rise to power. By intervening with supplies, money, and men, they hoped to encourage those who still fought the Bolsheviks. French and English policy looked toward the overthrowing of the Bolshevik regime. The Japanese were concerned solely with how much Russian Far-Eastern territory they could grab amid the chaos and how much of former Russian influence they could usurp. The Americans, on the other hand, were inclined not to interfere in Russian internal affairs. Woodrow Wilson resisted all British and French attempts to talk him into a new war against the Bolsheviks. American troops were to be included in the British expedition to Archangel and Murmansk, but solely to help protect the supply depots against the Germans. In the Far East, American troops were sent to Vladivostok on the same mission—but also to make certain that the Japanese did not use the occasion to seize Russian territory. When the Bolsheviks later accused Britain and France of helping prolong the agony of the civil war in an attempt to overthrow them, they were correct. The

same accusation leveled against the Americans was completely incorrect.

The British and French attempts at intervention were doomed in advance to end in fiasco. In Archangel, in Vladivostok, in the Crimea, wherever they sought to fight against the Bolsheviks, they soon found that their only allies were just those generals and politicians who had been most hated by the Russian people. With no popular support in Russia, war-weariness at home, and the growing strength of the Bolshevik power, foreign intervention soon collapsed, but not before it had produced one of the most remarkable events in military history—the odyssey of the Czechoslovakian Legion.

The Czech Legion was originally composed of former Austrian-Czech soldiers who had been captured by the czarist armies and certain Russian-Czech elements. These men fought for the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia against the Germans and Austrians. When the Russian armies collapsed, they alone retained their morale and fighting discipline. The Russian Revolution had little interest for them—they wanted only to return to an independent and free Czechoslovakia. When the Germans seized control of most of the Ukraine after Brest-Litovsk, this corps, after fighting a heavy rearguard action to avoid encirclement, retreated in good order toward the Ural Mountains. They were very well armed and were under the direct orders of the Allied Supreme Command in Paris. With the Russian collapse it was proposed to evacuate the Czech Legion from Russia. But the only way to get out seemed to be through Vladivostok on the Pacific. Accordingly the Czech Legion commenced a three-thousand-mile march across Siberia to Vladivostok. They immediately ran into difficulties along the way with the local Soviet authorities,

who suspected them of collaborating with counterrevolutionary forces. In May 1918 fighting broke out between the Czechs and the Bolsheviks along the line of their retreat. The Czechs immediately seized control of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and leagued together with all the anti-Bolshevik Russians in the three-thousand-mile corridor along the railroad. Soon the forty thousand men of the Czech Legion found themselves strung out in enemy territory from the Ural Mountains to Vladivostok guarding the line of the Trans-Siberian. It was in order to help the Czechs escape through Vladivostok that American troops were originally dispatched to that city.

One unexpected result of the Czech Legion's uprising was the murder of ex-Czar Nicholas II and his family. In April 1918 the Romanov family had been taken to Ekaterinburg in the Urals, where they were imprisoned in a local merchants's house. They were jealously guarded by the extremely hostile local soviet. In July a rumor swept through the little village: the Czech Legion was approaching, and with it various czarist and counterrevolutionary forces! If they liberated Nicholas or his family, would they not try to rally forces around him to regain the throne? The Russian Revolution at this moment had reached that same problem faced by the English Revolution of the seventeenth century and the French Revolution of the eighteenth: what to do with the deposed ruler who may become a threat to the revolution. They answered it the same way. On July sixteenth Nicholas and his family were herded into the cellar of their house by a squad of soldiers and there shot and bayoneted to death to the last member—even down to the children's pet spaniel. Later, Bolshevik central authorities arrested twenty-eight of the men involved and executed five of them.

But when the murders occurred, Lenin, Trotsky, and the others had little time to worry about them. Civil war had sprung up all over Russia—it flickered on through the summer of 1918 and into the summer of 1919. In the Urals where the Czechs held out, the Ukraine, the Crimea, Russian Poland, and Finland—everywhere armed resistance to the new Bolshevik government sprang into being. In the case of the Poles and the Finns these were battles for national liberation and were eventually won. In other cases the uprisings were based on many factors—widespread peasant discontent, protest against the Bolshevik dictatorship in Moscow (to which the government had moved from Petrograd early in 1918), simple freebooting by demoralized officers and generals. And the rebellions followed much the same pattern. A general or an admiral would, with Allied financial and supply support (and sometimes French or British troops), set up an independent government and march on Petrograd or Moscow. At first they would encounter warm support among the peasants or perhaps the Cossacks and the conservative socialist leaders. But soon it would emerge that they intended to restore the old czarist regime or one like it, and this support would fall away. Bolshevik agitators would infiltrate their forces, and they would find themselves alone. General Alexei Kaledin, commander of the Cossacks living along the banks of the river Don, committed suicide when he found that his men preferred Bolshevik promises to continued struggle. And the brutality and vengeance the rebellious generals or admirals inflicted on the peasants and workers who fell into their own power turned the masses against them. One after another they collapsed—crushed by the same fact that had made the original Bolshevik triumph all but inevitable: there simply did not exist in Russia any broad class of people who would support a counterrevolution, and the masses were impelled by the logic of their situation to embrace Bolshevism.

The peace conference which ended World War I (and from which the Russians were excluded) pulled the props out from under continued resistance inside Russia when Allied contingents were withdrawn and Russian borders established. The Soviet government saw Russia stripped of many of its captive nations at this conference. Poland, Finland, Latvia, Esthonia, Lithuania received their independence; certain areas of the Ukraine were included in Romania. Nevertheless, the Bolshevik leaders considered themselves well out of it, under the circumstances.

The hero of the civil war years was undoubtedly Trotsky. It was he who made the Red Guard formations into the Red Army, and he who inspired it to become an effective fighting instrument. He would rush from place to place—wherever civil war battles were being fought—in an armored train and he soon established himself as a brilliant military tactician. In the longer view the Bolshevik victory was largely political. The strikes and sabotage of the early months of Bolshevik power were quickly suppressed. And a new political secret police appeared on the scene in the form of the dreaded Cheka. Enemies of the Bolsheviks were arrested and executed ruthlessly by the thousand. A Red terror descended over the country which differed from the revolutionary terror of the French Revolution only in its more thorough and scientific application.

By 1920 peace had been reestablished throughout the Russian land. The Czechs who had involved themselves in Admiral Kolchak's anti-Bolshevik attempts were returned to their newly established country, the Allied troops had been withdrawn, and the Bolsheviks found themselves in supreme power.

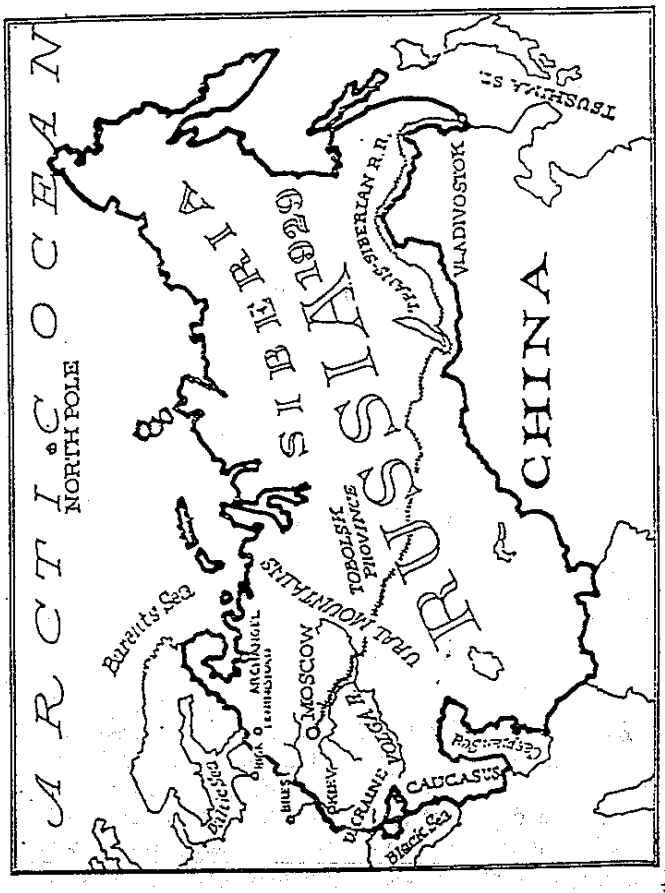
The Germans, who had encouraged and welcomed the Bolshevik Revolution, were made to see how short-sighted this policy was. Communist uprisings, directly sparked by the Bolshevik success in Russia, soon broke out throughout Germany and were the deciding factor in her surrender to the Allies and the abdication of the Kaiser. Socialist uprisings in Austria-Hungary helped dissolve that tottering empire in its last days. Lenin and Trotsky had both always insisted that the Russian Revolution could only succeed if revolution broke out in the West. To a certain extent they were proved correct. Although the Communist revolutions in Germany, Hungry, and Austria were brutally suppressed, they nevertheless weakened those countries sufficiently to insure against their intervening in Russian affairs. Likewise, the general war-disillusionment and the rise of the Labour party in England and the Socialists in France guaranteed to the infant Bolshevik state that at least they would not be subjected to invasion. Bolshevik problems in the coming decades were to be largely internal.

While Lenin remained in control, hope for a peaceful and perhaps even democratic solution to Russia's tremendous internal difficulties did not disappear. Even Winston Churchill, one of Lenin's bitterest enemies, conceded: "He alone could have found the way back to the causeway. . . . The Russian people were left floundering in the bog. Their worst misfortune was his birth . . . their next worse, his death." It was in the midst of the most difficult period of Russian recovery, with very many basic problems still undecided, that Lenin met his death. With famine and open peasant revolt inflaming the countryside, with Stalin preparing to seize complete control of the Bolshevik party, with a widespread experiment in limited capitalism (the so-called New Economic Policy) still under way, Lenin in

late 1923 suffered a severe brain hemorrhage. On January 21, 1924, he died at the age of fifty-three. Half a century before, Dostoevsky had predicted: "Starting from unlimited liberty it [a Russian revolution] will arrive at unlimited despotism." Although in his life Lenin embodied this prediction, there were few, friends or enemies, who at his death disputed the justice with which the Russian people renamed Petrograd—the city of Peter the Great—Leningrad, the city of Lenin.

If violence and ruthlessness had marked Bolshevik policy during Lenin's lifetime, if the basis for national repression and suffering had been unwittingly laid partly by necessity and partly by misguided fanaticism while he was alive, only after his death did the real storm break. For in those days Stalin, the ultraconservative Bolshevik who had consistently opposed much of Lenin's program, seized control of the Bolshevik (now renamed Communist) party machinery in Russia and, after much ruthless scheming, was able to force Trotsky once again into exile and later to murder nearly all of the Old Bolshevik leaders who had led the revolution.

Stalin's solution to the peasant problem was enforced famine and deportation to Siberia, which cost the lives of untold millions of peasants; his solution to political problems was the murder of all opponents and the setting up of slave labor camps for those who were merely suspected of opposition; his solution to problems of foreign affairs was international espionage, sabotage, and subversion on a vast scale—and finally the ruthless betrayal of anti-Fascist forces throughout Europe by his pact with Hitler. His solution to the problem posed by a brilliant and independent Marxist mind such as Trotsky's was the brutal axe-murder of his rival in Mexico. These charges against the Stalinist regime in Russia are not merely those of its declared



enemies—they are those made by Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders since Stalin's death. These leaders would have us believe that for thirty years Russia was ruled by a man who was growing progressively more and more insane—and there seems no reason to doubt their word. But how did such a man come to power in the new Bolshevik state—and how was he able to retain power with the support of those who later denounced him?

In the days following the revolution *Pravda,* the Bolshevik newspaper, declared: "They wanted us to take the power alone, so that we alone should have to contend with the terrible difficulties confronting the country. . . . So be it! We take the power alone, relying upon the voice of the country. . . . But having taken the power, we will deal with the enemies of the revolution and its saboteurs with an iron hand. They dreamed of a dictatorship of Kornilov. . . . We will give them the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . ." In those harsh words is to be found the core of much that followed. The Bolsheviks, faced with the task of leading a vast, illiterate population on the road to revolution against a fierce and implacable tyranny, had purposely been organized as a small, exclusive, completely dedicated band of leaders. When they triumphed, no machinery existed for, nor was any faith placed in, the transfer of power to the masses they had led. Accustomed to the methods of conspiracy, violence, and discipline, leadership within the party was always certain to fall to the most dominating, the most ruthless. Stalin's rise to power was therefore almost certain.

The Communist party had traditonally considered itself the head of the industrial working class which would dictate the building of socialism. But in a nation with a small industrial development, in which the overwhelming majority of the population was illiterate, then the

"leadership" of the party was certain to become more and more despotic, as the rule of a minority always does. When to this is added the fact that the Russian people had never experienced democracy or personal freedom, that their living conditions were such as to make a mockery of those words, the Communist tyranny of Stalin would seem to have been unavoidable. The Communists themselves would be the first to point out that the peculiarities of Stalin's personal madness were incidental to deeper historic drives. If that was true, communism in Russia—if it was to follow the Bolshevik line—was foredoomed to bring with it tyranny and terror. Trotsky always maintained that this was because the Communist party of Russia abandoned the true tenets of Marxism. But once again, this was due not to personal whim but to historical imperatives.

The Bolshevik Revolution requires justification no more than the French, English, or American revolution. Revolutions are not conspiracies—they are vast social upheavals as inevitable and self-justifying as earthquakes. But the Bolshevik program after the revolution requires justification—just as does any program of national development—in terms of simple human happiness. To point to the vast unhappiness of prerevolutionary Russia is not enough; human well-being demands more than merely comparative advances.

EPILOGUE

War and Peace

THE VICTORY OF BOLSHEVISM in Russia did not bring the millennium to that huge and backward country. On the other hand, it must never be forgotten from what depths of ignorance, despair, and cruelty it sprang. Fifteen years after the revolution Trotsky was to write: "Enemies are gleeful that fifteen years after the revolution the soviet country is still but little like a kingdom of universal well-being. Such an argument, if not really to be explained as due to a blinding hostility, could only be dictated by an excessive worship of the

magic power of socialist methods. Capitalism required a hundred years to elevate science and technique to the heights and plunge humanity into the hell of war and crisis. To socialism its enemies allow only fifteen years to create and furnish a terrestrial paradise. We took no such obligation upon ourselves. We never set these dates."

Now, almost fifty years after the fall of the Winter Palace, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the second strongest industrial nation on earth. The old jesting about socialist inefficiency came to an end when the first Soviet Sputnik circled the earth. But to ascribe this tremendous industrial advance to socialist methods alone is as incorrect as to ascribe American industrial development solely to capitalist methods. In both countries, geographic and geologic factors were of much more importance than the systems under which they were developed. In both cases continental land masses rich in agricultural, mineral, fuel, and hydroelectric resources had been ruthlessly exploited. Without these resources no gigantic industries would today sprawl around Pittsburgh or Stalingrad, Detroit or Omsk. The productive power of both countries depends less upon their economic systems than upon the natural factors which those systems were able to exploit. The argument as to whether socialism or capitalism is most likely to produce industrial development is thus largely irrelevant.

But what of human happiness? What of freedom, personal liberty? To charges that they are prisoners of their totalitarian state, Russians have replied that we are prisoners of our exploitive economic system. But if that was once true, American history during the past thirty years has proved that, under a democratic political system, tremendous social progress and economic planning are always possible. Recent Russian history,

on the other hand, has yet to demonstrate that personal freedom is possible within the rigidly organized Communist social and economic system.

When the world first came to assess the meaning of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, it seemed to pose the greatest threat ever raised against Western democratic institutions. European statesmen, at the insistence of their frightened ruling classes, did everything in their power to isolate the new Soviet state. They were not so much afraid in those days of Russian conquest as they were of the appeal communism might make to their own working classes. Only the United States, which did not share in the European heritage of economic privation and rigid class structure, had little realistically to fear from Communist doctrine or propaganda (in spite of politically inspired "Red scares" after both world wars). Yet today the United States finds itself at the head of an armed anti-Communist coalition. Why?

This is not the place to go into the details of recent history which have led to the "cold war." But the most obvious factors in Soviet policy which have contributed to the present state of tension in the world can be briefly stated. Of great importance among these has been the temperament of the Soviet leadership. With the death of Lenin and the Old Bolsheviks, Russian leadership was left largely in the hands of men with little or no personal experience of the world outside Russia. These were men who also still bore the scars of their ruthless and brutal struggle against czarism, poverty, ignorance, and direct foreign intervention in Russian affairs. Suspicion and deep distrust of Western policy, no matter what that policy may be, has often been a decisive factor in Soviet relations with the rest of the world. A second factor of great weight has been the dogmatic devotion of the Soviet government to

some outdated doctrines of Marxism. Marx predicted the rapid disintegration of capitalist society as a result of its own inner economic and social "contradictions." Soviet policy, through the financing and planning of subversion, unrest, and class hatred in capitalist nations, has sought to hurry that prediction along. Still another factor which has only recently become clear is the Soviet adoption of some of the expansionist aims of the old czarist regime. Thus, as Soviet strength and industrial power have increased, Russian governments seem to have felt free to indulge in the luxury of playing power politics along Russian borders.

But certainly the most important factor of all in the present hostile relations between Russia and the West has been the Russian internal political system. In a nation in which supreme power passes to politicians ruthless or strong enough to simply grab it (even, as in the case of Stalin, a psychotic personality) and in which the broad masses of the people have no means of restraining that power or even of influencing its decisions, almost anything can happen. Where all policy —and especially foreign policy—is left in the hands and at the whim of a small group of totalitarian leaders, their temptation to solve internal problems by external aggression is always very great. In a world of missiles and H-bombs the spectacle of the immense power of Soviet Russia remaining in the hands of a tiny group of leaders unrestrained by law, responsible only to themselves, and harboring misguided and hostile convictions regarding the rest of the world is frightening indeed.

The United States has met the challenges posed by Soviet policy in a variety of ways. Against Russian expansionist tendencies we have erected a system of armed alliance and today maintain the greatest peacetime military establishment in American history. The

deep-rooted mistrust of Western policy on the part of Soviet leaders has been met by a continuing and expanding dialogue in the United Nations and by the greatest possible exposure of Soviet citizens to the realities of life beyond their borders through economic and cultural exchange programs. The Soviet policy of subversion in capitalist nations has been countered with economic aid programs which have undermined the basis of Communist propaganda by dramatically raising the living standards of peoples throughout the world. This in itself has been the best possible demonstration of the irrelevance of Marxist predictions regarding the collapse of capitalist nations.

But to answer the essential and frightening problem posed by the totalitarian structure of Soviet society, there seems little we can do. The problems of political democracy, responsible government, and personal freedom within the Soviet Union can only be solved by the Russian people themselves. Perhaps our greatest contribution toward the solution of these problems will be to continue to expand and give meaning to the political freedom, personal equality, and economic security of *all* our people as an example of what free men working within democratic institutions can accomplish. To face the threat posed by Soviet society in the coming years we will require great fortitude, great wisdom, and—above all—great patience. But we should not be pessimistic about the final outcome.

For if we believe that the overwhelming majority of men everywhere desire peace, personal freedom, and economic security, we must believe that Russians desire these things as much as we do. The final word in the evolution of Soviet society will be spoken, not by a small group of doctrinaire leaders, no matter how apparently powerful, but by the Russian people themselves. If we recall the patience and fortitude with

which this people endured an old and seemingly eternal tyranny, and the resourcefulness and courage with which they shattered it, we can remain confident that they will eventually triumph over newer oppressions as they continue to "break a path into the future."

Bibliography

THE RUSSIAN Revolution, although one of the most heavily documented events in history, has aroused and still arouses such violent polemics both for and against that great care must be taken in placing too much reliance on the memoirs of individuals directly involved in the struggle. Thus Trotsky's massive history, the memoirs of Milyukov, the diaries of Sukhanov—while all invaluable primary sources—each reflect the partisanship of their authors. Besides that, the Soviet authorities have been engaged since the early 1920s in a monumental and bald-faced rewriting and suppression of original sources, falsification of documents, and the like, to fit the vagaries