



UCBMUN XXI



# Death of Lenin: Authoritarian Transition and the Communist Experiment

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# Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
A. Committee Overview	3
B. Head Chair Welcome Letter	5
C. Crisis Director Welcome Letter	6
II. Russia in the Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	7
A. The Fall of Monarch	7
B. The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party	9
C. World War I and Thoughts of a Proletariat Revolution	10
D. The February and October Revolution	11
III. Workings of the Soviet Union	12
A. The Communist Party	12
B. The Politburo and the Central Committee	13
C. Factionalism, Power Balance, and Internal Conflict	14
IV. Lenin: the Figurehead of the Revolution	16
A. Rise to Power	16
V. Policy Transitions and Political Challenges	17
A. Bolshevik Initial Decrees	17
B. Civil War	18
C. The Polish-Soviet War	18
D. The Communist International	19
E. The Famine of 1921	19
F. The New Economic Policy	19
VI. Character List	20

## **Introduction**

### **Committee Overview**

The Central Committee was established as the highest acting organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1917. Born out of the congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, the committee achieved its status after initiating the October Revolution under Vladimir Lenin's guidance. From that point forward, Lenin acted as the safeguard for the supremacy of the Central Committee within the new governmental framework. Members were elected at the annual Communist Party Congresses, and all decisions of elected members were made through a majority vote. The official role of the Central Committee was to manage all party and government activities between the annual Communist Party Congress gatherings.

A tremendous part of the success of the Central Committee's system can be attributed to Lenin's ability to negotiate and build strong, majority coalitions in favor of his proposals. The committee voted to accept the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in this fashion, and thus ended Russian involvement with Germany in World War I. While effective, Lenin's power-play strategy led many to criticize the centralization of Party politics that he created, and factions arose in opposition. One such faction, the Workers' Opposition, gained prominence

during the 10th Party Congress, which spurred Lenin push for the adoption of his New Economic Policy in an attempt to acknowledge criticisms while maintaining his position of control. After Lenin suffered a stroke in May 1922 and another paralyzing one the following December, he was removed from the public sphere. He did not chair the consequential 12th Party Congress due to his deteriorating health. By the time of his death on January 21, 1924, the pressures of factionalism persisted and the Central Committee remained indecisive as to whether they should continue with Lenin's New Economic Policy or replace it with a new planned economy.

Despite historians' widespread recognition of Lenin as one of the most powerful and influential Soviet leaders of all, the Central Committee's desire to carry out Lenin's wishes was not fully established as they shifted their allegiances towards Stalin. This juggling act, of both maintaining a "halo" around Lenin, praising the dying man in front of a mourning nation, and simultaneously distancing itself from his will was a major theme which characterized politics within the Central Committee during this time period. It was an feeling more experienced than acknowledged.

Delegates in this committee will have to deal with many issues, some of

which plagued the Soviet Union for extended periods of time. They will need to tackle leftist opposition. They will have to determine the Soviet Union's place in the world after World War One. They will have to determine how exactly to conduct policy towards former military allies who fundamentally differed in their economic and political structuring. They will have to draft the 1924 Soviet Constitution. They are responsible for setting up a new economic system which can both satisfy Communist philosophy and the regime's desire to maintain in power. And, perhaps most importantly, they will choose from among them the leader to drive forward Soviet policy for perhaps the next few decades. The possibilities that delegates need to be

prepared to deal with are endless. Perhaps war breaks out in Europe far earlier than the late thirties. Perhaps nations with market-based economies invade Russia, hoping to install a democratic-capitalist regime. Perhaps the United States falls to Communism. Perhaps Lenin makes a miraculous recovery and maintains power in his hands. Perhaps the Soviet experiment fails altogether. In our committee, do not expect history to fall into place as it did in the books. Instead, come prepared to fight, so that your character ends up on the right side of history.

## Chair Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Death of Lenin Committee at the University of California, Berkeley Model United Nations Conference XXI!

So who is our head chair, you might ask. I'm Zubin Koticha. For the most part, I grew up in Scarsdale, New York, a town in Westchester County not far from the City. I'm currently a Junior studying Computer Science. Though I am extremely interested in software engineering, perhaps my life's passion is macroeconomics, an interest which prompted me to get involved in Model United Nations here at Berkeley. As an economics nerd, I spend much of my free time reading the Economist, the Financial Times, or even just reading the IMF's World Economic Outlook.

My other academic interests include fintech, virtual reality, scientific research, value investing, philosophy of ethics, behavioral economics, entrepreneurship and startups, global geopolitics and world trade, and learning languages. In terms of leisure, I like Aston Martins, Arsenal FC, fashion, classical music, deep house music, and meditation.

In coming up with this committee topic, Megan and I thought long and hard about the most competitive, controversial, and monumental transfers of power in world History. Stalin's cementing of power during Lenin's demise fit the bill perfectly - it was nothing short of mastery at the art of Machiavellian politics. It is that level of tact and finesse that will bring home the gavel in our version of events.

Megan and I hope that you have a fun time in our committee - we certainly will. If you have any questions about the committee, or even just want to introduce yourselves and make friends, feel free to shoot us an email.

Best of luck,

**Zubin Singh Koticha**

Head Chair

**Crisis Director**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Russia, and oh hey, there's Sarah Palin in her backyard, looking right at us! Just kidding, the year is 1924 (Palin isn't around yet) and Lenin's heart just gave out at UCBMUN XXI. My name is Megan Conner and I'm truly honored to serve as this committee's Crisis Director.

A brief introduction: I'm a second year Environmental Economics and English double major here at UC Berkeley. Outside of MUN, I dabble in creative writing, cat stalking, and power napping. Inside of MUN, I've previously served as an Assistant Crisis Director in UCBMUN XX's Colombian Peace Accords committee. It was a tremendously rewarding experience that I hope to emulate with this thrilling committee on post-Lenin USSR. While not Russian myself, I've lived the Russian life vicariously through literary characters in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* to name a few. Suffice to say, I love Russian culture and all its antics.

Our committee will run in standard crisis fashion as it simulates the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Within the framework of a freshly radicalized national identity, delegates should aim to legitimize the revolution's Marxist ideals while also securing themselves positions of high power and security. Accept change as a constant. Arm yourselves with propaganda, intergovernmental diplomacy, economic strategies, hammers and sickles. This is indeed a unique opportunity for delegates to rewrite history.

Please contact me with any inquiries. I'm looking forward to reading some witty crisis notes and unraveling your conniving plots behind the scenes. Remember, Mother Russia is watching you.

Warm Regards,  
Megan Conner  
Crisis Director

## **Russia in the Early 20th Century**

### **The Fall of the Monarch**

In the early 20th Century, the roots of the Industrial Revolution began to pose a threat to the rural, peasant-dependent landscape of the Russian Empire. On top of this, after the rule of Alexander III (who reigned in a highly conservative fashion and without engagement in foreign armed conflict), Nicholas II came to power as a less peaceable leader. His coronation stands out particularly as a foreshadowing of what was to come: during the commencement of post-coronation festivities, a frenzied stampede formed, which killed over a thousand individuals and became known as the Khodynka Tragedy. The following years of his rule were similarly riddled with violent events.

From 1903 to roughly 1906, a series of Anti-Jewish pogroms occurred throughout the empire and proved particularly severe in Odessa. It is believed that many of these acts of discriminatory violence were instigated by the Tsar's secret police. In 1905, the trend continued with the bloody suppression of the 1905 Revolution. The attempted revolt came as a result of a conglomeration of issues. Following the emancipation of the serfs under Alexander II in 1861, the newly freed peasant class began to desire higher wages and a wider range of land rights. In tandem, ethnic

minorities became restless over discriminatory policies that barred them from equal footing in regards to education, national service, and voting rights. The freshly formed industrial working class similarly erred grievances over poor working conditions and the brutal suppression of attempted labor unions. At the same time, a relaxation of disciplined and regulated university curriculum allowed for the development of radical ideology within the educated classes. All these factors, combined with the international setting of the period, provided a strong foundational push for revolution.

Though the Jewish pogroms provided a scapegoat mechanism to redirect many of these frustrations, ultimately the 1905 Revolution erupted with military mutinies, worker strikes, and general unrest amongst citizens. In the face of these forces, Tsar Nicholas II agreed to establish an elected parliamentary body called the Duma and lay the framework for basic civil liberties with his October Manifesto. The Duma was designed to act as a check on the monarch's power. Thus, before any law held legal bearing, it first had to pass in the Duma. At first, the foundation set out by the manifesto delivered promising results. By 1906, a true constitution was written for the evolving Russia, and thoughts of a constitutional monarchy

looked promising. Yet, these developments turned out to be fleeting. Soon, the government began to resume its original autocratic style, and voices of revolutionary opposition were silenced militarily, through executions or similarly bloody measures.

During these years of internal conflict, a number of political parties gained traction. The Constitutional Democrats, or The Party of People's Freedom, was composed primarily of intellectuals and professionals who wished for a smooth transition into a constitutional monarchy, where ethnic minorities could experience the standard range of citizen rights and privileges. The Octobrists functioned under a similar aim. Parties such as the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries, in contrast, began adopting more leftist ideologies, which derived in part from a fusion of Marxist and other socialist teachings. Yet, despite the shifting and conflicting interests of many of the parties that surfaced in this period, there was an underlying drive for change in the fundamental framework of the Russian government.

The advent of the first world war was monumental in pushing these feelings of social unrest and political revolt to the point of success. As Russia experienced setback after setback during the war, the economy weakened, casualties mounted, and citizens

grew angrier still. Finally, Tsar Nicholas stepped down from his throne on the 15th of March, 1917. He originally abdicated in favor of his son, Alexei, but soon retracted this statement and announced that his brother, The Grand Duke Michael, would go on to fill his role as monarch. This came in light of numerous suggestions from medical experts that claimed Alexei, given his ongoing health concerns, would be incapable of surviving (let alone leading the nation) if Tsar Nicholas and Tsarina Alexandra were sent into exile. However, in a surprising turn of events, Grand Duke Michael declined the title. Under the poor conditions of the empire, he will not accept his right to rule until the Constituent Assembly holds a vote on whether to transition into a republic or uphold the monarchy.

Consequently, the United Kingdom officially offered the Romanovs asylum, but not without reservation. For some time, the royal family remained at the Winter Palace under the orders of the Provisional Government. However, the Bolsheviks, who were part of the Social Democrat Party, continued to steadily gain power. The Russian government deteriorated in legitimacy as riots, inflation, supply shortages, and mutineering proliferated. In the midst of the Great War's turmoil, international attention turned towards the



fate of Russia and the monumental role their future played in the fate of Europe. Though Nicholas's stint at the front from 1915-1916 was originally an attempt to garner power and focus to the efforts of war, it appeared that internal unrest, not external invasion, would mark the end of the Russian Empire.

### **The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party**

The members of the Social Democratic Labour Party convened together primarily in their opposition to revolutionary populism, *narodnichestvo*, and in accordance to the teachings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marx and Engels used a materialist conception of history as a lense through which they critiqued the socioeconomic development of capitalism that, in their view, led to much of the class struggle of their stime. While there are many intricacies and tangencies within the theories they laid forth, an overlying theme of their work conjectured that the capitalist system allowed for the production surplus and private property of a market minority (the bourgeoisie), which caused a rift with the proletariat masses who mechanized and created the production due to the unjust distribution of market benefits to all those involved in the production processes. Though the vast and enveloping Russian

homeland was rooted in agrarian tradition, those that followed the Marxist teachings in Russia hoped to rise up in revolution through the heart of the industrial ruling class. Yet, they did not seek to use simple economic mean to do so. They instead banded together as a vanguard of the proletariat. With the intent to educate their workers, they vowed to insert themselves into the mainstream political sphere by building their knowledge based on the social and economic sciences of their time. To overcome the tyranny of the bourgeoisie, they desired to first elevate themselves to the intellectual level of the bourgeois, and reclaim socialist theory for the working class. In doing so, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party joined together with the League of the Emancipation of the Working Class, the General Jewish Labour Bund, and others under a centralized aim of instituting social democracy in a weakened Russia.

The party's origins derived in part from the efforts of the Emancipation of Labour group, which made tremendous strides in first translating the writings of Marx and then propagating the translated knowledge through their publishing efforts. The Social Democratic Labour Party made it part of their mission to leverage the power of education, by means of pamphlets and other written resources, to spread word of

their revolution. Of the many pamphlets that circulated at the time, Lenin's *What is to Be Done?* and Trotsky's *Our Political Tasks* proved foundational in proliferating the political theories they devised and advocated. Through writings like these, they sought to use fast circulating forms of written word as their collective organizer. To overcome the grasp of the propertied class, the party educated in their strain, structuring a framework of political thought that attempted to understand all of society. Their strategy came under the assumption that becoming Marxist was not a spontaneous process, but rather a gradual one. Marxism was not born, it was learned.

### **World War I and Thoughts of a Proletariat Revolution**

The intricate web of international relations in the early 20th century, most notably the Triple Entente and Slavic Orthodox ties with Serbia, pushed Russia to enter the World War I. Unfortunately, it entered the war ill-prepared, and this would ultimately be the Russian monarchy's most fatal flaw. In December 1914, their army pulled together approximately six and a half million men, yet they only had approximately four and a half million rifles in their supply. Thus, troops of inadequately armed and poorly trained soldiers marched forth from Russia with little chance of of

skilled success on the Eastern front. To make matters worse, since the Crimean War the country had operated under a statute of compulsory conscription of all males over the age of 20. This conscription process meant that many men entered the armed forces with little motivation to fight outside of their lawful obligation. Given the fundamental absence of adequate armory, weapons, and training, such men became little more than human shields in the battlefield, which undoubtedly sparked unrest among citizens. In comparison to Germany, Russia lacked in railroad tracks for the speedy delivery of equipment and personnel. They also needed to travel a much longer distance to reach the front than their German counterparts. They lacked significant markets in heavy industry, as well as a clear path through ports and other transportation avenues to receive much needed supplies from their allied nations. The failure of the Russian government to properly transition into a wartime economy took its toll. Just under twenty-five days after declaring war, Russia suffered a brutal defeat by German troops at the Battle of Tannenberg. In the year 1915, Russia saw two million casualties alone and lost key territories in Kurland, Lithuania, and Belorussia. Conscription riots made headlines in countless cities. Agricultural production waned and food shortages

proliferated. Pillages swept across the country and at first targeted those of German descent but soon began to turn their wrath towards the government. The Duma held an emergency session, the Minister of War was replaced, and the Special Defense Council formed, but still Russia's outlook seemed grim. The Tsar's decision to take the place of the commander-in-chief and handle the war strategy on the ground proved to merely weaken his legitimacy further. Russian citizens could now place the blame for military defeats square on the Tsar's shoulders, and his absence at home made him appear negligent in the face of key governance decisions. The Tsaress Alexandra (who notably was of German origin, which did not help her in the slightest), meanwhile, tried to hold together the dynasty at home by relegating authority to her friend and faith healer, Grigori Rasputin. Without a truly legitimate central figure of authority, the monarchy was debilitated. Mutineers spread, strikes grew stronger, and many citizens were at the cusp of rebellion.

At this time, Vladimir Lenin resided in Switzerland in exile. As he witnessed the war unfold, he wrote a book, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and spread his sentiment that Europe should take this opportunity to turn an imperialist

war into a civil one. To say the least, Lenin felt appalled that German Social-Democrats chose to support the war effort. In 1907, at the Second International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, the Socialist International came together to establish that war was the fundamental product of competitive incentivization between capitalist nations involved in the global market. They thus passed a resolution on militarism, which stated that the socialist working class would do everything in their power to prevent outbreaks of war, and in the event of an inevitable war would hasten its end with the goal of breaking down the capitalistic classes. In light of this, Lenin felt that with the onset of the Great War, many of his former International Socialist allies had forgotten the importance of the resolution set forth in Stuttgart. He thus distributed propaganda pamphlets alongside Gregory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, with the aim of rallying allied troops to disobey their commanders and join a socialist revolution.

### **The February and October Revolutions**

March 1917. The Russian people, sustaining great casualties in the Great War, have shown the full extent of their discontent. On March 8th, thousands of women took to the streets in celebration of International Women's Day. However, these congregations soon turned into mass

demonstrations and riots as an infuriated populace blaming their commander-in-chief Tsar Nicholas II for food shortages, a dire economy, and for the horrors Russia had been sustaining from total war. Nicholas tried to disperse the crowds with violence, telling the army to shoot at street protesters. However, many disenchanted troops, unwilling to kill Russian civilians, instead mutinied. These troops began to hunt down police officers. With so many troops behind them, the protesters burned down government buildings, seized the arsenal, and released prisoners into the city. The Tsar, realizing there was little hope of establishing order, abdicated.

After the abdication, Russia had a dual government made up of a provisional government of former Duma members, and the socialist Petrograd Soviet (or workers' council) four days earlier. However, these two legislative authorities did not work well together, and instead undermined each other.

The February Revolution prompted Lenin to return to Russia from Switzerland, where he spent his exile. While back, he quickly attempted to gain influence. He did this first by challenging the provisional government. In his April Theses he criticized the government and Russia's involvement in the Great War. Further, he tried to garner power within the Bolshevik party.

The aforementioned structure was ineffective in practice, and so between July 16–July 20, huge crowds gathered in the streets of Petrograd, denouncing the Provisional Government. As a major source of anti-Government propaganda, the Bolsheviks were immediately the object of suspicion by the government. As such, the Provisional Government ordered the arrests of all Bolsheviks leaders. Lenin was forced to flee Russia yet again, and this time, he left for Finland.

On October 25, 1917 (Julian calendar, or November 7th in the Gregorian calendar). Armed Bolshevik forces overran Petrograd, ejecting the Provisional Government from power. With the help of armed workers (Soviets), pro-Bolshevik sailors and marines which had just arrived in Petrograd, and sympathetic troops, Bolshevik leaders Lenin, Trotsky, Dybenko were able to take control of vital government buildings. They captured the Winter Palace, the seat of the Provisional Government, the following day. The Diarchy was over, and the Bolsheviks de facto were the new leaders of the Russian Empire.

### **Workings of the Soviet Union**

#### **The Communist Party**

The Communist Party was born from the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Party in the wake of the

Romanov dynasty's fall. Like the name suggests, a main tenet of communism was to establish a society composed of communes, wherein the means of production were commonly owned by all. In theory, such a society would be classless and stateless, and every individual would obtain free access to the articles of consumption. This particular strain of communism adhered to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which advocated for a one-party state designed as a dictatorship of the proletariat that did not need the prerequisite of a worldwide socialist revolution to truly thrive. Furthermore, Marxism-Leninism championed universal social welfare as a means to raise labor productivity, scientific planning as a route to correct unbalanced free market flows, and inevitably the emancipation of workers from alienating work through an increased accessibility to material necessities. Given Marxism-Leninism was largely an ideology that developed in and through Russian history as Lenin shaped the foundations of Socialist rule within the country, the ideology can be seen as a collection of ideas that shifted and changed with time and practical application. It is not a singular set of rules, but rather an interpretation of Marxism that evolved as the Soviet Union cycled through trial and error.

### **The Politburo, the Central Committee, and other Bodies**

The Bolsheviks first established the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1912 under the guidance of Vladimir Lenin. During Lenin's reign, this was the sole governing party within Russia. It functioned upon the basis of democratic centralism, which stated that all political matters were to be freely argued and conversed amongst the party's personnel, but once a decision was reached in regards to an issue, a unanimous support of the decided action was mandatory. According to this doctrine, no objections to an initiative could be made within the party once the resolution to an issue was decided. Lenin modeled his system off of the workings of the German Social Democratic Party in this way. The governing bodies within the party were democratically elected, and a strict amount of party discipline kept the functioning of this system under steady hands. Lower bodies within the system were subject to the rulings of higher bodies without room for objection. Minorities were expected to be compliant with the majority.

The supreme governing body within this hierarchy was the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which convened every five years to bring together delegates of the party and its predecessors. In the interim, the Central Committee ruled

de jure supreme. The Central Committee met biannually, and all decisions were finalized through majority votes. The official role of the Central Committee was to manage all party and government activities between the annual Communist Party Congress gatherings, while the Politburo (which met on a more frequent basis) handled the day-to-day affairs presented to the party. The Central Committee established the Politburo during the Eighth Congress in March 1919 in order to address any pressing issues during periods where the Central Committee was out of session. However, due to its more intimate circle and active centralization, it soon came to rival the Central Committee in power as it developed into a hub for the political elite to garner momentum within the Party.

While the Congress, Central Committee, and Politburo aimed to draft political policies, the Secretariat and Orgburo dealt with the central administration of the Communist Party. The Secretariat members, like Politburo and Orgburo members, were elected by the Central Committee and served to sort out technical issues within the party's governance as well as see to the smooth coordination of day-to-day operations within the political system as a whole. They worked to handle mundane administrative tasks, standardization between regional party organizations, and

the like. The head of the Secretariat, known as the General Secretary, became an important position of influence on the eve of Lenin's illness. As for the Orgburo, it shared some organizational powers with the Politburo, but ultimately retained less power. This body developed the essential organizational workings within the Soviet Union, monitored party committee localities, and decided on certain specific functional positions for party members.

Among other significant positions within the Communist Party was the Premier, who acted as the head of government for the USSR. This position amalgamated in 1922, as a result of the Treaty of the Creation of the USSR, and Lenin briefly held the title before his untimely death. Additionally, the position of head of state was ideologically held by the entirety of the body composing the vanguard party. This reasoning was justified through the democratic electoral process as well as the framework of Party bodies that organized the governing system. However, in reality, much of the power within the government was held by the charismatic Lenin himself, who was regarded as the party leader and the icon of revolutionary ideals.

### **Factionalism, Power Balances, and Internal Conflict**

In critique of the party system established by Lenin, Leon Trotsky once remarked, "Lenin's methods lead to this: the party organization at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organization; and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the Central Committee." Indeed, while Lenin paved the way for a stable transition into a communist regime, he was able to do so in part because he centralized much of the power within the party. Though it claimed democratic foundations, and fair representation of the proletariat, ultimately the governing bodies established after the revolution placed a large sum of power square into Lenin's hands. His impeccable ability to negotiate with and persuade his opposition on nearly any issue made Lenin an ideal figure to navigate the foundations of his Communist Party and gain political leverage. It allowed him to be not only the face of the revolution, but the face of the newly constructed government as well.

However, like Trotsky, many other party members agreed that this sort of centralism within the party was detrimental to the ideology at its core. In 1919, the Democratic Centralists advocated for the decentralization of power within the party, as well as the reinstitution of local party initiatives and a more flexible control of

industry and administration. By 1920, the Workers' Opposition faction formed to support union workers who sought a greater voice in the directing industrial, economic decisions. Though factions were soon officially banned within the Communist Party during the 10th Party Congress, factionalism within the party nevertheless continued. In light of problems with the Lenin's New Economic Policy and the ill-fated attempts of party members to give criticism and other individuals to lead strikes, new oppositional groups formed. Accusations of factionalism became methods to oust politicians from their governmental positions, as was the case with the Workers' Truth and the Workers' Group, when dissenting views arose on key issues. In October 1923, as a response to these suppressions of free political speech within the party, the Declaration of 46 was written by a group of significant party members to the Politburo. At this time, Lenin's health commenced its rapid spiral downward. Trotsky took this opportunity in Lenin's weakness to establish the Leftist Opposition faction, as a culmination of his variant views from Lenin, most notably that of centralism. At the threshold of Lenin's demise, the Leftist Opposition proved to be a point of intricate friction within the ruling party elite, holding either the potential for a

successful power shift or the tragic political fall of Trotsky and his allies.

In the end, the complex framework of connections within the Central Committee of the Soviet Union allowed for a number of plausible power shifts on the eve of Lenin's death. These interpersonal ties were sometimes formed out of deep rooted friendships established in the years prior to the First World War. In other instances, these ties formed solely through aligning opinions on ideological implementation within the Communist state. In any case, the ability to skillfully debate, negotiate, and command were key in determining who rose in prestige within the party, and who lost their place within the evolving political system.

### **Lenin: the Figurehead of Revolution**

#### **Rise to Power**

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (known later as Vladimir Lenin) was born in 1870 in Simbirsk in the Russian Empire. Given that his father was an education official and his mother was a schoolteacher, Lenin's early life revolved around education. Lenin enjoyed a stable family life until his mid-teen years. When Lenin was sixteen, his father Ilya died of a brain hemorrhage. Early the next year, Lenin's older brother, influenced by left-wing anti-Monarchist ideologies, was

executed after attempting to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. These two events were pivotal in both Lenin's renunciation of Theism and his commitment to revolutionary left-wing ideology.

As an adolescent, Lenin showed intellectual promise, and accordingly he graduated with a gold medal from high school. After, Lenin enrolled in Kazan State University in 1887. A politically minded and active college student, Lenin joined demonstrations against the Tsarist government, which had just banned student societies. As a result he was expelled from university in his first year. However, Marx studied law on his own, and so, in 1890, became a lawyer after passing his exams with honors.

Lenin spent the years after his expulsion being involved in revolutionary and "radical" circles, and after reading *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx, Lenin decided to dedicate much of his time to the Marxist cause. In 1889, Lenin translated *The Communist Manifesto* into Russian.

In 1893, Lenin, now living in Petrograd, started gaining influence within revolutionary Communist circles in the city, such as the "Social-Democrats." In order to grow his influence abroad, Lenin traveled to Switzerland to visit Russian members of the Emancipation of Labour, a Marxist group.



After stopping by Paris to meet with Marxist thinkers, Lenin returned to Russia with Communist publications. However, Marxist thought was a crime. Lenin was arrested for sedition and sent to Siberia for his imprisonment, where he stayed until 1900.

In July 1898, when he was still in Siberia, Lenin married Nadezhda Krupskaya. He then traveled around Europe. His influence grew in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, and as such, people began to cling to his ideals for revolution; namely that socialism was the preferable next step in the evolution of the Russian economy, as opposed to the traditional Marxist view that market capitalism needed to be established and then overthrown in the long-run move towards socialism. The supporters of Lenin's contention called themselves the Bolsheviks ("the majority"). Afraid of being charged again with sedition by the Tsarist government as his profile grew, Lenin spent World War I in Europe rather than Russia. As the war began, Lenin initially left Russia in order to represent the Bolshevik movement as their leader at the Second Communist International, however the Bolshevik's opposition to the war did not sit well with other revolutionary groups, and so the conference was adjourned prematurely.

After the February Revolution, after which Tsar Nicholas II abdicated, Lenin returned to Russia where Bolshevik thought was now accepted. However, Lenin was not pleased with the Diarchical government which replaced the Tsar, and as such he began to advocate for a popular proletariat uprising which would overthrow the Provisional Government.

After the July Days, a futile popular uprising in Petrograd (largely organized by the Bolsheviks), Bolsheviks again became a target. Lenin escaped Russia for Finland. Later in 1917, sensing a weakness in the government's authority and an unrest in the urban proletariat, Lenin returned to Russia and committed to revolution. In November 1917 (October 1917 in the Julian calendar), Lenin, accompanied by Trotsky, led a successful Soviet Revolution against the Kerensky Provisional government, called the October Revolution, which established a new form of government, and, later that month, Lenin assumed the role of Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian SFSR.

### **Policy Transitions and Political Challenges**

#### **Bolshevik Initial Decrees**

Immediately after their successful uprising, the Bolsheviks declared their first

decrees, directing policy in a new direction. In the Decree on Land, the Bolshevik's decreed that farmland was to be taken from the wealthy and the nobility and given to peasants, by force if necessary. The Decree on Peace announced Russia's intention to withdraw from the Great War. The Workers' Decrees outlined improvements for workers. Through these and many other decrees issued in the coming weeks, the Bolsheviks outlined a Bolshevik government and the policies that Russia would pursue. The Decrees helped to cement the popularity and authority of the Bolsheviks, as well as actionably outlining their official policy.

### **Civil War**

Despite the Bolsheviks' pivotal role in the October revolution, they were left facing many competing interests afterwards. With the disbanding of the Russian Imperial Army, War Commissar Leon Trotsky had the responsibility of creating a professional "Red" army out of the Red Guard. Among the opposers of the Bolshevik ideology were individuals favoring competing versions of communism, capitalists, monarchists. To counter the Red Army, the opposition assembled a White Army.

The international community was wary of Bolshevik ideology and its spread. There was a great deal of international opposition to the Red Army, and fully eight

nations provided military support against them.

### **The Polish-Soviet War**

After the reestablishment of Poland as the Second Polish Republic in 1918, the nation tried to take advantage of the raging Russian Civil War. Poland wished to expand its borders eastward into Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, they began a successful military offensive which sparked the Polish-Ukrainian war, in which the Poles captured the Ukrainian capital, Lviv, in late 1918. After 16 months, sensing Soviet weakness, the Polish launched the Kiev Offensive against the Ukrainian SSR armies in order to "liberate" Ukraine from Soviet control. Initially, this was quite successful, and Polish forces took Kiev in less than a month. The Red Army found it necessary to launch a counter effort to take Polish land. Bolstered by military successes in Russian Civil War, the Red Army's forces were unstoppable, pushing back Polish forces almost to Warsaw, before a Polish counter offensive left the Soviets asking for a ceasefire in October 1920. This ceasefire preceded the Peace of Riga on 18 March 1921 which created the formal borders between Poland and Russia which lasted until World War II.

### **The Communist International**

In early March 1919, as the Red Army fought in the brutal Russian Civil War, Lenin was trying to increase the support of Communist movements worldwide. He organized and founded the Communist International, an international coming together of groups which were prepared to use violence to overthrow Bourgeois capitalism and achieve communist goals. Lenin used this as a body by which to increase his profile, support, and popularity worldwide.

### **The Famine of 1921 (Povolzhye famine)**

Six and a half years of war left Russia reeling in 1921. As large military factions moved throughout the countryside in the previous years, they had forcibly taken grain from peasants, leading peasants to cut production. In retaliation for what he saw as a sabotage of the Bolshevik forces, Lenin doubled down on the peasantry, and decreed that all food, grain, or seeds grown by peasants could be seized by the state, practice called *prodrazvyorstka*. The peasant class rioted in response. Combined with an inefficient Communist command economy, and an inadequate rail food distribution system which had been further damaged in war, and drought in 1921, famine struck Russia hard, leading to more than 5 million deaths

mostly in the Ural River and Volga regions of Russia.

Lenin, wary of allowing foreign intervention in Russia, at first declined aid from the international community. However as the situation, and the subsequent rebellions and revolts, got increasingly serious, he allowed foreign aid. Further, this cooperation with the international community was the prelude to the New Economic Policy which he announced in March 1921.

### **New Economic Policy**

After the near collapse of the Soviet economy, famine, and widespread peasant discontent, Lenin found that it was necessary to steer the economy towards state capitalism. To this end, Lenin revoked the practice of *prodrazvyorstka*, allowed for the establishment and ownership of small business, the investment in Russian assets by foreign actors, established a small grain tax on peasants (*prodnalog*), allowed for landowning by private entities, amongst other things in what he called the New Economic policy. He outlined this plan in March 1921.

### **Character List**

Andrey Andreyev currently sits as chairman of the Central Committee of the Union of Railway Workers. Additionally, he is a Secretariat and Orgburo member within the Communist Party. He comes from a Russian peasant family, and in his early adulthood he sought a career as an industrial worker, eventually climbing the social ranks and achieving political respect in industrial management. His association with the Union of Railway Workers, the most radical union at the emergence of the Soviet Union, serves as the crux of his power. During the tide of revolution, the railway union rebelled independently of yet simultaneously with the Bolsheviks. Under Soviet rule, the government managed to gain support within the union, but tension with the ruling party currently remains a point of concern. Due to his background, Andreyev aims to tie together the views of governing elite with the realities of everyday working men. Additionally, Andreyev holds an unwavering admiration for Tchaikovsky's tunes, as well as a soft spot for nature photography. If not for his ideological obligation to his beloved country, he would have left the political field and retreated to live in the heights of the Altai mountains long ago.

Nikolai Bukharin is the editor-in-chief of Pravda, the official newspaper of the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He is also a candidate member of the Orgburo. His devotion to revolution took shape during his years at the Moscow University, where he participated in student politics that earned him connections to the blooming Bolshevik movement. He has close relations with both Lenin and Trotsky, who served as his companions during his political exile prior to the October Revolution. However, recent stances on party politics, namely his devotion to the New Economic Policy, presently strengthen his newfound relations with Stalin. Bukharin stands at the crossroads of party relations. His editorial leadership provides him with extensive power over news coverage and censorship, though his power over what is said and left unsaid places him dangerously delicate position.

Felix Dzerzhinsky is chairman of the State Political Directorate of the Russian SFSR, as well as the People's Commissar for the Railways of the Russian SFSR. He is a member of the Orgburo. Born and raised in Poland, Dzerzhinsky came from an aristocratic family and in youth had aspirations to become a Jesuit Priest. However, late adolescence proved troublesome for Dzerzhinsky, so despite his noble lineage, he began to build connections with the Union of Workers, eventually culminating in allegiance to

Marxist ideological teachings. He became well acquainted with the logistics of protest and served an extensive amount of time in tsarist prisons prior to the revolution. After the revolution, he dedicated his time to gaining prominence within the central political realm of the Soviet Union in Russia, with the hopes of extending the strength of Marxism to all the soviets, most importantly his beloved Poland. Under Lenin's command, Dzerzhinsky established the Cheka with the aims to combat internal party threats. His power over the Cheka undoubtedly solidified his power within Party politics and made him a sought after ally in light of Lenin's death.

Mikhail Frunze is the commander of the Ukrainian Military District. During the revolution, he was a prominent leader of the Bolsheviks, and went on to serve as a commander of the Red Army during the resulting civil war. He is a Moldovan by birth, but spent his formative years in urban Russia. His military success makes him a valuable asset when devising political strategies for quelling unrest within the satellite regions. Frunze currently works to strengthen Turkish-Soviet relations. He has a thick skin and an authoritarian presence. Many criticize him for harsh, even unorthodox, tactics when it comes to policy implementation.

Mikhail Kalinin is Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. He also is a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets. He came from a peasant family, and as a young man ventured into St. Petersburg to work a number of odd jobs. Kalinin started his political career as a formative member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and with time became a close companion, both professionally and personally, to Stalin. Kalinin continues to be one of Stalin's most trusted associates and the only individual among Stalin's closest companions that came from peasant origins.

Lev Kamenev is Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian SFSR, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense of the Russian SFSR, and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Regional Soviet. He is also a member of the Politburo and thus holds a tremendous amount of political strength. He is a Moscow born Jew, whose father gained wealth through the construction of the Baku-Batumi railway. Trotsky is legally his brother in law, though recently their relationship had struggled significantly over the past year due to widening differences in political opinions and Kamenev's newfound closeness with comrade Zinoviev. He also

retains a tight alliance with Stalin. Ever since Lenin first fell ill, Kamenev has taken the temporary role of Politburo chairman and Council of People's Commissars chairman. He currently fills Lenin's roles for all procedural matters.

Vyacheslav Molotov is a prominent Russian politician and diplomat. Additionally, he is a Secretariat and Orgburo member within the Communist Party. Prior to the revolution, he worked extensively in the underground movement for revolution by serving as an editorial staffer for the then dissident Pravda newspaper as well as a campaign writer for various revolutionary efforts. After the revolution, his work centered on Ukraine and its opposition to Communist rule. He currently serves as the secretary of the Ukrainian Bolshevik party. One of the younger politicians on the council, other members often underestimate his potential. Molotov fosters a fond admiration of Stalin and sees an alliance with Stalin as an opportunity to propel his own political influence within the council.

Karl Radek is the Secretary of the executive Committee of the Communist International. He is a Lithuanian Jew who was born in Austria-Hungary. As a young man, he became involved with the social democratic party movement in both Germany and Poland. He was a key figure during the negotiations that resulted in the Treaty of

Brest-Litovsk, which ended Russian involvement in WWI. He dreams of spreading the grasp of communism into the heart of Germany, and his involvement with the Soviet Union strives to make that dream a reality. In light of Lenin's decline in health, Radek solidified his commitment to Trotsky and openly advocates for his rise to power.

Christian Rakovsky is the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR. he also has experience as a diplomat, journalist, and physician. He is Bulgarian by birth and temporarily held Romanian citizenship as a young man, consequently lending him as a major proponent of the International. His simultaneous political influences in Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia make him a large asset in uniting the outlying regions central communist efforts in Russia. As a supporter of the Left Opposition, Rakovsky is not fond of Stalin and holds strong bonds to Trotsky.

Jānis Rudzutaks serves as chairman of the Central Asian Bureau, as well as a member of the Secretariat and the Orgburo. Born in Latvia under a farm working family, Rudzutaks first became involved with the Latvian Social Democratic Labor Party and later worked his way into higher positions of revolutionary power by obtaining key positions in labor unions and eventually the All-Russian Communist Party. He regards

Lenin as both a dear friend and associate. Recently, controversial talk has circulated over Rudzutaks, as one of Lenin's final political discussions proposed that Rudzutaks should replace Stalin as Secretary General of the Communist Party. Alexei Rykov serves as the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian SFSR And the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense of the Russian SFSR. He is a member of the Politburo and the Orgburo. He began his political career as a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, and later identified with the Bolshevik Revolutionaries. Rykov proved to be a powerful force in the 1905 Revolution as well as the 1917 Revolution, although at times he was and continues to be criticized by his comrades for maintaining overly moderate political views. During the Russian Civil War, Rykov gained extensive knowledge into food distribution systems through his management of Army and Navy sustenance programs. Additionally, Rykov acted as the key implementer of the economic policy of War Communism in this period. Currently, Rykov serves as Deputy Chairman alongside Kamenev, but Kamenev undoubtedly holds a stronger grip upon the position, as he is regarded as the acting Premier.

Grigori Sokolnikov serves as the People's Commissar for Finance of the Russian SFSR. He was the son of a Jewish, Ukrainian railway doctor, but separated himself from the path of his father after moving to Moscow in his adolescence, where he first became involved with the Bolsheviks. Sokolnikov was a member of the first ever Politburo, but presently no longer holds a spot within this key organ. He worked extensively on peace negotiations with Germany following the Russian exit from WWI. He also worked a commissar in the Red Army, where he earned himself a reputation of brutality after handing out orders for mass shootings. Despite this, Sokolnikov's peers consider him an extremely level-headed and superb political administrator, which he continues to prove in his current position as Commissar for Finance.

Joseph Stalin serves as General Secretary of the Central Committee, and sits as a member of the Orgburo, Secretariat, and Politburo. Born to a Georgian cobbler and a housemaid, Stalin originally set out to become a Priest, but lost his religious inclinations in seminary school and turned to the world of poetry, cultural literature, and politics instead. Eventually, he found himself drawn to the writings of Lenin. He aligned himself with the revolutionary cause and began to see success during the Russian

Civil war, where his controversial tactics to drive civilians into submission of the Red Army challenged Trotsky's authority in the matter. Given Lenin's untimely demise, Stalin now works to situate himself to challenge Trotsky, and all his fellow congress members, once more at gaining reigns of the USSR.

Mikhail Tomskey is the Chairman of Council of Trade Unions of the Russian SFSR and a Member of Presidium of the Council of Trade Unions. He also sits on the Politburo and the Orgburo. He began his political pursuits as a factory worker, who, unsatisfied with working conditions, formed a trade union and eventually became affiliated with the Russian Social Democratic Party. As a moderate, Tomskey has close connections to Rykov and Bukharin.

Leon Trotsky serves as the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs of the Russian SFSR and Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Russian SFSR. He sits on the Politburo and the Orgburo. Although he originally supported the Mensheviks after the split of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, he joined the Bolsheviks briefly before the October Revolution and went on to establish the Red Army in the consequent Russian Civil War. Thus, Trotsky has ample connections and control

of the Soviet armed forces. He is a close associate to Lenin and a favorable candidate to fill the vacancy that Lenin leaves in death.

Alexander Tsiurupa is Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian SFSR, Chairman of Gosplan of the USSR, and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense of the Russian SFSR. He is Ukrainian by birth and gained a prominent position with the Party through his work on food supply challenges. Tsiurupa developed and saw the implementation of a food ration dictatorship in the first years following the revolution. However, with the creation of the New Economic Policy, Tsiurupa's rationing tactics were abandoned in 1921, and Tsiurupa now searches for a fresh economic avenue for his political ideas.

Isaak Zelensky is the First Secretary of the Moscow Regional Committee. He also sits on the Orgburo and is a Candidate Member of the Secretariat. A Jewish Russian of humble origins, Zelensky joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in adolescence. Over time, he became the lead coordinator in propaganda campaigns in many of Russia's most prominent cities. He presently is the first Secretary of the Moscow City Committee, and as such has the task of arranging for Lenin's looming burial.



Grigory Zinoviev is of Jewish Russian descent. He acts as the Chairman of both the Executive Committee of the Communist International and Executive Committee of the Leningrad Regional Soviet. He also is one of the original members of the first Politburo and still sits there today. Although Zinoviev was once close with Lenin, a disagreement during the October Revolution about the handling of Railroad Unions brought a sharp divide between the two figures that persists to this day. Yet, while not favored by Lenin, Zinoviev is believed to have the political positioning to be a potential replacement upon Lenin's death. Additionally, he holds a lifelong dream of transforming Germany into a communist nation.