



THE TRUE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

Yuri POLYAKOV

The Civil War in Russia

Its causes
and significance





THE TRUE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

The attempt to destroy the workers' and peasants' state and the gains of the October Revolution by military force ended in complete failure. The victory in the Civil War made millions of people aware of their strength and of the righteousness of their cause, the cause which they had fought for and had secured by their struggle.



Yuri POLYAKOV

The Civil War in Russia

**Its causes
and significance**

General Editor: I. Mints

**Novosti Press Agency Publishing House
Progress Publishers**

Moscow, 1981

10604 © Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1981
0505030102 © Progress Publishers, 1981

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
WHY THE CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT IN RUSSIA	8
WHAT WAS THE FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION?	21
COUNTER-REVOLUTION'S POLITICAL FORCES	43
THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES	54
BUILDING UP THE ARMED FORCES	69
ESTABLISHING A WAR ECONOMY	91
ON AND BEHIND THE WAR FRONTS	97
IN CONCLUSION	113

FOREWORD

The Civil War in Russia lasted for three grim years (1918-1920), in some areas even longer, causing devastation and bloodshed. For three years the front lines moved backwards and forwards over the country's vast territory—from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, from the White Sea to the Black Sea and from the Arctic tundra and Siberian taiga forests to the mountain countries and desert lands of Central Asia.

The war left the country in ruins, destroyed its productive forces and brought immeasurable human losses.

Many years have since passed but interest in these dramatic events is as great as ever. People want to know how and why the war broke out, who was responsible for its outbreak and its brutal prolonged character.

For sixty years writers, historians and journalists in many countries have returned to this topic. A vast amount of books, pamphlets and articles have been written on the subject, and the most diverse and even antipodal viewpoints have been expressed. Unfortunately one-sided, biased views prevail in Europe and the USA on the causes and character of the Civil War in Russia. The accumulation of historical data, however, has made it possible to give a precise and substantiated account of those events.

1. WHY THE CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT IN RUSSIA

The October Revolution

In the autumn of 1917 a socialist revolution took place in Russia.

In the twenties, thirties and forties much was written in the West to represent the October Revolution as a chance phenomenon, the result of a fateful concurrence of circumstances. The revolution was ascribed to the mistakes of individuals and to the actions of a small group of Bolshevik organizations headed by Lenin. One still comes across interpretations of this kind in many school textbooks and popular editions. However the more serious-minded historians and publicists no longer treat the subject from this point of view. It is virtually no longer possible to deny the fact that the October Revolution was historically inevitable, and that it had mobilized the effort of millions of people.

Over a period of twelve years three popular revolutions took place in Russia: the revolution of 1905-1907, the February-March revolution of 1917 and the October Revolution of 1917—ample evidence that the revolutionary changes in Russia were historically conditioned.

In pre-revolutionary Russia deep-seated contradictions typical of the monopoly stage of capitalism, into which the country had entered, were closely linked with contradictions that already existed from

the feudal stage of development and its system of serfdom. By 1917 Russia had reached a medium level of capitalist development, but its numerous medieval remnants were a drag on the lives of the people.

This is why the majority of the country's population pressed for a revolutionary re-making of society.

The working class, which accounted for nearly 15 per cent of Russia's population, was brutally exploited and lacked political rights. That the working class resolved to wage a revolutionary struggle was testified by numerous massive upheavals which increased with every year.

The toiling peasantry, which together with craftsmen and artisans accounted for almost 70 per cent of the population, suffered from a shortage of land: 10.5 million peasant families had as much land as 30,000 landowners. Their struggle for land virtually never ceased and often expressed itself in massive action against the landowners and the government. At the same time capitalist relations were making headway in the twentieth-century Russian village where the rural bourgeoisie (kulaks), the exploiter of the poor peasants, was gaining strength.

Russia was a multinational state where nearly half the population was made up of non-Russian nationalities and national groups. In this case social inequality was intensified by national inequality; economic oppression by moral oppression. The peoples' struggle for national equality and national dignity merged with the fight for social emancipation. For this reason all the people of Russia gave their active support to the Russian proletariat, whose aims were akin to theirs.

The First World War, which broke out in 1914, was an aggressive imperialist war—on the part of Britain, France, Russia and the USA as well as on the part of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey; its aims were alien to the people. The war brought out all the contradictions of the old system and was highly resented by the vast majority of the people, giving rise to a massive endeavour for peace, especially among the soldiers.

The overthrow of the monarchy by the February-March revolution of 1917, the abdication of Nicholas II, the last Russian tsar, and the installation of the bourgeois Provisional Government did not solve the country's urgent problems.

The war raged on and its burden on the people grew still heavier. The Provisional Government refused to turn over to the peasants land which belonged to the landowners. While nothing was done to alleviate the workers' conditions, the bourgeoisie received new rights and benefits. The national question hung in mid air, and millions non-Russian working people were deprived of basic rights. In 1917 popular discontent gathered momentum. All its various currents—the mass resentment of war, the struggle for democratic rights and freedoms, the peasants' fight for land, the struggle of oppressed nationalities for equal rights and the struggle of the working class against the capitalist system—all these merged into a single force under the banner of the socialist revolution, which offered the only solution to the contradictions that had come to a head.

In 1917 Lenin and the Bolsheviks stood for peaceful development of the revolution. They proposed progressive reforms and transfer of power to the people. This was to be achieved through a system of Soviets which expressed the people's interests.

However the bourgeoisie and the landowners who supported the tsar rejected this proposal and frustrated all initiatives to meet the interests of the people. They refused to hand power over to the Soviets, although the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" received universal support. They refused to hand land over to the peasants and dispatched punitive detachments to the villages. They refused to satisfy the workers' demand for workers' control over production and suppressed strikes, organizing lock-outs and disorganizing production. They refused to recognize the equality of non-Russian people and preserved the former colonialist apparatus in the provinces, just as it had been under the tsars.

The Russian nobility and the Russian bourgeoisie were unrealistic and inflexible. Their political leaders as well as the leaders of petty-bourgeois parties showed a total lack of understanding of the balance of class forces, manifesting a blind devotion to the old ways and an obstinate belief in the perpetual character of the bourgeois order. It was therefore no accident that the anti-popular regime in Russia was overthrown by an armed uprising.

On October 25 (November 7), 1917 the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, expressing the will of the overwhelming majority of the working people of Russia, consolidated the victory of the revolution by proclaiming the establishment of Soviet power. The people who had accomplished the revolution now turned with enthusiasm to build a new life.

For centuries the exploiting class had reinforced the state machine to keep the toilers under its sway. The army, police, the courts and government bodies had served the nobility and the bourgeoisie, the ruling classes of pre-revolutionary Russia.

In no time at all the old state machine was demolished and in its place popular democratic governing bodies—the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies—emerged in the centre and in the provinces.

In rural areas the toiling peasants elected village Soviets. Workers, government employees and Red Army men from industrial enterprises, government establishments and military units sent their deputies to the city Soviets. Congresses of Soviets, including All-Russia Congresses, were convened regularly. The entire working population went to the polls to elect local and central government bodies.

In November 1917 a decree issued by the Soviet government (Council of People's Commissars) introduced workers' control at all plants and factories. The Soviet state began to nationalize separate enterprises and by June 1, 1918, had expropriated from the capitalists over 500 big plants and factories. On June 28, 1918, Lenin signed the decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the universal nationalization of large-scale industry, banks and transport.

Management bodies made up of workers, trade union representatives and specialists were set up at the nationalized enterprises.

With a single blow the October Revolution solved the question of land, taking it away from the landowners and handing it over to poor and middle peasants. The Decree on Land provided the peasants with over 150 million *dessiatinas* (1 *dessiatina*=2.7 acres) of land that had formerly belonged to the landowners, the tsar's family and the monasteries. The land was granted to the peasants free of charge.

Old Russia, which had rightly been called the "peoples' prison", collapsed. In its Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia the Soviet gov-

ernment proclaimed full equality for all people. Workers and peasants of large and small nationalities were ensured equal rights through the formation of Soviet socialist republics.

In the cities workers were moved from attics, cellars and slums to well-appointed flats which had belonged to the bourgeoisie, prominent functionaries and non-toiling elements. Medical services to working people were made free of charge. The Soviet government implemented labour legislation, which guaranteed an 8-hour working day and social insurance.

Huge cultural changes were taking place. The great achievements of science, technology, art, music and literature gradually became accessible to the people. Free education was introduced in native languages. A campaign was launched to do away with illiteracy among the adult population.

The gains of the revolution were consolidated in the first Soviet Constitution that was adopted on July 10, 1918, by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

But the peaceful life of the young Soviet Republic was cut short from the start. The social and political strata of society that had enjoyed power, wealth and countless privileges, unleashed a crusade against the victorious revolution. These forces shall be considered in greater detail later. What must be noted is that even after the revolution had scored victory Soviet power had no intention of destroying at a single blow all that pertained to the old way of life.

This does not mean that it intended to give up the programmatic goals of the Communist Party or compromise with the landowners regarding the land. Society was of course being reorganized along socialist lines and the old state apparatus of violence

and oppression had to go. The new state apparatus, based in the Soviets, defended the interests not of the exploiters but of the working people.

Yet for all this the new state contemplated a gradual restructuring of society along socialist lines. It did not step up the nationalization of industrial enterprises; large-scale nationalization began only in the summer of 1918. It intended, in particular, to make wide use of state capitalism: the founding of Soviet joint-stock companies with the participation of private capital, the development of concessions and the leasing out of separate state factories and plants to private proprietors. Lenin noted that there would be a gradual transition to new social and economic relations, breaking up as little of the old as possible, while adapting as much as possible to the existing social relations.

However the Russian bourgeoisie turned down these proposals, flatly rejecting every single initiative of the Soviet government. It immediately declared war on the Soviet Republic which was consequently forced to step up socialist reorganization and implement a quicker and more radical break with the old.

This does not mean that it would have been possible to carry out the revolution along peaceful lines. Revolutionary changes could not have been introduced without encroaching upon the interests of the former ruling classes, and those classes would have naturally taken up arms in defence of their property down to the very last private bank.

There is hardly a revolution where the deposed class does not fight to stay in power. However the scope, character, length and extent of its resistance differ in different countries, and the development of this resistance into a civil war is far from inevitable.

In the case of Russia the exploiting classes fiercely resisted the victorious socialist revolution, and their resistance turned into a prolonged civil war.

The main reason for such resistance was that Russia was the world's *first* country where the working people had come to power. The counter-revolutionary forces knew from historical experience that all former attempts by the working class to seize power had failed and they therefore felt certain that this time too victory would be theirs.

Secondly, Soviet Russia was the world's *only* workers' and peasants' state. It did not receive support from any other state, whereas the counter-revolution was provided with huge all-round aid from the biggest capitalist countries, aid which turned into direct military intervention into Russia and which was responsible for the grim and protracted character of the Civil War.

Class Support of the Counter-Revolution

We shall now consider in closer detail the forces that came out against the victorious Russian revolution.

In the first ranks were the bourgeoisie, the landowners and the kulaks. In historical literature one often reads of the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie. In our opinion this thesis must be accepted with reservation. True, from the political viewpoint the Russian bourgeoisie did not have the experience of its counterparts in Britain, France, Germany or the USA. It lacked political unity and a clear programme of action and had failed to gain leadership over the petty-bourgeois masses. Acting in fits and starts, it showed that it knew little about political manoeuvring.

However, it would be wrong to underestimate from the general historical viewpoint the forces that opposed the revolution, and above all the strength of the bourgeoisie. In spite of its contradictions, it came out, in the final analysis, as an ally of the nobility, on the one hand, and the kulaks (rural bourgeoisie), on the other. And although the petty-bourgeois masses on the whole did not follow the bourgeoisie, their "upper crust", represented in conciliatory parties, provided support for the counter-revolution.

The counter-revolution had considerable economic resources at its disposal, as well as highly trained military personnel (the subject will be discussed in greater detail below).

In other words, the Russian counter-revolution had ample possibilities and reserves to resist the revolution with great ferocity, and it used these possibilities to the full.

In the course of the revolution and the Civil War the position of the former exploiting classes changed radically. The landowners were liquidated as a class (and this was done quickly and substantially), and so their economic resources could not be used during the war. This at once weakened the counter-revolution's economic positions.

The bourgeoisie was liquidated gradually but with an intensity that increased in the course of the war. When counter-revolutionary action began, it had considerable material resources to hand.

The most numerous contingent of the counter-revolutionary forces were the kulaks. But the blows they received in the course of the socialist revolution in the countryside in 1918 undermined their economic positions and the political influence they exerted on the middle peasants. They continued to lose ground during the Civil War, owing to the So-

viet government's support for the poor and middle peasants and the restrictions imposed on the wealthy peasants. By the end of the Civil War the proportion of kulak households in the total number of peasant farms dropped from 15 per cent (in pre-revolutionary Russia) to just over 3 per cent.

Thus firm action by the revolutionary government considerably narrowed the sphere of influence of the counter-revolutionary forces.

Many army officers, state employees and members of other sections of the intelligentsia opposed the revolution. Their family, ideological, and organizational links with the bourgeoisie and landowners automatically brought them to the counter-revolutionary forces.

But the Soviet government managed to divide these strata by its ideological and organizational influence and to win many of the officers, employees and intelligentsia over to its side.

The privileged class of exploiters in the national regions was also a force to be reckoned with, especially since in many parts of the country—Kazakhstan, Central Asia and the North Caucasus—the expropriation of tribal chiefs and feudal lords was carried out only after the Civil War.

In all the national regions the feudal-patriarchal chiefs and the national bourgeoisie opposed the socialist revolution and Soviet rule. The struggle against the national counter-revolutionary forces in these areas called for great efforts, especially in the Ukraine, the Caucasus and the Baltic regions, where they had a higher degree of political and military organization.

But the creation of a single front uniting Russian and local counter-revolutionary forces ran into several difficulties and contradictions. The striving of nationalist groups to win autonomy conflicted with



Petrograd, 1917-18. Armed detachments of workers who defended the Soviet government against the counter-revolutionary forces.



the imperial claims of the military commanders (Kolchak, Denikin) and other leaders of Russian counter-revolution, who had not the slightest intention of giving even a semblance of self-government to the non-Russian peoples. On the other hand, the whipping up of strong national feelings brought the nationalists themselves into conflict with each other. This often led to armed conflicts. In Transcaucasia, for instance, the nationalist parties (Georgian Mensheviks, Azerbaijani Musavatists and Armenian Dashnaks) who at one time achieved power, were at daggers drawn with each other and Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanians became involved in armed internecine fighting.

From the very outset of the October Revolution its enemies not only resorted to economic sabotage and political manoeuvres but unleashed an armed struggle in a bid to overthrow the Soviet government and restore the old order.

The jubilant cheers of delegates to the Second Congress of Soviets greeting the proclamation of Soviet rule had not subsided when an attack was launched against the revolutionary capital. Ex-Premier Kerensky, who had fled from Petrograd (Leningrad) raised a rebellion and knocking together a few military units set out with General Krasnov to suppress the victorious workers and peasants. The Kerensky-Krasnov forces were routed on the approaches to the capital by revolutionary workers, sailors and soldiers.

The Cossack chieftains, Dutov in the Southern Urals and Kaledin in the Don region, who launched an attack against the new rule, suffered the same fate. But the counter-revolutionary forces refused to lay down their arms. In the first half of 1918 the bourgeoisie set up numerous clandestine counter-revolutionary organizations which resorted to plots,

rebellions, acts of sabotage and terrorism and anti-Soviet propaganda. The counter-revolutionary forces were intensively building up their strength. They called themselves the "White Guard"—following an old tradition, white symbolized "legitimate" system as opposed to red of "seditious" revolutionaries. Hence the counter-revolutionary soldiers and officers became known as White Guards, or Whites.

The White Guards, however, could not hope for lasting success. The quick rout of the counter-revolutionaries' first attempts to unleash a civil war was convincing proof that the Soviet government, which enjoyed the support of the bulk of the population, was infinitely superior to the counter-revolutionary forces.

Nevertheless, the Civil War continued to rage, gaining momentum in scope and strength. This was because external forces came to the side of the recalcitrant counter-revolutionaries. The leading capitalist states unleashed war against the victorious revolution, and a major role in the war was played by the anti-Soviet forces of intervention.

2. WHAT WAS THE FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION?

Austro-German Troops Invade Russia

Let us consider the scope and forms of the military interference of foreign powers in Russia's domestic affairs. The October Revolution took place when the First World War was still on. Since 1914 the Entente countries—Britain, France and Russia, joined later by the United States, Japan, Italy and other countries—had been fighting against the quadripartite alliance of Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. The world war continued until the autumn of 1918. So for a whole year after the October Revolution the world remained divided into two blocs locked in bitter fighting. This certainly thwarted the alliance of the imperialist forces, although even in those strained circumstances the two antagonistic groups spearheaded their attacks against the Soviet Republic.

The first aggressive steps were taken by the German and Austro-Hungarian interventionists, who seized vast parts of Russia's territory. British, French, Japanese and American intervention began soon after. From the autumn of 1918, when Germany and its allies suffered defeat in the imperialist war, the chief role in intervention passed to the Entente, which used the resources of the vanquished countries and their territories as a springboard against Soviet Russia.

And so imperialist Germany was the first to unleash all-out intervention against Soviet Russia.

At the time of the revolution Russia, on the one hand, and Germany and its allies, on the other, had been locked in combat. The Russian and Austro-German armies confronted each other along a front stretching from the Bay of Riga to the mouth of the Danube.

The Soviet government immediately proposed to all belligerents and, naturally, to Germany and its allies the conclusion of a just peace.

The peace proposal was made in the first decree of the Soviet government—the famous Decree on Peace adopted on October 26 (November 8—N. S.), 1917, by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

Soviet Russia proposed that all the combatant countries should start immediate negotiations on concluding a just, democratic peace without annexations or indemnities.

The Entente governments never replied to the proposal.

Germany agreed to begin negotiations. An armistice was signed on November 20, and on December 9 peace talks began in Brest-Litovsk in Byelorussia. The aims pursued at the conference by Kaiser Germany were a far cry from the just, democratic peace proposed by Soviet Russia. Germany demanded the annexation of Poland, Lithuania and parts of Latvia and Byelorussia, openly aggressive demands which German Foreign Secretary von Kuhlmann set forth on February 9 in an ultimatum to Soviet Russia.

The Soviet delegation refused to accept these terms, and on February 18 the German command launched an offensive along the entire front. Austro-German troops numbering 700,000 men were thrown against the Russian army. Grave danger threatened the Soviet Republic. The people of Russia, wearied

by the war, craved for peace. The country's economy had been ruined by the tsarist and Provisional governments. The old Russian army had in fact disintegrated and could not withstand the enemy attacks. The new Red Army was only just taking shape, it was still small in strength and lacked sufficient training.

The German divisions were closing in on Petrograd, Moscow and Kiev. In this situation the Soviet government issued a decree declaring: "The Socialist fatherland is in danger!" It said: "Fulfilling the task with which it had been charged by the capitalists of all countries, German militarism *wants to strangle the Russian and Ukrainian workers and peasants, to return the land to the landowners, the mills and factories to the bankers, and power to the monarchy.*" At plants and factories workers volunteered for the front. Red Army units were quickly formed.

The German offensive against Petrograd was checked by newly formed Red Army units on the snowbound fields of the Pskov region and on the approaches to Narva. In memory of the Red Army's first battles February 23 is traditionally celebrated as Soviet Armed Forces Day.

The situation at the front remained grave, however. The fate of the country was at stake. It was imperative to conclude peace.

On March 3, 1918, at 5.50 p.m. the Soviet delegation signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Germany and its allies. It was a peace on hard terms—even harder than those proposed initially. Soviet Russia lost all the Baltic regions, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, and was to pay Germany a huge war indemnity.

Western politicians, whose insinuations were later reiterated by bourgeois historians, were unsparing in their condemnation of Russia for "betraying its



1918. German occupation forces in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine.



1918. Austro-German troops executing revolutionary workers in occupied Yekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk).

duty to its allies" and signing a separate peace with Germany.

But it was clear to any sober-minded person that any such reproaches against Russia were quite unwarranted.

Firstly, as we have already said, Soviet Russia had addressed a proposal for a *universal* peace to all the belligerent countries. And it was not Russia's fault that the Entente governments flatly rejected the very idea of negotiations on a universal, just and democratic peace.

Secondly, the Brest-Litovsk peace had been *forced* upon Russia by German militarism. It was an enforced, aggressive peace. The peace treaty had been signed at a time when German forces had seized vast parts of the country and were threatening its vital major centres, threatening, in fact, the very existence of the new-born state.



Thirdly, one should not forget that during the three years of the world war Russia had contributed huge resources and efforts to the struggle against the quadripartite alliance and that its losses and sacrifices had been *much greater* than those suffered by other Entente countries.

The Entente leaders were quite content to let the fighting continue to the last Russian soldier. But why, one may ask, should the people of Russia have gone on shedding their blood on behalf of the British, French and US ruling circles?

The invasion by Austro-German forces was the first act of foreign intervention against Soviet Russia. The Soviet state suffered enormous damages: Soviet rule was ended in the occupied territories and the old order was restored there.

Violating the peace terms German forces continued their aggressive onslaught. They proceeded to seize the Crimea and part of the Caucasus. The Soviet government was compelled to sink its Black Sea fleet to prevent its falling into German hands.

The Entente Intervenes

The Entente began its intervention at almost the same time. The invasion began with the landing of British, Japanese and US interventionist forces in the North and the Far East.

On March 9, 1918, the warship *Glory* brought the first 200 British soldiers armed with two cannons to Murmansk. The tramp of their heavy boots and the roll of their drums marked the beginning of the Entente's armed intervention against the Soviet Republic.

The first contingent of troops was followed by ever larger detachments of British, French and

American forces. The whole of the Murmansk region was occupied by foreign troops. They went on to Arkhangelsk. On August 1 at daybreak the interventionists' warships approached the mouth of the North Dvina and attacked coastal defence batteries. Enemy aircraft flew over the city. On August 2 Arkhangelsk was in enemy hands.

Intervention began in the Far East as well. On the morning of April 5 boats and launches were lowered from Japanese battleships anchored off the coast of Vladivostok, and soon afterwards a large detachment of Japanese soldiers with guns, machine guns, vehicles, and field kitchens disembarked and overran the city. They were followed by British forces. Soon afterwards the US too began to prepare feverishly to bring its troops to the Far East. General Graves was summoned to the US War Department in Washington and ordered to prepare to sail to Russia. The troopship *Thomas* with 2,000 troops on board left San Francisco, while other troopships sailed from Manila in the Philippines. All the ships headed for Vladivostok, where more Japanese and British troops were landing.

The interventionists were planning to strike a heavy blow at regions deep in the country.

In late May 1918 there was a mutiny of a Czechoslovak corps that had been formed in Russia from among prisoners-of-war of Czech and Slovak nationality, officers and men of the Austrian army. The Soviet government had given permission for the corps to be transferred to Europe via Siberia and the Far East. As attested by numerous documents and memoirs by Entente leaders, the imperialists intended to use the corps against the Soviet Republic. On May 18, 1918, the French ambassador to Russia informed the corps command that the Allies desired them to remain in Russia and to form the nucleus

American soldiers marching in occupied Arkhangel'sk (autumn 1918). The invasion of the Soviet North by British, French and American forces began in March 1918.



The Urals, 1918. Counter-revolutionary troops of the Czechoslovak corps.

of an Allied army against the Bolsheviks. The corps was fully financed by the Entente. Its command and most of the officers opposed Soviet rule. Telling the soldiers that the Soviet government decided not to let them out of Russia, they involved them in an anti-Soviet venture.

The corps, comprising 50,000 well-equipped men, whose units were deployed along the Trans-Siberian railway, seized several cities on the Volga and in Siberia.

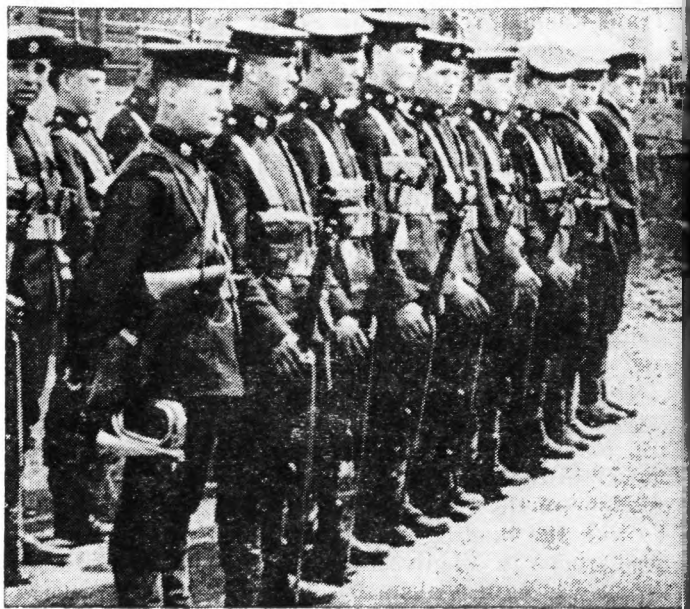
The interventionists forced their way into Soviet Central Asia. On a sultry August day in 1918 a column of army trucks with British troops crossed the Soviet-Persian (Iranian) border near Artyk station. The British began their intervention in Russia. They occupied Ashkhabad and several other cities in the Trans-Caspian region (now Soviet Turkmenia).

These facts are too well known to be denied or disputed. But many books on the history of the USSR simply ignore them.

The intervention was in fact a large-scale undeclared war against Soviet Russia. Groundless if not ridiculous excuses were given at the time in a bid to justify intervention. In the spring and summer of 1918 the Entente spoke of a German threat, claiming that by signing a peace treaty with Russia Germany could easily gain hold of major communications and use them against the Entente.

A rather thin argument, because with Russia out of the war, why would the Entente need communications with the North of Russia, with Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, regions that bore no relation whatsoever to the fighting in Western Europe where the outcome of the First World War was being decided? To link the landing of British, American and Japanese troops in Vladivostok with an alleged German threat was no less absurd.

Spring 1918.
Vladivostok
is occupied
by American
and Japanese
forces.





Autumn 1918. A British marine detachment in occupied Odessa.

This was not all. When Germany capitulated in November 1918 and the war came to an end, the intervention, far from ceasing, was sharply intensified. Nothing remained of the alleged "German threat", yet foreign troops continued to land in Russia's ports. The Armistice signed in Compiègne in November 1918, which was the last act in the First World War, virtually began a new chapter in the chronicle of anti-Soviet intervention and spurred the Entente to even more open and extensive interference in revolutionary Russia's affairs.

Early on November 16, 1918, British and French warships entered the Black Sea. They were followed through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus by troopships with arms and ammunition. French and Greek forces landed in Odessa under the cover of battleships. Sevastopol among other Black Sea ports was seized and major places in Transcaucasia, such as Baku, Tbilisi and Batumi, were occupied. The French held sway in the Ukraine, the British in Transcaucasia. Intervention forces were augmented in the North and the Far East.

Only in 1919 did the basic contingents of the interventionist troops leave Russia. Several factors forced them to leave: the revolutionary movement among their troops—soldiers refused to fight against Soviet Russia and demanded to be sent home and there was a mutiny in the French Black Sea squadron; the growing might of the Red Army—the hopes of quick success by a punitive expedition had failed to materialize and a prolonged war required ever new resources; and still another factor was the broad public movement in the West under the slogan "Hands Off Soviet Russia!".

In subsequent years foreign military units of varying strength remained in Russia—not to mention the advisers and instructors with the White

Guard armies—and warships continued to ply Russia's territorial waters. Japanese troops stayed in the Soviet Far East until the end of 1922. In April 1920 the Entente unleashed another crusade against Soviet Russia by instigating Poland to open hostilities against the young Soviet Republic.

The Entente imposed on Soviet Russia strict blockade which reached its peak in 1919. Eloquent evidence to this effect is the note of the Entente's Supreme Council of October 10, 1919. It told neutral countries how to bring economic pressure to bear upon "Bolshevik" Russia and to ensure strict observance of such a policy. It also said that British and French vessels would continue "to alter the course" of all ships heading for Soviet ports. Citizens of Entente countries were forbidden not only to visit Russia but even to communicate by letter, telegram or radiogram.

The blockade severed virtually all Soviet Russia's ties with the outer world.

The Entente also interfered in Soviet Russia's domestic affairs by organizing and financing state plots and revolts. Facts afford irrefutable proof that Entente agents—in some cases official representatives of Britain, France and the US—were directly responsible for instigating such plots and revolts.

Another form of intervention, and a very active form, was through the control Entente military experts exercised over the counter-revolutionary armies. Military advisers and emissaries of various rank were accredited to the Military Headquarters of White Guard generals and admirals—Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich, Miller and others.

It should be recalled that the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia were scattered in their disposition. Being concentrated chiefly in the outlying parts of the country (Siberia, the South, the Northwest

and the North) they lacked direct contacts and this led to the emergence of several counter-revolutionary centres. Attempts to establish a single counter-revolutionary centre ended in failure. So when Kolchak was proclaimed the "Supreme Governor" of Russia in late 1918 and the remote city of Omsk in Siberia was declared to be Russia's "capital", the proclamation was of more symbolic than practical significance.

Nevertheless the actions of White Guard and interventionist forces were mostly coordinated. In a bid to surround the Soviet Republic with a ring of war fronts and make simultaneous attacks on Moscow and Petrograd, both contingents of enemy forces acted on the basis of common plans.

These plans were drawn up under the guidance of the Entente, which organized and coordinated the anti-Soviet struggle. It is not by chance that the phrase "Entente campaigns" was coined at the time. It neatly expressed the essence of the matter, for in 1918, 1919 and 1920 each combined onslaught of White Guard and interventionist forces was a well-thought-out military campaign organized under the direct leadership of the Entente's political and military commanders. Last but not least, the intervention was furthered by supplying foreign arms, ammunition and equipment to the White Guard armies on a large scale.

S. M. Kirov, a prominent Red Army political leader during those years, said that Kolchak wielded "a sword forged in the best workshops of imperialism..." With equal justification one may add that Denikin, Wrangel and Yudenich were supplied with rifles, machine guns and guns from the best workshops in the US, Britain and France.

General A. W. Knox, Chief of the British Military Mission to Siberia and Kolchak's chief adviser on

matters of supply and organization, was known to have said to T. K. Gins, one of Kolchak's closest associates, that each bullet fired on the Bolsheviki was made in Britain—a more than adequate confirmation of the actual state of affairs at the time.¹

Winston Churchill, Britain's Secretary of State for War, wrote that by the autumn of 1919 Britain had spent approximately 100 million pounds on aid to White Guard forces. In 1919 he had every reason to call Denikin's army "his own"². The bulk of this money went to supply Denikin's troops. Later Churchill wrote in his memoirs of the First World War that Britain had been Denikin's chief supplier, having sent him no less than 350,000 rifles, 200 guns, 30 tanks and huge amounts of arms and ammunition to Novorossiisk via the Dardanelles and the Black Sea.

Thus foreign interference was in fact responsible for the prolonged, grim and bloody character of the Civil War in Russia.

What Motivated Their Actions

The question naturally arises: what were the motives of the Entente's political leaders when they launched intervention against Russia?

¹ T. K. Gins, *Siberia, the Allies and Kolchak*, Vol. 2, (in Russian), Peking, 1921, p. 386. Historical works contain much data—chiefly from White Guard commanders and officers of interventionist forces or from documents—on the scale and importance of foreign aid. Thus A. I. Denikin writes in his memoirs that from March to September 1919 he received equipment for 250,000 men, as well as 558 guns, 12 tanks, over 1,500,000 shells and 160 million rounds of rifle ammunition (A. I. Denikin, *Sketches on the Russian Rebellion*, Vol. IV, Berlin, 1925, p. 86, in Russian). In the winter of 1918-19 Denikin received almost 300,000 rifles and Kolchak was supplied with 500-600,000 rifles and about 600 guns.

² A fact confirmed by B. Savinkov, a White Guard leader and terrorist—*Ed.*

Their actions were motivated by their class interests. Hardly any of the leaders of the capitalist world at that time could grasp the immense historical significance of the socialist revolution in Russia and that its victory had ushered in a new era, the era of socialism as a world social and economic system.

But most of the Entente leaders were well aware of the social, class essence of events in Russia. It was in a bid to destroy the gains of the revolution and to restore the rule of capitalists and landowners in Russia that they launched their crusade against the Soviet Republic.

Their feeling of class unity with the deposed Russian landowners, capitalists and colonialists, who had been deprived of their incomes and privileges, and their hatred for the common people who had come to power, were closely linked with the need of Western ruling circles to defend their own class positions.

They feared that a successful development of the revolution in Russia would give an impetus to revolutionary movements in their own countries. Indeed the upsurge of revolutionary activity in Europe, America and Asia, which gathered particular momentum from 1918 to 1920, showed that their apprehensions were correct.

Of great importance were their commercial imperialist ambitions. Each imperialist power was itching to seize one part or another of Russia with a view to turning it virtually, if not formally, into a colony. Numerous documents attest not only to the expansionist plans of Britain, France, Germany, Japan and the US but also to the existence of a specific agreement between the Entente powers on a division of Russia into "spheres of influence".

The nationalization of industry and the banks struck a heavy material blow at the Western capitalists, thereby turning the foreign holders of "Russian shares" and the former owners of nationalized plants, banks, mines and so on into frenzied supporters of intervention against Russia, in which capacity they exerted considerable influence on British, French and US policy.

Another point is that in the initial stage of intervention the Entente imperialists were attracted by the prospect of preserving Russia as a supplier of cannon-fodder for the prolonged war against Germany.

The External and Internal Counter-Revolution Pools Its Forces

In the course of the Civil War the internal and external counter-revolutionary forces banded together against the victorious revolution. This was nothing new—there are numerous precedents in history. Yet never before, nor after, were external counter-revolutionary forces deployed on such a scale or with such concerted effort as they were between 1917 and 1920.

Quite obviously, intervention was timed to coincide with the massive onslaught of the internal counter-revolution.

In late February and early March 1918 the German-Austrian intervention, as noted above, led to the temporary loss of the Soviet Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic regions, the Crimea and part of the Caucasus.

This weakened the Soviet Republic and at the same time activized the counter-revolutionary forces which were mustering strength for wide-scale military action.

In March and April 1918 the interventionists started landing their troops in the North and the Far East. In May the mutiny of the Czechoslovak corps broke out, and simultaneously the counter-revolution launched a countrywide offensive from the Volga to the Pacific.

Later the alliance between the external and internal counter-revolution assumed numerous organizational forms and even acquired a certain legal status.

This at once gave the internal counter-revolution many advantages in the military, material and technological spheres.

Yet for all this the bloc which it formed with foreign forces was based on relations of dependence and subordination and thus seriously weakened its positions. The counter-revolutionary forces began their struggle under the demagogical patriotic slogans of preserving Russia's unity and independence, and defending and strengthening her sovereignty, slogans which won favour with certain sectors of the population. In actual fact, they shamelessly betrayed national interests for the sake of their self-interested class aims, virtually agreeing to the partition of the country, taking on shackling financial commitments, etc.

This confirmed an important law of history: the exploiting classes who pose as the champions of national interests are in fact ready to betray and flout these interests. They defend national interests only insofar as they coincide with their own class interests (such coincidences are in fact possible), but when the choice has to be made between the two, the odds are always in favour of class interests.

The Russian counter-revolution was no exception to this, indeed, it provided particularly indicative evidence of the truth of this law.

The Russian proletariat on the contrary showed itself to be the true champion of national interests, for it defended the independence not only of the Russian people, but also of the country's other nationalities.

Moreover it defended them on a new, internationalist and socialist basis. The defence of national interests was closely linked with the defence of the gains of the socialist revolution, the defence of the socialist homeland. The national interests of the Russian people were never opposed to the interests of the country's other nationalities, nor were they opposed to the interests of people in other countries. Soviet patriotism has always been organically linked with internationalism.

In the course of the Civil War many people who believed in the greatness of Russia and who had at first turned away from Soviet power gradually began to go over to its side, having become convinced that its goal was to bring about the revival and prosperity of Russia.

Even a cursory glance at the map of the Civil War shows that the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces each held quite well-defined and relatively stable geographical positions. And though for three years the front lines were constantly changing, as was the size of the territory held by one side or the other, the general parameters of their geographical location remained the same.

There were areas that stayed out of the enemy's reach all through the war—the central districts of European Russia, none of which (with the exception of a small area northwest of Petrograd) touched on the state border.

The regions of central European Russia (including a part of the Volga region) with such large industrial and administrative cities as Moscow, Petro-

**СОВЕТСКАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА В
ОГНЕННОМ КОЛЬЦЕ ФРОНТОВ**



A 1918 map showing the ring of fighting fronts around the Soviet Republic.

grad, Astrakhan, Bryansk, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kaluga, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod, Novgorod, Penza, Ryazan, Rybinsk, Saratov, Smolensk, Tambov, Tver, Tula, Vladimir, Vologda, Vitebsk and Vyatka became the chief bases of Soviet power; bordering on them were the Volga regions (Kazan, Simbirsk, Samara, Tsaritsin and Yaroslavl) and the southern regions of Central Russia (Voronezh, Kursk and Orel)¹ which were under enemy occupation only for a short period of time.

These regions were surrounded on all sides by a vast territory that kept passing into the hands of the interventionists and White Guards for longer or shorter periods. A considerable part of this area was the site of bitter fighting and some regions and cities were more than once turned into battlefields. As the Red Army advanced, this gigantic periphery continued to shrink, while the area under Soviet power steadily increased. The liberated territory spread from the centre to the country's outlying areas, frontiers and maritime regions.

This geographical disposition of Soviet and enemy forces was due mainly to foreign intervention, which naturally affected first and foremost the frontier areas and maritime regions. Virtually all of the country's land frontiers (with the exception of certain desert and mountain areas where access was difficult) found themselves either under the direct attacks of the interventionists or were used as staging areas for counter-revolutionary armed forces, or served as transit areas for the transportation of arms and ammunition.

Practically all the accessible sea borders (the ports on the Pacific, and on the Black, Baltic, White, Ba-

¹ Many parts of Turkestan (with the centre in Tashkent) repelled enemy attacks and escaped occupation in spite of the fact that they were cut off from the centre for a long time.

rents and Caspian seas) were used for the direct invasion of Russia by the interventionist forces and for the delivery of war supplies to the White Guard forces.

Moreover, as noted above, the mutinous Czechoslovak corps, another external foreign force, played a decisive role in 1918 by creating the prerequisite military conditions for the downfall of Soviet power in a vast area remote from all the frontiers—the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia.

It was characteristic that a considerable part of the outlying regions was repeatedly occupied by foreign troops. Many Western and Southern regions were successively seized by forces of the Austro-German bloc, the Entente and bourgeois-landowner Poland.

Thus the main seats of the counter-revolution emerged in areas that were under the influence of foreign intervention.

A large number of counter-revolutionary elements shifted from the centre to the periphery where they became concentrated in areas held by the interventionists. Tsarist officers, former factory owners expropriated of their enterprises and landowners dispossessed of their land, high-ranking officials and leaders of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties fled from Moscow and Petrograd to Kiev (patrolled by German troops), Arkhangelsk (overrun by British soldiers), Samara (under Czechoslovak legionaries) and the North Caucasus (cut off from the centre). This mass concentration made the counter-revolution especially strong in the peripheral regions.

3. COUNTER-REVOLUTION'S POLITICAL FORCES

Let us now consider the political forces that led the internal counter-revolution.

The political and military map of the counter-revolutionary camp presents a motley picture. There is no need to enumerate the many "governments" that rose and fell in the Urals and Siberia, in the North and the Far East, in the Caucasus, the Ukraine and in the Northwest. The territories under their sway constantly changed size in the course of military operations, and some "governments" even moved from town to town with a train as their official headquarters.

Let us recall the main centres held by the counter-revolutionary forces. Siberia, for one, was under the White Guards from the summer of 1918 until 1920. Here, following a series of upheavals, power was seized by Admiral Alexander Kolchak. The South of Russia, including the Ukraine, the Don regions, and the Caucasus, where the front lines were especially mobile and where the Austro-German occupation (March-November 1918) gave way to that of the Entente (autumn of 1918-spring of 1919) and then to that of the Polish interventionists (1920), was highly prolific in "governments" and rulers, the most significant in scope and mili-

tary strength being the régime of General Anton Denikin. At its height, in the autumn of 1919, his power spread over almost all of the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Don region, the Crimea and the southern regions of Central Russia.

The Northern regions (with the ports of Arkhangelsk and Murmansk) were another big counter-revolutionary centre. The counter-revolutionary "government" that sprang up there after the British invasion stayed in power until early 1920.

An active though comparatively small counter-revolutionary centre, headed by General Nikolai Yudenich, functioned in the Northwest in the immediate vicinity of Petrograd. What were the main political forces in the counter-revolutionary camp?

We have already dwelt on the socio-class base of the counter-revolution. The interests of the city and rural bourgeoisie, the landowners and the feudal aristocracy of Central Asia and the Caucasus were represented by different parties.

And here it is important to note that the White Guards did not, and apparently could not, have a political organization capable of uniting the diverse anti-Soviet groups. The *Cadet* (Constitutional-Democratic) Party aspired to be the leading political force in the counter-revolutionary camp. Its members actively supported the establishment of the White Guard dictatorships of Denikin and Kolchak and were themselves the instigators of many anti-Soviet plots and rebellions. But for several reasons they were unable to unite the counter-revolutionary forces.

In the course of the Civil War political groups that were even more right-wing and reactionary than the Cadets increased their influence on the White Guard camp. These openly monarchist groups, well

aware that the counter-revolution could not win over the people, set their hopes on military dictatorship, brutal force and suppression, stripped even of the outward attributes of democracy. These groups slighted the Cadets and were reluctant to form an alliance with them, regarding their liberal talk as harmful to the aims of counter-revolution.

One must also take into consideration that the Cadets were alienated both territorially and organizationally. Some of their representatives had joined the southern counter-revolutionary camp, others were active in Siberia, still others were engaged in clandestine activities in Moscow and Petrograd. Some Cadet leaders were mustering forces abroad.

“The Third Force”

The winning over of petty-bourgeois sections of the population and especially the millions of peasants, was a major task of the political struggle at the time, and the petty-bourgeois parties were very active in this respect. The *S.R.*'s (Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the *Mensheviks* (Social-Democrats) began to advocate the so-called “third way” of development.

The petty-bourgeois parties endeavoured to play the leading role in the country's political life. “We consistently adhere to the position of creating a third force between Bolshevik mob rule and the military-bourgeois counter-revolution,” said the appeal of the *S.R.* Central Committee to all organizations (September 1919).

These parties tried to take up a mid-way position between the two chief embattled forces—the proletariat and the bourgeois-landowner bloc. But there could be no mid-way position in the bitter class

struggle, and so the petty-bourgeois parties merely served as a cover for rabid counter-revolution.

The revolutionary battles that raged in the country divided it quite definitely into different political camps and the front lines made this demarcation even more obvious. The self-styled "third force" found itself in the counter-revolutionary camp. The "champions" of democracy took their stand alongside Cossack generals, tsarist officers, landowners and industrial tycoons in the role of the interventionists' minions, while the programmes of the petty-bourgeois parties, despite all their democratic slogans, were counter-revolutionary in essence.

In 1917 the S.R.'s split into two groups—the "Right" and the "Left". The *Right S.R.'s* fought vigorously against Soviet power, and in May 1918 the Eighth Council of the Right S.R.'s took a decision to organize a revolt. They instigated several mutinies in the Soviet rear, made attempts on the lives of Communist Party leaders and joined the shortlived White Guard "governments" that sprang up in the summer of 1918.

The *Left S.R.'s* at first supported Soviet power and formed a bloc with the Bolsheviks, but then went over to reactionary positions, and in July 1918 staged armed uprisings in Moscow, on the Eastern Front and in other areas.

The *Mensheviks* openly declared in the resolution of their All-Russia Party Meeting (end of May 1918) that it was necessary "to replace Soviet power".

In 1918 the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks set up a number of governments in the territory occupied by the interventionists and White Guards. In June 1918, for instance, a government composed chiefly of Right S.R.'s with some Menshevik participation,

sprang up in Samara. It was known as the Committee of the Members of the Constituent Assembly.

The S.R.'s also predominated in the provisional Siberian government in Tomsk. The so-called Ufa State Assembly (September 1918) formed an All-Russia Provisional Government (Directorate) made up of Right S.R.'s and Cadets which soon moved to Omsk. The S.R.'s headed a Provisional Government of the Northern Region set up in August 1918 in Arkhangelsk and a Trans-Caspian Government in Ashkhabad.

These "governments" made a special point of displaying all the outward attributes of democracy. This was a political manoeuvre and a highly significant one at that. The petty-bourgeois policy-makers were well aware that the masses, having just accomplished two revolutions, which in the course of only a few months had delivered the country from the tyranny of the autocracy and introduced Soviet democracy, and for the first time in many centuries had achieved genuine freedom, that these masses would not tolerate any attempts to restore the pre-revolutionary status quo. The idea was to draw the masses to (or at least not to alienate them from) these governments, whose makers advocated the "third way" or "third force" concept.

However ideas are one thing and deeds are another. All these "governments" without exception came into existence in areas occupied by the interventionists. All of them relied on the only real force available to them—interventionist detachments and military formations made up of bourgeois, landowner and kulak elements under the command of former tsarist generals and officers. All of them came into existence by overthrowing the people's rule and establishing a reign of terror against Communists and non-Party representatives of the working people.

They pursued a single aim—to fight Soviet power, which under the Bolshevik leadership had become established in Russia's central districts and which represented the hopes and interests of the bulk of the country's population.

But the people were used to judging things by deeds and not by words. And that is precisely why the mere bandying about of democratic slogans failed to bring the petty-bourgeois leaders the desired results. The futility of resorting to "third force" manoeuvres was so obvious that the counter-revolution soon pulled off its pseudo-democratic mask and reverted to open bourgeois-landowner dictatorship under the leadership of the tsarist generals and admirals.

An event which gives a very clear indication of this *volte-face* was Admiral Kolchak's putsch in Omsk. The "All-Russia Provisional Government", composed of Right S.R.'s and Cadets, offered the post of War and Naval Minister to the die-hard counter-revolutionary, Kolchak. Two weeks later Kolchak staged a putsch, threw out the S.R.'s and established an open military-bourgeois-landowner dictatorship.

Similar events took place in the North, in Arkhangel'sk, where General Miller virtually became dictator upon assuming the post of General Governor and Chief Commander of the Northern Region in January 1919, and in the South where General Denikin united the forces of the White Guard "volunteer" army and the White Cossack detachments in the Don and Kuban regions into the "armed forces of Southern Russia" and became their chief commander and deputy of the "Supreme Governor" Kolchak.

The setting up of the military bourgeois-landowner dictatorship gave eloquent proof that not only was it impossible to avoid taking sides in the strug-

gle between the main class forces, but also that the attempts to win the petty-bourgeois masses over to the side of the counter-revolution had suffered a fiasco. The peasant masses were joining the struggle against counter-revolution with increasing resolve and vigour. The counter-revolution realized that even the most brazen demagoguery would not bring it the support of the masses. Hence the emphasis which they placed on overt violence, military force and unbridled terror.

The "third way" concept was fallacious in principle.¹ This led to a quick disintegration of the petty-bourgeois parties. Fairly large and enjoying extensive support at the time of the revolution (the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for instance, received over 40 per cent of the votes during the elections to the Constituent Assembly), towards the end of the war these parties had lost their supporters and split into isolated groups, often with conflicting platforms.

Nationalist Parties

Nationalist parties could not, of course, expect to play a leading role in the forces of counter-revolu-

¹ At the end of the Civil War an attempt was made to rally the support of the elemental petty-bourgeois contingent under the slogan "Soviets without Communists". The attempt was nothing less than a forced admission of the popularity of the Soviets which was the only form of government that had won the confidence of the people. However, the endeavours of the counter-revolution to gain the upper hand over the Bolsheviks in the Soviets under the false banner of "neutrality" were but a repetition of past events. The Kronstadt mutiny, for example, (which broke out at the beginning of 1921 among the sailor recruits of the Baltic Fleet under the slogan "Soviets without Communists") showed that there was no room for any "mid-way", "neutral" or "third" force. The rebellion was anti-Soviet from the start and its leadership passed into the hands of overt representatives of the White Guard.

tion. For obvious reasons the sphere of their activities was confined to the national territories inhabited by the people they claimed to represent. In some districts, however, nationalist parties managed to influence the course of local events and thereby hindered the consolidation of revolutionary forces and drew certain sections of the population into the orbit of counter-revolution. This was especially true of the Baltic regions, where the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian nationalists, supported by the interventionists, succeeded in overthrowing Soviet rule and establishing bourgeois states. In Transcaucasia the nationalists of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, backed by the interventionists, held their ground until the spring of 1920, the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921, respectively.

In the Ukraine the course of events was greatly influenced by the Ukrainian nationalist parties and this prolonged the war and complicated it. Petty-bourgeois and to a lesser extent bourgeois nationalist parties had considerable influence there in the early stages of the revolution. In elections to the Constituent Assembly petty-bourgeois nationalist parties won a majority of the votes in the Kiev, Poltava, Kharkov and Volyn districts. Here demagogy on social issues was combined with demagogy on national issues and propaganda for a "third way" had both a social and national basis. The nationalist promises, however, proved just as false as the social ones.

In actual fact the advocates of "independence" for the Ukraine were shamelessly auctioning it off to Germany and Austro-Hungary and to the British-French-American bloc.

The Ukrainian nationalists repeatedly seized power. In the autumn of 1917 the Central Rada, comprising *Social-Federalists* (Ukrainian Constitution-

al Democrats), *Social-Democrats* (Ukrainian Mensheviks), headed by Vinnichenko and Petlyura, and *Ukrainian Social-Revolutionaries*, headed by Grushevsky, Kovalevsky and Golubovich and backed by the Entente and Russian counter-revolutionary forces, won control of a large part of the Ukraine. Working people refused to support the Rada and Soviet rule triumphed in most of the Donbas region and in Kharkov, the Ukraine's biggest industrial centre. On December 12 (25—N.S.), 1917, the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets, meeting in Kharkov, proclaimed the Ukraine to be a Soviet Republic. In January 1918 Soviet rule triumphed in Kiev. Rada representatives, who had fled to Zhitomir, entered into collusion with the German military who helped to restore them to power in Kiev. But in late April 1918 the Germans threw out the Central Rada and established the open dictatorship of capitalists and landlords in the person of P. Skoropadsky, a big landowner and a former tsarist general.

In the autumn of 1918, when the German occupation ended, the Ukrainian nationalist parties, who had joined to form the "Ukrainian National Alliance", set up the Directorate, a nationalist-bourgeois government led by Petlyura and Vinnichenko. Once again they looked to the Entente for support and were prepared to make the Ukraine a protectorate of the Western powers.

The smokescreen of high-flown phrases about the "independence" of the Ukraine was dispersed by every action of the nationalist "governments" which could not conceal their counter-revolutionary nature and hostility to the people's interests. The revolutionary movement of the working people which developed under Communist leadership swept away the nationalist Directorate. In February 1919 its members fled from Kiev.

In Central Asia and Kazakhstan local nationalist organizations also joined up with the White Guard counter-revolutionary forces. In Kazakhstan, for instance, the feudal lords and the emergent capitalists set up their "government" which relied on the support of White Guard troops under Kolchak, Dutov and Annenkov.

In Central Asia the openly counter-revolutionary nature of bourgeois-nationalist organizations was obvious at the very outbreak of the Civil War—the formation of "Autonomous Kokand" which joined the armed struggle of White Cossack troops against Soviet rule.

During the Civil War nationalist organizations were active in other national districts too. Whatever their political manoeuvring they invariably played into the hands of the Russian counter-revolutionary forces.

The Communist Party fought to free the mass of the people from their influence. It exposed the nationalists' true aims, helping people to see that true national and social emancipation could be attained only by a socialist revolution.

During the Civil War all the nationalist parties and organizations faced the necessity of making a definite choice and this exposed their true nature. That is why the war brought about their natural and inevitable collapse.

A Minus Factor

The political insolvency and disunity of the counter-revolutionary forces was not a matter of chance. They mirrored the social heterogeneity of the forces of counter-revolution whose elements were bent on restoring their power and privileges.

From the political viewpoint their aim was to overthrow the Soviet government and defeat the Bolsheviks. Like all dying forces that are destined to leave the stage of history they had no future and so did not, and could not, have a positive programme that would appeal to the masses.

All this inevitably affected the state structure (if such a term can be applied to the territories under the temporary rule of interventionists and White Guards) of the forces of counter-revolution. In territories seized by the counter-revolutionary forces, territories with a population often running into scores of millions, the remnants of old, pre-revolutionary government bodies were used and the old tsarist laws were kept in force.

In the vast majority of the areas under White Guards' control government was virtually in the hands of the military administration. The civil "governments" that existed under Kolchak, Yudenich, Denikin and others, had a limited range of functions. The territories occupied by the interventionists were in fact under the full and undivided control of the foreign military command.

4. THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

Class Backing of Soviet Power

As the Civil War spread the combined forces of internal and external counter-revolution were opposed first of all by the working class and toiling peasants of Russia. Having won state power, the working class performed its historic mission with honour. It set an example of courage, staunchness, organization and self-sacrifice.

The working class created a new state apparatus composed of its best representatives and took charge of industrial enterprises.

The workers played a decisive role in the formation of the Red Army. The majority of able-bodied workers joined the ranks of the Soviet armed forces and formed their solid core—64 per cent of all metal workers and 60 per cent of all textile workers took part in front line action.

In its efforts to meet the needs of the front the working class of Russia displayed great enthusiasm and selflessness.

The continued fighting, however, was a heavy drain on the strength and resources of the working class.

It gave its leading members to the army and the state apparatus. It suffered great losses in battles at the front and in partisan units and at the hands of punitive White Guard detachments in occupied territories. Some workers, unable to bear the hard-

ships, left the towns for the countryside. All this greatly reduced the strength of the working class, which was never very large.

Yet, despite all difficulties, the working class rallied its strength and stood its ground. It held on to state power and won a full military victory. This was eloquent testimony to its might and ability to withstand the enemy onslaught in the most unfavourable circumstances and to lead the masses.

The proletarian and semi-proletarian peasant masses—the poor peasants and farm labourers—acted in close alliance with the working class. In speaking of these social strata one should note that they were undergoing structural changes at the time of the revolution and Civil War. The agrarian revolution that began in the countryside after the October Revolution led to radical changes in the social composition of the peasantry. By the end of the Civil War the percentage of rural poor had fallen to 35-40 per cent, as against 65 per cent on the eve of the revolution. Yesterday's poor peasants and farm labourers had received land and were becoming middle peasants, a new social strata that was politically close to the working class.

In the course of the socialist revolution in the countryside, which began on a nationwide scale in 1918, the rural poor who had been wanting in organization managed to strengthen their unity and raise their political consciousness with the direct guidance and help of the proletariat. During the Civil War the rural poor, along with the city proletariat, bore the brunt of material privations. They sent their best members to the Red Army and the local Soviets, suffered considerable losses in the battles against the kulaks, and in the occupied areas they were oppressed and persecuted. All these hardships drained their strength too.

That is why at a time when the urban proletariat and the rural poor were pooling their efforts against the combined forces of counter-revolution the position of the middle peasants, who had now become the largest section of the peasantry, gained primary significance. In 1919-20 middle-peasant households began to constitute 55-60 per cent of all peasant households, as compared with 20 per cent on the eve of the revolution.

The middle peasants gave unconditional support to the October Revolution and its decrees. The revolution had brought them considerable gains, including the bulk of the lands confiscated from the landowners.

Later, however, in 1918 the majority of middle peasants began to waver and adopted a wait-and-see position in the mounting struggle. The middle peasants were disturbed by the fact that the Soviet government imposed restrictions on private trading in grain, a measure prompted by the need to concentrate the country's meagre food reserves in the hands of the state in order to meet the requirements of the urban population and the army.

The kulaks, who profited from the sale of grain, fought tooth and nail against the state monopoly on grain. The Soviet government, the workers and the rural poor gave a firm rebuff to the kulaks.

The social and political differentiation of the peasantry led to the growth of political consciousness among the poor and middle peasant masses and made them more active. Ultimately the middle peasant sided with the Soviet government. This decision stemmed to a great extent from the peasants' own experiences in areas that had been under the rule of the interventionists and White Guards. The peasant saw for himself that the triumph of count-

er-revolutionary forces invariably brought the land-owners back, deprived the peasants of their land and restored the hateful old way of life.

The firm decision of the middle peasants to side with the Soviet government, a move which became obvious by the autumn of 1918, made it possible to establish a lasting alliance between the middle peasants and the working class. The policy of the Soviet state which called for forming an alliance with the middle peasants while at the same time relying on the poor peasants and fighting the kulaks, a policy proclaimed by Lenin in the autumn of 1918 and embodied in the decisions of the Eighth RCP(B) Congress in March 1919, accorded with the logic of history and broadened the class basis of Soviet rule.

During the Civil War a military and political alliance had arisen between the working class and the middle peasants. At the time the Soviet state could not satisfy the material needs of the middle peasants but it gave them land and protection while the peasants supplied the towns and the army with raw materials and food by giving up their surpluses.

This alliance between the working class and the petty-bourgeois peasant masses, which constituted the bulk of the peasantry, proved sound and withstood the ordeals of war. The vast majority of the middle peasants came out firmly in support of Soviet rule and against counter-revolution—this was a fact of great significance in determining the correlation of class forces.

Ultimately the majority of the working people in the national areas also came over to the side of the Soviet government. The winning of their support was a key question of the class struggle at the time. In a bid to confine the working people's liberation

movement to narrow nationalist channels, the local exploiting elite set nations and nationalities at loggerheads with each other, stressing the existence of conflicts between nations and denying social conflicts within a nation. Being aimed against Soviet rule and the socialist revolution this policy objectively played into the hands of the counter-revolutionary forces as a whole.

In the struggle to win over the working people in the national regions victory was won by the Soviet government. The population of Russia, consisting of many different nationalities, divided first and foremost along class lines. Of special importance in this process was the Soviet government's policy, which combined a class approach with due regard for specific national features. By proclaiming and consistently implementing the principles of the equality of peoples, by giving full support to the establishment of their statehood, by showing through practical example that real national emancipation could not be achieved without social emancipation, while maintaining respect for national traditions, the Soviet government won the active support of the majority of the working people in the national areas.

During the Civil War years the relation of class forces constantly changed. On both sides some positions would strengthen and others weaken. Positive and negative factors were intricately woven into a complex and contradictory picture. Yet one thing was absolutely clear: the balance of class forces ultimately changed in favour of the revolution.

It changed in the course of military action and was to some extent influenced by the size of the territory occupied by each side. But the course of military operations was itself determined ultimately by the relation of class forces.

Political Unity of the Soviet State

Unlike the counter-revolutionary forces, the revolutionary forces were always united. This logical circumstance was manifested in several ways.

While strengthening its alliance with the toiling peasantry, the proletariat firmly held power in its hands. It created a political system resting on the support of broad sections of the working people.

It is common knowledge that in previous eras in history the wielding of state power had been the prerogative of an exploiting minority. This was so in peace time and especially during revolutions and armed conflicts between the exploiters and the exploited.

During the Civil War in Russia the proletariat established not only its own state organization but one that was immeasurably stronger than that of the forces of counter-revolution.

The firmness and strictness, required by the grim struggle of those days, were combined with as much democracy as was possible at the time. It was democracy for the bulk of the population, for the working people who had for ages been oppressed and deprived of all rights.

The strength and unity of the Soviet state sprang from its social and class unity. The social changes introduced by the October Revolution and continued during the Civil War gave rise to a new social structure. The exploiting classes—the landowners, merchants and capitalists—largely ceased to exist as a social and economic force, even though their remnants put up a fierce resistance. The rural bourgeoisie were considerably weakened.

The proletariat and the toiling peasants became the main social classes and joined forces in a close

Defence of the
revolutionary gains
was directed by
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin,
who headed the first
Soviet Government.



Lenin in his office in the Kremlin. Moscow, October 1918.

alliance. The vast majority of the population, who were united by their common aim of defending revolutionary gains and Soviet rule, bore hardships and made sacrifices with a will.

From their own experience the working people came to see the radical difference between the policies of the forces of counter-revolution and of the Soviet government. In areas under counter-revolutionary rule plants and factories were returned to their former owners and the land to the landlords. Private trade flourished, bringing the bourgeoisie huge profits. Working people's organizations were disbanded, the urban and rural poor were again treated with scorn and humiliation as "cattle" and "rabble"—but this time with greater malice and vindictiveness.

The class policy of the Soviet government was firmly and invariably directed at defending the interests of the workers and peasants.

It was quite natural that the White Guards and interventionists should have failed to win over the people. During the war their social basis, far from expanding, diminished. Leading members of the counter-revolutionary forces on many occasions admitted their failure to win moral and political superiority and the support of the workers and peasants. Moreover, the population of areas which they had temporarily seized, including wavering sections of the population, turned away from them and on an

Lenin addressing troops leaving for the front. Moscow, 1920.

ever increasing scale joined the struggle for Soviet rule.

Such a turn of events became a regular occurrence. The same thing happened in Siberia and the Urals, in the North, in the North Caucasus and the Ukraine and everywhere else. Even when the counter-revolutionary forces managed to expand occupied territory, this only led to their weakening. That is why, despite the fact that the counter-revolutionaries sometimes controlled more than three-quarters of the country's territory the hopes of their winning grew ever fainter.

Also, throughout the Civil War the relation of class forces from the moral and political standpoint favoured the Soviet government.

The fact that it had the support of the bulk of the population was not the only factor which gave the revolution the advantage over its enemies. It also had a moral and political superiority, which lay in the new *quality* of its popular support.

The people led by the Bolshevik Party had accomplished the revolution *by their own hands, they themselves* had created the Soviet state and they were defending *their own* revolution and *their own* state.

In the process the activity of the masses increased on an unprecedented scale, thereby, as Lenin said, raising "the very lowest strata to making history". The people did not merely support the Communist Party and the Soviet government; in an upsurge of creative activity, revolutionary energy and initiative, producing hundreds of new champions from among their own midst, the people were building a new life, strengthening the Party and government bodies, restoring the economy to normal and building up their armed forces.

In the Civil War behind the fronts Soviet rule had a solid base that steadily grew stronger.

The White Guard rear could well be likened to a sand hill which rulers and commanders were busy climbing only to see the sand slip from under their feet and to find themselves buried in the crumbling mound.

A major feature of the Civil War was that in the course of it revolutionary changes were constantly introduced and promoted in all spheres of life. Revolutionary changes had taken place in production relations. The agricultural revolution was gaining ground in the countryside. The new proletarian state was growing in extent and strength. Also, radical changes were taking place in the cultural field.

A. V. Lunacharsky, the first People's Commissar for Education, said during the Civil War that the people were holding a sword in one hand and the torch of enlightenment in the other.

Socialist development engaged much of the people's energies but in turn infused the Soviet state with new strength.

In the course of the Civil War the leadership and organizing role of the Bolshevik Party were displayed to the full.

During the revolution, when the proletariat had not yet won power, the Party was the chief force which united and organized it. After the victory of the revolution the Soviet state that had emerged took upon itself the functions of organizing the working people for building socialism and defending the republic from its enemies at home and abroad. Far from diminishing, the Party's role continued to grow and the experience of the Civil War was eloquent evidence of this.

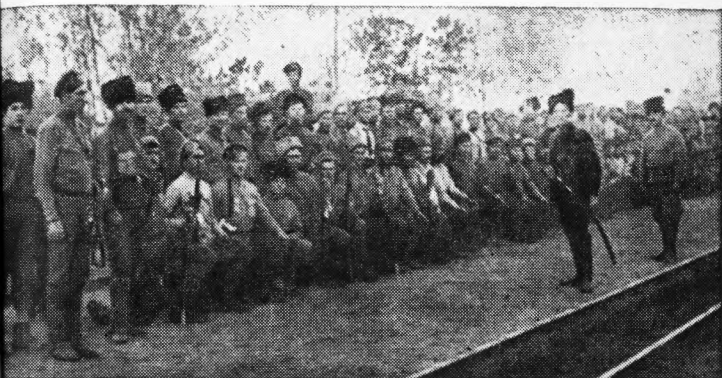


1919. Defence of Petrograd. A patrol checking papers in Petrograd in which a state of siege had been declared.

1918. The Eastern Front.

At the Perm station. The assault force of an armoured train after successfully carrying out a raid.





The First Soviet Battalion after the capture of Samara (now Kuibyshev).

The Party's untiring work among the broad sections of the population was one of the major factors that hastened victory over the interventionists and White Guards.

Communists were in the front ranks of those who went to the front arms in hand to defend the revolution. In the first half of 1918 some 40,000 Communists enlisted in the Red Army.

When the situation at the front grew desperate the Party launched new recruiting campaigns and tens of thousands of Party members responded to the call.

During the three Civil War years the Central Committee sent over 260,000 Communists to join the Red Army. In 1920 nearly half the Party members—over 300,000 men—were fighting in its ranks. On the battlefield Communists were always in the forefront guided by the directive of the Eighth Party Congress which said in part: "Membership of the Communist Party does not give a soldier any spe-

cial rights—instead it imposes on him the duty of being a most selfless and courageous fighter.”

Fifty thousand Communists gave their lives on the battlefields of the Civil War.

Throughout the war the ranks of the Party steadily increased. Highly significant is the fact that the largest number of applications for Party membership came in the grimmest weeks and months in the life of the young Soviet Republic. The following instance is worthy of note. A “Party Week” was held in the autumn of 1919 at a time when the situation at the fronts was especially grave: Denikin’s troops were quickly closing in on Moscow and Yudenich was on the approaches to Petrograd. Those applying for Party membership were well aware that a victory by the White Guards would mean prison if not the gallows for themselves. They knew that membership of the Party offered them no advantages or privileges but meant greater hardships and trials. Lenin wrote at the time: “We do not promise and do not give... any advantages from joining the Party. On the contrary, just now harder and more dangerous work than usual falls to the lot of Party members.”¹

During the Civil War a network of Communist Party organizations emerged in the countryside and grew stronger. They were established with the direct assistance of the urban proletariat and embraced progressive elements among the toiling peasantry, above all, the rural poor.

Up to 1917 there had been only a few rural Communist organizations. In 1917 altogether 203 such organizations were formed, 2,285 in 1919 and 4,868 in 1920.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 30, p. 64.

By the beginning of 1918 there were 16,700 peasant members of the Party, constituting 14.5 per cent of the membership. By 1920 their number had soared to 108,400 (25.1 per cent) and by 1921 to 165,300 (28.2 per cent).

Never before had socialist or communist parties embraced peasants on such a mass scale. The Party had won the solid support of the peasants.

On the territory of the Soviet Republic the Communist Party enjoyed unrivalled political authority.

The bourgeois parties, being parties of the White Guards and of open counter-revolution, quit the political scene. The Soviet state took firm measures against all the attempts of their remnants to commit acts of sabotage and terrorism.

As has already been noted, the petty-bourgeois parties had virtually joined up with the forces of counter-revolution. Some of their leaders and activists who remained on Soviet soil threw themselves into clandestine activities, plotting counter-revolutionary revolts, acts of sabotage and terror.

The attempts of some Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders to manoeuvre were doomed to failure. In the course of the revolution and the Civil War the working people had come to realize that the activities of the petty-bourgeois parties were a far cry from the people's interests. In 1919-20 the number of Mensheviks, Social-Revolutionaries and anarchists in all the Soviets—city, regional, district and rural—was virtually reduced to nil.

The petty-bourgeois parties, once comparatively strong numerically, were falling apart: their rank and file sided with the revolution and their opportunist leaders eventually joined up with the White Guards. This process of disintegration resulted, towards the end of the Civil War, in the petty-bour-

geois parties having lost the support of any sizable sections of people.

Only one political party voiced the true interests of the broad masses of the working people and defended those interests to the end. The Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) was the only true revolutionary people's party. So it was historically inevitable that it should become the only party in the Soviet republic. All other parties and groups, despite their demagogical manoeuvring and dodging, were compelled to quit the stage of history.

5. BUILDING UP THE ARMED FORCES

Temporary Superiority of Counter-Revolutionary Forces

The class nature of the revolutionary Soviet state and its superiority over the counter-revolutionary forces were fully manifested when the need arose to create regular armed forces. The experience of revolutionary wars shows that the deposed ruling classes have an initial advantage in respect of commanding officers. This is quite natural, because the machinery of exploitation, perfected over many generations, inevitably has a corps of experienced and privileged officers at its disposal.

The oppressed classes are usually banned from commanding posts in the army and have no access to military knowledge. But revolutions usually produce talented military leaders from among the lower classes and revolutionary armies introduce new and more flexible, up-to-date forms of warfare.

This, for example, is shown by the victorious struggle of the French bourgeois revolution.

As regards military cadres, Russia was no exception. Moreover, owing to several special features of its history, the numerical strength of the cadres at the disposal of the exploiting system was quite significant. This was a result of Russia's numerous wars, as well as of tsarist colonial policy that called for additional military strength to keep the oppressed nations "in hand".

Owing to these circumstances Russia had produced a privileged troop contingent known as the

Cossacks, who had the status of special administrative-territorial unit. Cossacks living in their military district were entitled to additional land and privileges. Special army units, mainly cavalry, were formed from among the Cossack population. The Cossack armies, eleven in all, were numerically strong and occupied large territories stretching from the Don and North Caucasus to the Far East.¹

Thus Russia's ruling classes had a formidable military force in the person of the Cossacks.

The 1914-1918 war waged by imperialist powers had strengthened to a certain extent the capitalists' and landowners' positions as regards military cadres. It had brought into the officers' corps members of the bourgeoisie, the nobility, the bureaucracy, the bourgeois intelligentsia and even the kulaks, who in peace time had nothing to do with the army.

At the same time, however, the war had considerably weakened the positions of the exploiters. The old officers' corps had suffered great losses. The influx of new forces had undermined its uniform class character, giving rise to political divisions and democratic tendencies. The war itself had a great impact on army officers by exposing the vices of the existing social system.

All this created the objective circumstances that subsequently brought the democratically-minded officers over to the side of the revolution.

Lastly, the war had called into the armed forces workers, peasants and members of the democratic intelligentsia and had given them military experi-

¹ In 1916 the territories of the Cossack armies (the Don, Kuban, Terek, Astrakhan, Urals, Orenburg, Siberian, Semirechye, Trans-Baikal, Ussuri and Amur districts) had a population of about 4,500,000. Approximately 285,000 Cossacks were in the services in that year.

ence, which facilitated and speeded up the training of revolutionary military commanders. As has already been noted, it was highly significant that in late 1917 and early 1918 the old army had actually ceased to exist as an organized force and could therefore be of no use either to the revolution or to its enemies.

When the Civil War broke out both sides faced the task of creating a regular army with its own military cadres and a reliable system of recruiting, forming up and training troops.

At the beginning the White Guards had much better trained military cadres. The relatively large number of such cadres allowed them to build up their armed forces on an exclusively class basis.

An example of this was the White Guard "volunteer" army which began to be formed in the Don region in late 1917 under the command of M. Alexeyev and L. Kornilov—leadership later passed to A. Denikin. Volunteers, imbued with bitter hatred of Soviet rule, mainly officers and cadets—military college graduates—signed up for the White Guards. Lieutenants and captains often fought as rank-and-file soldiers. Often whole companies and even battalions were made up of officers. The army's numerical strength was, of course, small—4,000 men at the beginning of 1918.

In the summer of 1918 the Siberian White Guard army numbered approximately 40,000 men, of whom 10,000 were officers (half of them fighting in the ranks) and 30,000 were volunteers drawn from the bourgeoisie, landowners, the bureaucracy and kulaks.

Units composed of counter-revolutionary officers and bourgeois and kulak volunteers were well organized, well trained and disciplined and displayed military staunchness and stubbornness.

The White Guards initially hoped to score a victory with these numerically small forces, with the help of the Cossacks and aid from the interventionists, as well as by instigating revolts in the Soviet rear.

The Soviet Republic had at the time hardly any forces at all. The Red Army, which had been initially formed on a volunteer basis, was in its infancy and had virtually no officer cadres. The question of enlisting the aid of officers from the old Russian army had not yet been put to the test. Furthermore, the Soviet armed forces were scattered over a vast area.

That is why at first the forces of counter-revolution scored unquestionable successes. With comparatively small forces the interventionists and White Guards in the summer of 1918 managed to seize Siberia, the Far East, the Urals, part of the Volga region and the North. The White Cossacks, based in the Don region, launched an offensive on Moscow.

After meeting with several reverses but preserving an efficient fighting core, Denikin's "volunteer" army acting jointly with detachments of the Kuban and Terek Cossacks seized control of nearly all the North Caucasus in the second half of 1918.

However, this shortlived superiority did not bring victory for the counter-revolutionary forces.

Main Advantages of Revolutionary Armed Forces

The relatively small counter-revolutionary armies were operating in a hostile environment. As they advanced they left behind them an occupied but unconquered rear. Operating over vast territo-

ries they were forced to extend and disperse their troops. In the meantime the Red Army's resistance was steadily growing. Despite the Austro-German occupation of extensive areas and many plots and revolts, in the summer of 1918 the Soviet government managed to dispatch relatively small but effective fighting forces to the most menacing sectors of the front.

On the Eastern Front—along the Volga in the region of Kazan, Samara, Syzran and Simbirsk—and on the Southern Front—the defence of Tsaritsyn and battles on the approaches to Voronezh—the White Guards were dealt several severe blows which not only halted their advance but drove them well behind their former positions.

The war was becoming a prolonged operation and was beginning to involve ever increasing masses of people. The armies were steadily growing in strength. As fighting continued, the forces of counter-revolution steadily lost the military superiority they had enjoyed at the beginning of the war, while the revolutionary forces were increasingly successful.

The Cossacks had never been a homogeneous group from the social, economic and political standpoint, and these differences grew even more marked in the course of the revolution and the Civil War. While the well-to-do Cossacks sided with the old regime, the middle and poor Cossacks found Soviet rule increasingly to their liking.

The social and political stratification of the Cossacks affected the numerical strength of Cossack units fighting on the side of the counter-revolutionary forces and reduced their fighting efficiency.

The workers and peasants vigorously resisted all attempts by the White Guards to recruit them into their army. Moreover, the White Guards failed to

create an effective, let alone uniform, system of recruiting, and this made it even more difficult to create an effective mass army.

Nevertheless, in the latter half of 1918 and especially in 1919 the White Guard armies were considerably enlarged. In the spring of 1919 Kolchak had an army of 400,000, of which 130,000 men and officers were directly engaged in fighting. In the summer of 1919 Kolchak's army, despite serious losses, increased its total strength with the influx of new recruits. In May 1919 Denikin had 100,000 men in action and by July their number had risen to 150,000. In the autumn of 1919 Denikin's troops further increased following the mobilization of peasants from South Russia. But the growth of the numerical strength of the White Guard armies inevitably affected their social homogeneity and sapped their fighting efficiency. Class antagonisms between the volunteers of noble birth and the peasant recruits reduced to a minimum their chances of success in the Civil War, in which they fought against workers and peasants. Although the war kept draining the White Guards of their best officers, they proved incapable of organizing a sound and permanently functioning system to provide fresh military cadres for their armies.

The Soviet government, on the other hand, was building up its army on a sound and organized basis. Its recruiting system was a reliable and effective one at the time.¹ This produced a mass army

¹ In early April 1918 the Council of People's Commissars passed a decree establishing district, regional, provincial and territorial military commissariats. By the end of 1918 there were 39 provincial, 385 regional and 7,000 district military commissariats. These measures went hand in hand with the setting up of a system of universal military training "Vseobshcheye voyennoye obucheniye", known as "Vsevobuch".

properly equipped and possessing considerable reserves. Although it was initially founded along voluntary lines, the growing scale of military operations made it necessary to go over to a regular army based on strict discipline and tight organization.

One of the reasons why Soviet forces suffered setbacks in the summer of 1918 was their poor organization, their lack of military training and experience, and their lack of coordination.

On May 29, 1918, the Soviet government passed a resolution on the introduction of mobilization for the Red Army and in July of that same year the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets took decisions to that effect.

Regular mobilizations, conducted locally and later on a nationwide scale, brought new reinforcements into the Red Army. Its ranks grew from 150-300,000 in the period of voluntary enlistment to nearly one million by the end of 1918.

In October 1918 Lenin wrote: "We had decided to have an army of one million men by the spring; now we need an army of three million. We can have it. *And we shall have it.*"¹

Six mobilizations of nine age groups were conducted in 1919, bringing over 1,300,000 men into the Red Army. By the end of the war, in the autumn of 1920, the Red Army numbered 5,500,000 men.

General mobilizations naturally brought large numbers of peasants into the ranks of the army. As the Red Army grew in strength the proportion of peasants in it became predominant. Its backbone, however, were members of the working class and, above all, Russian workers from Moscow, Petrograd

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 28, p. 103.

and the industrial centres of European Russia, the Urals and the Volga region.

The several hundred thousand workers¹ who were now in the army welded the peasant masses and helped the commanders and commissars conduct military training and educational work.

The practical and theoretical aspects of the question of creating a disciplined regular Red Army became the subject of serious and keen debate.

At the heart of the debate lay different views on the need for centralized army direction, the appointment of army commanders, strict observance of discipline and enlisting the services of old army specialists. Those opposing such measures claimed that to introduce army regulations and the appointment of commanders would be tantamount to restoring the old army system. In their view the new army had to differ in every detail. They regarded absolute obedience to orders—an integral element of military discipline—as a rejection of democracy, while the creation of centralized direction and supply they regarded as bureaucracy.

The most controversial issue was enlistment of the services of old military specialists. Opponents denounced it as violation of the class principle in army building, which was fraught with dire consequences for the revolutionary cause.

The struggle to establish the principles of army building reached its height in the spring of 1919 at the Eighth RCP(B) Congress. Almost 40 delegates, forming what was called the "military opposition", were against the Central Committee proposal favouring the use of former military experts, the

¹ Towards the end of the war the proportion of workers in the armed forces (naval forces excluded) was estimated to be 15-18 per cent, or 630-760,000 men.

introduction of army regulations and so on. After a heated debate the Eighth Congress approved the standpoint of the Central Committee.

Lenin paid much attention to questions of building up a regular army and showed that the formation of precisely such an army was historically justified. He stressed that a regular army "is always characteristic of the consolidated power of every class, including the proletariat"¹ and on more than one occasion he spoke of the harm inherent in the guerrilla spirit. "The guerrilla spirit, its vestiges, remnants and survivals have been the cause of immeasurably greater misfortune, disintegration, defeats, disasters and losses in men and military equipment in our army... than all the betrayals of the military experts."²

In the process of building a new army, drawing upon experience—and military experience is always gained at the cost of blood—the mistaken views were overcome and the Party had clear-cut principles of army building that proved their worth.

In March 1918 the elective principle was abolished in the army and from that time on commanders were appointed. The services of former military experts were used on an increasing scale.

The Red Commanders

It is true that some of the former officers, spurred on by the class hatred they felt for workers and peasants, betrayed the Soviet Republic and went over to the interventionists and White Guards,

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 29, p. 292.

² *Ibid.*, p. 448.

causing considerable harm to the republic.¹ But the bulk of the officers served the Soviet government honestly and selflessly. From mid-1918 to mid-1920 some 50,000 former army officers and generals, as well as over 10,000 military administrative personnel and upwards of 40,000 army medical staff were recruited into the Red Army.

Tens of thousands of officers were employed in central military establishments and at headquarters of military units and held command posts in regiments, divisions, armies and fronts. They produced many outstanding Red Army leaders, among them A. I. Yegorov, P. P. Lebedev, A. P. Nikolayev, A. A. Samoilo and A. I. Shorin.

Col. Sergei Kamenev did not hesitate to come to the defence of the revolution. He was appointed Commander of the Eastern Front, and later Commander-in-Chief of Soviet Armed Forces. During the Civil War Col. Boris Shaposhnikov was Chief of the Operations Department at Field Headquarters of the Revolutionary Military Council and later, with the rank of marshal, he was Chief of Red Army General Staff.

Mikhail Tukhachevsky, son of a Smolensk nobleman, was a lieutenant in the First World War. Having become an ardent supporter of the revolution and joined the ranks of the Bolshevik Party in 1918, he came to be an outstanding military leader of the new Soviet school. In 1918, 25-year-old

¹ Among those who betrayed the Soviet Republic were: Viktorst and Potapov, commanding the naval and land forces at Arkhangelsk, who made it easy for the interventionists to seize the city; Makhin, commanding Soviet forces in Ufa, who connived at the city's capture by the Czechoslovak corps; Kovalevsky, Chief of Staff, Southern Front; and his deputy, Nosovich.

Tukhachevsky commanded the First Army of the Eastern Front, which liberated several cities on the Volga, including Simbirsk, Lenin's birthplace. As Commander of the 5th Army, which liberated the Urals and Siberia, he covered over 4,000 kilometres from the Volga to the shores of Lake Baikal. This talented military leader was appointed to command the Caucasian Front and then to command the Western Front, where the most crucial battles were fought.

The name of Dmitri Karbyshev is inscribed in Soviet history. A prominent military engineer, who took part in the Russo-Japanese War and the First World War, during the Civil War Karbyshev took charge of fortification construction work and helped to rout Kolchak and Wrangel. In the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) Lieut.-Gen. Karbyshev was taken prisoner by the nazis. Knowing him to be a leading military specialist they tried to persuade him to serve them, but neither lavish promises nor tortures could break the spirit of this true patriot. He died an agonizing but heroic death.

The use of military experts also merited attention from the social and class viewpoint. Coming for the most part from the former privileged classes, they served the Soviet government and fought against the forces of counter-revolution.

Their activities were, of course, controlled, mainly by army political workers—commissars—who enjoyed wide powers. A decree of the Fifth Congress of Soviets stressed that military commissars "were entrusted with the fate of the army". They directed political work among the troops, were responsible, along with the commanders, for the carrying out of army orders and, whenever necessary, guided the work of army commanders.

Alongside former experts, command personnel



**Red Army
commanders,
heroes of the
Civil War.**

**Division
Commander
V. I. Chapayev
(right). 1918,
the Eastern
Front.**



**M. N. Tukha-
chevsky,
Commander of
the First Army
of the Eastern
Front (1918).**



The Staff of the
Fourth Cavalry
Division in
conference.

Seated:
K. Y. Voroshi-
lov (left) and
S. M. Budenny
(centre).

1920, the
Western Front.



Division
Commander
I. P. Uborevich.
1919, the
Northern Front.

were widely recruited from among the people. Former privates and non-commissioned officers, the workers, peasants and students of yesterday, became steeled and experienced after their battles. Thousands of them were promoted to commanding posts in the course of the war.

Semyon Budenny was one of the most popular army leaders in the Civil War. The son of a Don peasant, he had fought in both the Russo-Japanese War and the First World War. After the revolution he organized a cavalry unit in the North Caucasus for action against the counter-revolutionary forces and it grew into a cavalry division.

In the autumn of 1919 Budenny assumed command of the legendary First Cavalry Army, later to become the subject of historical research, novels and plays. Many songs were dedicated to its exploits. Sturdy, broad-shouldered, with a striking upturned moustache, Budenny was a man of rare courage and a naturally gifted army leader. He was alien to any kind of routine and always found original and daring solutions. He was one of the first Soviet Marshals.

Vasili Blyukher, of peasant stock, began life as a factory worker and in 1916 joined the Bolshevik Party. He fought in the First World War as a non-commissioned officer, took an active part in the struggle for Soviet rule, and early in 1918 commanded the Red Army detachments that routed Ataman Dutov. In the summer of 1918 Blyukher was heading a 10,000-strong partisan army of workers from the South Urals. In a 40-day raid in the enemy rear, this army covered over 1,500 kilometres and linked up with the Red Army forces of the Eastern Front. This feat earned the army commander the Soviet Republic's first combat Order

of the Red Banner, then the country's highest military award. Blyukher helped to rout Kolchak and commanded the famous 51st Division that took the Crimea by storm in November 1920. From 1921 on he commanded the Soviet forces that liberated the Soviet Far East.

Vasili Chapayev, son of a village carpenter, returned from the First World War with three St. George's Crosses—the highest soldier award in the tsarist army. In 1917 he organized Red Army units in the Volga region and shortly afterwards was commanding a division. A born army leader, he led his forces to brilliant victories. His short military career—he was killed in action in September 1919—won him legendary fame and made him one of the most popular Civil War heroes.

Oka Gorodovikov, a Kalmyk, former blacksmith Stepan Vostretsov, Ieronim Uborevič, son of a Lithuanian peasant, Ukrainian ensign Ivan Fedko—these are but a few of the legendary Red Army commanders. Many young officers of those days became outstanding army leaders in the Great Patriotic War (1941-45).

Marshal Georgi Zhukov was a cavalry squadron commander in the Civil War, Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky commanded a cavalry regiment and Marshal Leonid Govorov commanded an artillery battalion. Many Red Army organizers and leaders were drawn from the ranks of professional revolutionaries and leading Party workers.

Mikhail Frunze, who became a Bolshevik in 1904, spent over seven years in jail, doing hard labour or in exile and was twice sentenced to death. After the triumph of the revolution, in which he took an active part, Frunze fought on the Civil War fronts. His talent, determination and educational



M. V. Frunze, Commander of the Southern Front, reviewing troops (1920).

background made him an outstanding Soviet military leader who won many notable victories on the Eastern and Southern Fronts.

Kliment Voroshilov, son of a railway worker and himself a fitter, became a Party member at an early age. He joined its ranks in 1903, and in the first Russian Revolution of 1905 was in charge of organizing workers' combat units in Lugansk (now Voroshilovgrad). After the October 1917 Revolution, already a prominent Party leader, Voroshilov plunged actively into military work. In March 1918 he formed the 1st Lugansk Socialist Unit, which defended Kharkov from Austro-German invaders, then he commanded the Red Army forces fighting at Tsaritsyn and together with Budenny organized the 1st Cavalry Army. After the Civil

War Voroshilov headed the Soviet Armed Forces, a post which he held continuously for 15 years. He had the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union.

Valerian Kuibyshev, a smart well-built man with finely chiselled features, was an officer's son. Following the family tradition he went to military college. In 1904 at the age of sixteen he joined the Bolshevik Party. His life in pre-revolutionary Russia was full of danger and hardships. In 1917 he headed the Party organization in Samara and took an active part in the struggle for Soviet rule in the Volga region. He soon became one of the Red Army's most prominent organizers and political leaders.

S. M. Budenny and K. Y. Voroshilov among soldiers of the Western Front (1920).



Many distinguished Party leaders, among them Andrei Bubnov, Sergei Gusev, Sergei Kirov, Grigori Ordzhonikidze and Joseph Stalin, were active organizers and political leaders on various Civil War fronts.

An extensive network of army educational institutions, including courses, military colleges and academies, was established.

By the end of 1918 the Soviet Republic had 63 military educational institutions, and by the end of 1920 their number had risen to 153. In the Civil War years they trained nearly 40,000 Red Army commanders. Another 25,000 or so were trained directly in the ranks of the army, on the battlefield and at courses at army and division level.

Most of the military students were drawn from among the working people—over 80 per cent of all military college graduates in 1920 were workers and peasants—and more than half of them were Party members.

The number of commanders drawn from the common people steadily increased. By the end of the Civil War former army officers constituted 34 per cent of the commanding staff and of these approximately 6 per cent had been regular army officers and about 28 per cent officers commissioned in wartime.

The system of military training that was established during the Civil War, apart from meeting the urgent need for officers, had the task of preparing the highly skilled specialists needed for the further building of an up-to-date army. One must not forget that the training of military cadres at that time was complicated by the fact that the new conditions of warfare called for more specialized knowledge.

Widely enlisting the services of former army officers and finding appropriate ways of enabling former military experts to cooperate with the new army commanders, who had emerged from amidst the people, the Soviet Republic managed to achieve a steadily increasing superiority over the White Guards in respect of army cadres.

The system of appointing political officers—army commissars, a practice which was prompted by practical needs and which conformed to the spirit of the revolution, ensured the necessary control over former army officers and, what was of even greater importance, it placed the political education of Red Army men on a broad footing.

Long ago Friedrich Engels had foreseen that the victorious proletariat would create a radically new military organization which would be a military expression of the emancipation of the proletariat. His prophecy came true.

In the shortest possible time the workers of Russia managed to create their own army organization and cadres—mass workers' and peasants' army. They robbed the capitalists of their temporary advantages and on a wide scale made full use of all the favourable factors and circumstances precisely and with farsightedness. In all their actions the workers acted as masters of their country, not only seeking to satisfy its pressing needs but also taking account of the need to solve long-term tasks. In consequence of all this the workers' army organization proved stronger and more effective than that of the capitalists.

The first victories it won imposed a great strain on the Red Army. They followed grave setbacks and were won against better equipped White forces only because of the Red Army soldiers' heroism.

In the closing stages of the war the Red Army's victories were due to its all-round superiority. Mass heroism, political awareness and a clear understanding of the issues of the war were further promoted by efficient organization, experienced commanders and military skill.

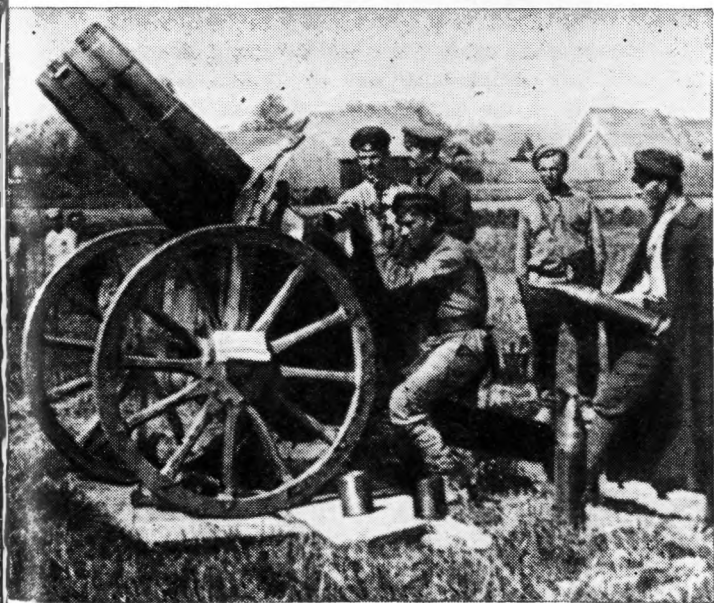
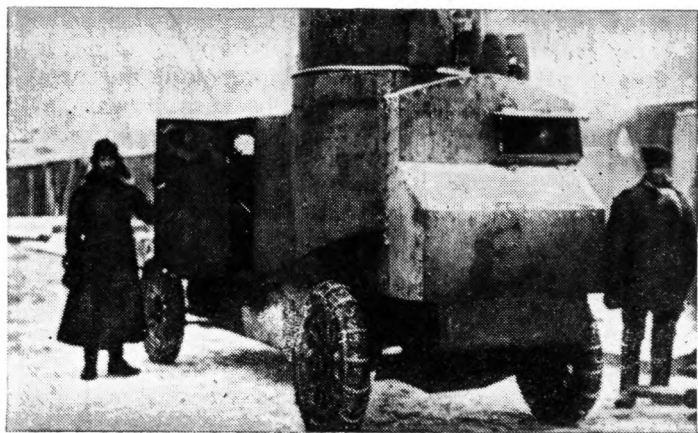
The Red Army grew successfully and emerged victorious because it was born of a great revolution. The character of the Red Army was inseparable from that of the new society, from the entire system of class relations that had taken shape in Soviet Russia and the transformations that were taking place in all spheres of life.

These factors were underscored by Lenin:

"The experience of the Soviet government in



1919, the Western Front.
By then the Red Army was being adequately supplied with combat equipment, including artillery and armoured cars.



army organization must not be regarded as something isolated. War embraces all forms of organization in all spheres. The development of our army led to successful results only because it was carried out in the spirit of general Soviet organization on the basis of class relations that affect all development." ¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 309-310.

6. ESTABLISHING A WAR ECONOMY

The invincibility of Soviet power was seen in the way the economy was put on a war footing, especially in such an important sphere as the manufacture of arms, ammunition and equipment.

In the initial stages of the war both sides used old stocks of arms which were more than plentiful, since in the course of the imperialist war Russia had amassed considerable stocks of a variety of weapons, ammunition and equipment. But as the Civil War proceeded the difference in the fighting potential of the two sides became ever more obvious.

The White Guard failed to establish any war economy worth mentioning. They continued to "consume" their old stocks and from the autumn of 1918 began increasingly to rely on aid from the Entente. This assistance was lavish and undoubtedly made things easier for the White Guard armies.

The fact that counter-revolutionary forces had no war base in Russia and received the bulk of their military supplies from abroad was further evidence of their innate weakness.

The Soviet government, on the other hand, succeeded in mobilizing all the country's resources

for the needs of defence and began large-scale production of everything the front needed. As Lenin repeatedly stressed, the country resembled a beleaguered fortress but one that was inaccessible to the enemy.

This was achieved by overcoming immense difficulties. The lack of raw materials and fuel¹, the disruption of existing domestic trade ties because of enemy occupation, the food shortage and the almost total absence of commerce due to the imperialist blockade—all these factors called for the mustering of every effort and for creative initiative, for the highest degree of organization and clarity of purpose. The Soviet Republic coped with all these hardships, although they cost it dear.

The lion's share of the country's resources, small as they were, went to the Red Army. In 1920-21 it received 40 per cent of all the cotton textiles manufactured and from 70 to 100 per cent of other textiles, 90 per cent of the men's footwear and 60 per cent of the supplies of sugar, meat and fish.

Everyone had to make great sacrifices and endure considerable privations, but they knew that this was the only way out.

Devastated as it was, deprived of many of its territories for many months, the country withstood not only military confrontation with the capitalist world which had virtually inexhaustible economic resources, but economic confrontation as well.

In the course of the Civil War the Red Army received some 4,000 guns, almost eight million shells, nearly 2,500,000 rifles and approximately

¹ In the autumn of 1918 the interventionists and the White Guards had control of areas which before the war produced 85 per cent of the country's iron ore, 90 per cent of its coal, 75 per cent of its iron and steel and nearly all of its oil.

1,500 million rounds of ammunition.¹ Red Army units operating in the main sectors had more military equipment—guns and machine guns—than the old pre-revolutionary army.

These figures are ample proof that the new society brought to life by the socialist revolution was sufficiently strong and well organized to achieve its goals.

The defence industry was not, of course, built up from scratch.

Putting the economy on a war footing was greatly facilitated by the fact that the revolution had its base in industrially developed regions. Although at a certain stage of the war the forces of counter-revolution also had access to centres of industry in the Urals, the Donbas and elsewhere, they were able only to a small extent to use their resources.

An advantage that the counter-revolutionary forces did have over the Soviet Republic, and one retained throughout the Civil War, was in respect of food reserves. This was because the White Guards and interventionists were long entrenched in areas that were the country's chief granaries—Siberia, the Ukraine and North Caucasus.

The creation of an efficient war economy was made possible only by running the country's industry on socialist lines.

"We began to develop the new economy in an entirely new way, brushing aside everything old," Lenin wrote. "Had we not begun to develop it we would have been utterly defeated in the very first months, in the very first years."²

¹ In 1919-20 the Red Army received over 5,600,000 great-coats, more than 4 million summer uniforms and over 10 million pairs of army footwear.

² V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 33, p. 269.

By nationalizing industry at the time of the Civil War the Soviet Republic was able to use all its industrial resources for defence. At a time when industrial output on the whole was far below its former level, due to the devastation inflicted by White Guards and interventionists, the shortage of raw materials, fuel and manpower, the depreciation of machines and mechanisms, and so on, war enterprises were able to meet the needs of the front on an ever increasing scale.

Strict centralization was introduced in the distribution of raw materials, fuel and manufactured goods, while the law on universal labour¹, based on the principle "those who will not work shall go hungry", provided manpower for the war enterprises.

Skilled workers and other specialists were recalled from the Red Army and assigned to war enterprises in a centralized way. Workers at all the major war plants received higher food rations.

Concentration of effort on the more important sectors played an immense part in expanding the defence industry. It could never have achieved what it did without the labour heroism of the working class. History books cite many facts and much data illustrating unprecedented labour efforts made by Soviet workers.

Working day in day out in cold shops on a semi-starvation diet to the point of physical exhaustion was a veritable feat, and one that was performed daily on a mass scale.

Overtime work to complete urgent orders for the front, such as the production and repair of military

¹ The decision on universal labour was adopted at the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets in January 1918 and embodied in the Labour Code in December 1918.



A Communist Subbotnik (voluntary work carried out on what is normally a day-off). Moscow, 1920.

equipment and transport and the repair of damaged railway lines and bridges, acquired a mass character.

When some workers would leave for the front following general, or trade union- and Party-sponsored recruitment drives, those that remained would redouble their efforts.

A striking expression of proletarian labour heroism were the *Communist subbotniks*, or days of voluntary work on a Saturday or Sunday, the first of which was held in the spring of 1919 as a response by leading Moscow workers to the Party's appeal for a rallying of all their efforts to beat back the attacks of Kolchak's troops. The campaign quickly spread to all parts of the country. In 1920 hundreds of thousands of people were taking part in Communist subbotniks, which Lenin called an important initiative. Hungry workers, he wrote, were "working overtime *without any pay* and achieving *an enormous increase in the productivity of labour* in spite of the fact that they were weary, tormented and exhausted by malnutrition. Is this not supreme heroism?"¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 29, p. 427.

7. ON AND BEHIND THE WAR FRONTS

Special Features of Military Action on the Civil War Fronts

The revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces were locked in combat for several years, of which at least thirty months were devoted to bitter fighting with large seesaw battles. The armed struggle became a real war in which mass regular armies took part and all the latest arms were used.

Any long war usually has periods of varying intensity and months of incessant fighting give way to temporary respites. This is true of the Civil War in Russia.

After the first grim battles with counter-revolutionary forces in late 1917 and early 1918, and after hard unequal battles with Austro-German armies a relative respite came in the spring of 1918.

But growing British, French, Japanese and US intervention, the mutiny of the Czechoslovak corps and the White Guard uprisings ended the respite and intense fighting was resumed in many parts of the country. Despite the relatively small strength of the embattled armies the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces were locked in a stubborn and long-drawn-out struggle in which neither side outweighed the other.

Gradually front lines were established and the geographical boundary between the two sides be-

came clearer. The struggle grew in scope, bringing massive armies into conflict and leading to the big battles that were a feature of the whole of 1919. The Red Army's decisive victories over Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich in 1919 and the rout of the interventionists gave the Soviet Republic another brief respite. Then the attacks of the White Guard remnants (Wrangel) and external counter-revolutionary forces (those of Polish capitalists and landlords) led to fresh major battles.

Many social, political, economic and military factors and circumstances were responsible for these changes. The fact that the Civil War had become interlocked with imperialist intervention heightened the importance of international factors too, such as the course of the imperialist world war and its outcome, revolutionary events in Europe, the domestic political situation in the interventionist countries, the contradictions between the imperialist powers themselves, and so on.

The fact that social and political factors were often responsible for the choice of particular areas for military offensives also distinguished the Civil War from conventional wars.

The Soviet forces sought to break through to industrial centres with a predominantly working-class population, such as the Urals and the Donbas. The White Guards set their hearts on the Cossack areas. The Soviet command took into account the growth of the partisan movement in the rear of the enemy and the achievements of the Bolshevik underground movement, while the White Guards set store by anti-Soviet rebellions, counter-revolutionary acts of sabotage and terror, and betrayal on the part of military experts.

In short, military strategy was largely of a social, class and political nature.

A unique feature of the entire course of the war was the vast size of the theatre of the war.

By the end of 1918 the front lines extended over 10,000 kilometres. In the spring of 1919 the line of the Eastern Front alone stretched for over 2,000 kilometres from the forested North Urals to the Trans-Volga steppes in the South.

Alongside the regular fronts circling Central Russia to the North, South, East and West many local fronts sprang up in the course of the war, especially in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Siberia and the Far East. Thus, in 1919 the Trans-Caspian, Aktyubinsk and Semirechye Fronts emerged, and in 1920—the Western Trans-Baikal and Eastern Trans-Baikal (Amur) fronts among others.

Battles were fought in a great variety of conditions—in mountain gorges of the Caucasus and Central Asia, Turkestan deserts, the steppes of the Ukraine, the Volga region and North Caucasus, in the Siberian taiga, the forests of Byelorussia and the Arkhangelsk region, and in the plains around Orel. Battles continued to rage in the bitter frosts of Yakutia and in the scorching heat of the Kara Kum desert.

Because the fronts were spread out and scattered trench warfare was reduced to a minimum. The Soviet forces conducted several long and stubborn defence operations that kept several major cities from falling into enemy hands—Tsaritsyn and Grozny in 1918, Orenburg and especially Uralsk in 1919.

The White Guards' attempt to go over to positional warfare in the autumn of 1920 and to sit it out in the Crimea by entrenching themselves behind the Perekop fortifications was foiled by the heroic storming of the Crimea by the Southern Front forces.

It was chiefly a war of movement. There was no continuous front line and troops often manoeuvred along large river arteries, such as the Volga, Dnieper, Ural, Kama, Don and Northern Dvina, and especially along main railway links. Attacks were

Budenny receiving the honorary Revolutionary Banner awarded to the First Cavalry Army.



usually made swiftly notwithstanding the shortage of means of transport and the poor state of the roads.

The high mobility of warfare and the conduct of military operations over vast areas enhanced the importance of large cavalry formations. At first the balance of odds in this respect favoured the counter-revolutionary forces which managed to make good use of their mobile cavalry units, composed mainly of Cossacks.

But here too the revolutionary forces succeeded in depriving the enemy of its advantages. A Soviet cavalry force was created and steadily grew in strength.

In the autumn of 1919 the First Cavalry Army was formed. Proving its superiority to White Guard cavalry in several hard battles, it became the powerful strike force of the advancing Red Army. In the final rout of Denikin's forces and in battles against the White Poles and Wrangel's forces the Cavalry Army repeatedly broke through enemy lines and harassed the enemy behind the lines.

The conduct of military operations over vast areas close to main railway lines enhanced the importance of armoured trains. These were used almost everywhere on a wide scale. They were often made from passenger trains and flat trucks, fitted with light guns and machine guns and packed with sand bags, cotton bales and so on.

Small flotillas were used on lakes and rivers. These too were mainly passenger ships, tugboats, barges and launches refitted and equipped with guns. These flotillas were extensively used on the Volga and its tributaries in 1918-19.

Operations by large military units behind the enemy lines were another feature of warfare in that period. In the summer of 1918 the Taman Ar-

my, numbering some 20,000 men, which had been cut off from the main Soviet forces by the attacks of German interventionists, Denikin's army and White Cossacks, launched a raid in the enemy rear lasting many days. Similar raids were undertaken by White Guard troops in the Soviet rear—in the autumn of 1919, when Denikin was advancing on Moscow, Mamontov's cavalry corps made a raid behind Red Army lines.

In judging the course of the war as a whole, it must be stressed that the Soviet government made much better use of the opportunities for strategic mobility than did the counter-revolutionary forces.

Soviet forces launched their attacks consistently, expertly choosing the direction of their main blows and moving their reserves in accordance with the prevailing situation from the centre to the East and from there to the South and West. Even in the grimmest situations, when the counter-revolutionary forces had scored success on the approaches to Moscow and Petrograd, the Soviet Republic invariably had a strategic advantage over the enemy.

Fighting Behind the Lines

Although it was frontline battles that decided the outcome of the Civil War, an important feature of the war was the extensive, bitter fighting behind the lines on both sides.

In territories occupied by the White Guards and interventionists working people waged an unceasing struggle against the enemy. A partisan movement arose in the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic regions immediately after their occupation by Austro-German forces and played a decisive role in ending it. Partisan detachments were active in the

Arkhangelsk region in 1918-19. In the Ukraine, the Don region and the North Caucasus in 1919 a real partisan war was waged against Denikin's forces.¹

In Siberia partisan detachments numbering around 100,000 had virtually disorganized the whole of Kolchaks' rear by the autumn of 1919. In the Far East many thousand partisans waged a long hard struggle against the interventionists and White Guards.

The scale and organized character of the partisan movement may be seen from the fact that partisan units were organized in regiments, brigades, divisions, corps and even armies.

Another significant fact was that large areas behind enemy lines were liberated by the partisans' efforts. In the autumn of 1919 they liberated nearly all of the Daghestan highlands. Early in 1919 the Taseyev Soviet Partisan Republic was formed in the Yenisei region. Very many areas in other parts of Siberia, in Kazakhstan and the Far East, in the Ukraine and North Caucasus were also cleared of enemy forces.

The mass partisan movement, which was largely a spontaneous one, mainly embraced peasants. But almost everywhere the Bolshevik Party gave the partisan movement an organized character and guidance. Underground Communist organizations in the occupied areas devoted much attention to expanding the partisan movement and gave it efficient leadership.

In territories occupied by the counter-revolutionary forces the working people resorted to many different forms of struggle. Workers and peasants

¹ Fifteen thousand partisans fought in Novorossiisk, Gelendzhik and Tuapse. By the end of 1919 there were nearly 50,000 partisans in the Ukraine.

refused to serve in White Guard forces or to pay taxes, they actively resisted requisitioning and so on. Strikes became a regular occurrence.

There were constant uprisings in towns and villages, undermining the White Guards' rear. Though many of these were spontaneous, the mass movement was generally under the leadership of Communists, because underground Party organizations continued to function even in times of unbridled terror campaigns. The underground Communist movement survived in virtually every occupied district. Moreover, despite heavy losses, it continued to gain in size and strength. The proletariat gave it loyal and steadfast support.

Acute as it was, the struggle became even more bitter. In occupied areas the White Guards and interventionists carried out the deliberate mass annihilation not only of more or less prominent revolutionary leaders and those who resisted their regime, but also of very many ordinary workers and peasants.

In thirteen regions during the latter half of 1918 the White Guards shot almost 23,000 people. In the year from August 1918 to August 1919 altogether 17 per cent of the population of 400,000 in the Northern region passed through prisons and concentration camps. During that period 38,000 persons were jailed in the Arkhangelsk prison and 8,000 of them were shot.

History books record innumerable cases of the mass executions of Red Army prisoners-of-war, including the wounded, and of partisans, workers and poor peasants. The White Guards set up numerous death camps like those on the island of Mudyug and on the Yokanga peninsula in the Northern region.



Everywhere the rule of White Guard dictatorial "regimes" was marked by violence, reprisals and bloodshed.

1919. Burial of workers murdered by Kolchak's troops in Novonikolayevsk (now Sverdlovsk).

Victims of Kolchak's supporters in Omsk, the seat of the Kolchak "regime" (1919).



Large groups of Communists and Soviet officials were executed without charge or trial. Such was the fate of 26 Baku commissars¹ headed by S. Shaumyan, M. Azizbekov, A. Dzhaparidze and I. Fioletov.

On September 15, 1918, Baku fell into the hands of Turkish troops and Azerbaijani nationalists—Musavatists—who killed up to 30,000 of the civilian population in a bloody massacre.

Many thousands perished in the Urals and Siberia at the hands of White Guards and interventionists. In the Yekaterinburg region Kolchak's troops tortured or shot over 25,000 people and publicly flogged 200,000.

I. Sukin, a minister in the Kolchak government, cynically stated: "The shootings and executions were ruthless... The bodies of the shot rebels were hung from telegraph poles along the main Siberian railway and the scene was viewed from passing express trains with philosophic indifference. Whole villages were burnt down."²

Numerous facts testify to the unparalleled brutalities perpetrated by the counter-revolutionary forces: people were buried alive or burnt in locomotive and steamboat boilers—such was the fate of prominent revolutionary leaders S. Lazo, A. Lut-

¹ The Baku Commune was a Soviet republic established in Baku and other districts of Azerbaijan in the spring and summer of 1918. In late July 1918 the Baku Commune fell under pressure from foreign and domestic counter-revolutionary forces. Its leaders were taken to the Trans-Caspian region, occupied at the time by British forces and ruled by a local Social-Revolutionary government. On orders from the British command the Baku commissars were taken out into the desert and shot.

² E. M. Spirin, *The Rout of Kolchak's Army* (in Russian), Moscow, 1957, p. 38.

sky, V. Sibirtsev and Y. Ushakov, who were killed in May 1920.

Monstrous executions and crimes were perpetrated by various bandit and kulak units and *basmachi* armed gangs in Central Asia.

Long years of continuous fighting had a harmful effect on some people's minds. Many became mentally unbalanced. Embittered by the chaos and hardships, they rejected all laws and all the elementary norms of human behaviour.

In a bid to intensify its reign of terror and intimidate the population the counter-revolutionary forces encouraged the basest instincts. Moral degradation in the ranks of the White Guards and the general mood of despair and doom that reigned among them spurred them to unbridled acts of terror and the most outrageous crimes.

To this one must add that the White Guards' savage reprisals were to a great degree responsible for alienating wavering elements, especially among the intelligentsia, from them.

Numerous documents, as well as the memoirs of many members of the White Guard, show that class hatred was one of the chief motives for the mass terror. Full of contempt and hatred for the common people, the "civilized" White Guard officers were guided by the sole aim of "punishing" and "bringing to heel" the "mutinous mob", the "boors who fancied themselves masters". This was what made them massacre countless civilians and send innocents to the gallows.

The interventionist troops contributed to this reign of terror. The Austro-German occupation of the Ukraine, the Baltic regions, Byelorussia and other territories was accompanied by mass reprisals against all who voiced dissatisfaction with the occupation regime. The US, British, Japanese and

French troops that landed in the North, South and Far East did not hesitate to execute prisoners or massacre civilians.

Many cases are known when Japanese and US troops in Siberia and the Far East shelled villages or razed them to the ground and massacred the inhabitants. Such facts were confirmed by those taking part in the intervention. General Graves, commanding US occupation forces in Siberia, said that even 50 years later Russians would still remember the brutalities of those years.

Class bitterness was not, of course, to be found only on the counter-revolutionary side. It would be naive to suppose that the people's hatred for their exploiters, at whose hands they had suffered humiliation and oppression for ages, could have assumed polite forms.

The White campaign of terror was met with retaliatory wrath and hatred. Nevertheless in the first years of the revolution the Bolshevik Party, the Soviet government and the Red Army's political leaders did their best to show utmost restraint and self-control. The Red Army took shape as an army of humanity and justice, firmly observing revolutionary legality and strict discipline.

While dealing with the attackers as they deserved, Soviet government bodies tried to be patient and considerate towards the wavering middle strata and unstable elements.

The counter-revolutionary forces unleashed a "White" terror both in the occupied areas and behind the Soviet lines. This was done mainly through mutinies and plots throughout the war. These were of varying character and embraced different political forces. There were openly White Guard revolts and conspiracies, in which the monarchists and Cadets were the dominating in-

fluence, such as the "National Centre" plot in Moscow and Petrograd in 1919. There were "mixed" plots and mutinies with the participation of White Guard officers and the Right-wing Social-Revolutionaries—the Yaroslavl mutiny of 1918, and plots and mutinies organized by the "Alliance in Defence of the Motherland and Freedom" with foreign diplomats playing a leading role. There were revolts of Left Social-Revolutionaries—the biggest of these were the Moscow revolt and the revolt on the Eastern Front in July 1918. And there were kulak revolts—in the latter half of 1918 there were 129 kulak revolts in 16 regions of the Russian Federation. All of them were accompanied by the mass extermination of Communists, Soviet officials and workers and poor peasants who supported Soviet rule.

Hundreds of loyal supporters of Soviet rule were seized by the White Guards and tortured to death during the Yaroslavl revolt, one of the bloodiest—the fighting continued for 16 days.

Nearly 15,000 workers and poor peasants were killed during the kulak revolts that broke out in 22 regions from July to September 1918.

Immediately after the revolution the enemies of Soviet rule made many attempts to assassinate Communist Party leaders. Right-wing Social-Revolutionaries played a leading part in this. Several attempts were made on Lenin's life. On August 30, 1918, he was gravely wounded by a Social-Revolutionary, F. Kaplan. Soviet leaders V. Volodarsky and M. Uritsky were assassinated in Petrograd in that same summer. In September 1919 a bomb exploded on the premises of the Moscow Committee of the RCP(B), killing 12 Communists, including the committee's secretary V. Zagorsky.

There were frequent acts of sabotage: warehouses and war factories were set on fire—in May 1920 nearly 20 war factories and depots were destroyed in the Russian Federation, bridges and water mains were destroyed and food trains derailed.

This forced the Soviet state to take the firmest measures in retaliation. The decisions of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of September 2, 1918, and of the Council of People's Commissars of September 5, proclaimed the introduction of a Red terror campaign. "To secure our rear by means of terror is a direct necessity," said the decision of the Council. "It is necessary to secure the Soviet Republic against its class enemies by isolating them in concentration camps . . . All persons involved in White Guard organizations, plots and revolts are subject to execution by shooting . . ."

The facts show that the Soviet state had at first been lenient and humane towards its political adversaries. Up to September 1918 the organs of the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission had not executed a single political enemy. But, if such leniency had been continued, it could easily have turned into an inadmissible weakness. Nevertheless, comparatively few counter-revolutionaries were subjected to repressions—by February 1919 the Extraordinary Commission had executed 5,496 political criminals, including 800 persons convicted for non-political offenses.

Such retaliation was an enforced measure. Albert Rhys Williams, a progressive American writer who witnessed the events of the revolution, noted that the Red terror was a protective measure, a direct response to the counter-revolutionary White terror.

To have spared the enemy in the conditions then prevailing would have put the revolution at risk.



Meeting of a Komsomol detachment before leaving for the front to fight Wrangel's forces. One of the placards says: "The Crimea must be taken at all costs!"

As soon as the situation on the fronts and in the rear took a turn for the better the Soviet government, in early 1919, took measures to restrict the activities of the Extraordinary Commission. In January 1920, when the Civil War was still continuing, the Soviet government abolished capital punishment.

• • •

In the main areas the Civil War ended in late 1920. In November 1920, forces of the Southern Front, commanded by M. V. Frunze, successfully stormed the Perekop fortifications which blocked the way into the Crimea, the main base of the White Guard army under Denikin's successor Baron Wrangel. The storming of Perekop is one of the most memorable episodes in the Civil War.

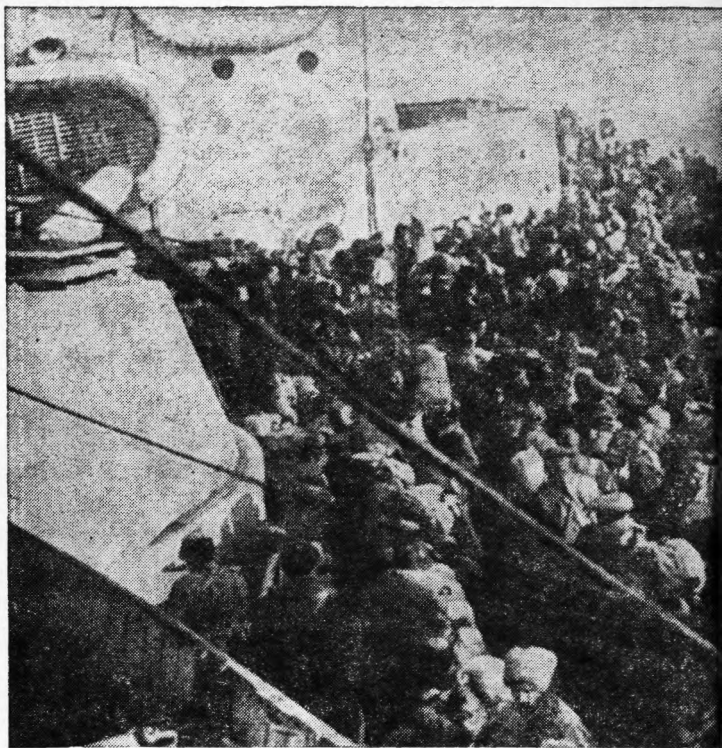
But in several areas battles against the interventionists and White Guards continued to rage for a long time. Only at the end of 1922 were Japanese troops driven from the Far East and Vladivostok was liberated. So it was virtually only in the early twenties that the Soviet people were able to start peacetime construction.

IN CONCLUSION

There is hardly any country in the world that has not experienced a revolution. A revolution is not the result of an individual decision or whim, it expresses the urgent needs of society and reflects the contradictions of social development. It begins if these objective needs are not satisfied and contradictions are not resolved in some other way. History shows us that this is how human society advances. But a revolution always comes up against resistance from the old dying forces which impede the advance of the new and fight to preserve their rule. The degree of their resistance determines the intensity and bitterness of the revolutionary struggle.

That is how changes came in preceding epochs and it is how changes come today in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

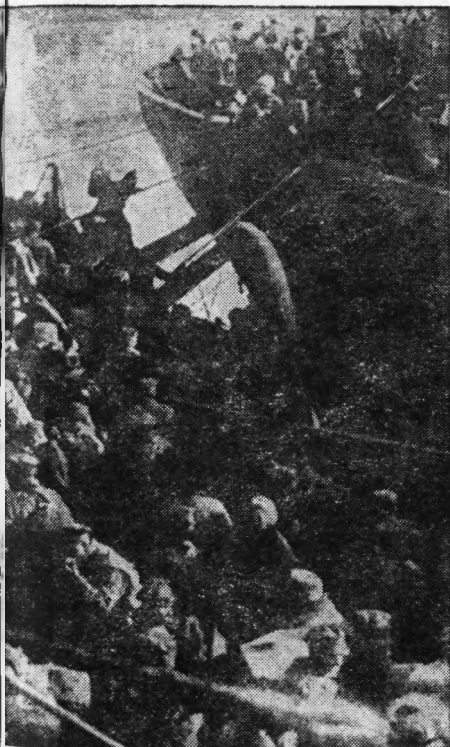
It has been stated in theory and confirmed in practice that this transition can come about without civil war. The resistance of the deposed exploiting classes is inevitable. Class harmony is impossible and there is no perfect recipe for replacing capitalism by socialism. The bourgeoisie offers bitter resistance in very many ways. It is, nevertheless, quite possible that a favourable relation of forces within a particular country or on the international scale—



this has become possible with the emergence and consolidation of the Soviet Union and the world socialist system—can prevent the bourgeoisie unleashing civil war.

Because of the historical circumstances described in this account the course of the socialist revolution in Russia was far from peaceful. The overthrow of bourgeois rule was achieved by force and

The inglorious finish.



**White Guard troops
fleeing the Crimea.**



**A field gun abandoned
by retreating
Wrangel's troops,
symbolizing, as it
were, the defeat of the
White Guard forces
by the workers' and
peasants' Red Army.**



POLITICAL POSTERS OF THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD



A 1918 poster, published when White Guard troops were closing in on Moscow. It says: "The enemy wants to seize Moscow, the heart of Soviet Russia. Destroy the enemy! Forward, comrades!"

"Hands off Soviet Russia!" demand the working people in the West. A 1919 poster.

◀ "Rise to defend Petrograd!"—a poster calling for struggle against the Yudenich forces (1919).

◀ A poster depicting the unity of the Entente with its White Guard watchdogs—Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenich.

the ensuing struggle developed into a civil war. This war, however, came to be unprecedented in scale and ferocity only because of foreign interference. Foreign intervention in Russia had no legal or moral basis. It was beyond all doubt a reactionary step directed against social progress in defence of the old thoroughly rotten society, it was an attempt at reversing the course of history.

It was among other things a flagrant violation of Russia's sovereignty, an act of brazen interference in its domestic affairs, a striking example of the "export of counter-revolution". Foreign intervention caused enormous loss of life and great damage. It took no less than five years—a whole stage in the country's history—to restore an economy that had been devastated by the interventionists and White Guards.

For over eight years the main efforts of the people were directed to beating back the enemy onslaught and then repairing the damage caused, to say nothing of the setback this constituted to the socialist development of the country.

The outcome of the Civil War was, nevertheless, highly instructive. Despite everything, the young Soviet Republic emerged victorious against the combined forces of the domestic counter-revolution and world reaction.

The attempt to destroy the workers' and peasants' state and the gains of the October Revolution by military force ended in complete failure. This was hardly accidental. The Civil War left an indelible mark on the country's history and in the memory of the Soviet people. It made millions of people aware of their strength and of the righteousness of their cause, the cause which they had fought for and had secured by their struggle.

**Booklets of the series: "The True Story
of the Russian Revolution and the Building of
Socialism"**

1. **Korelin, S. Tyutyukin**
1917. The Collapse of the Russian Empire
2. **I. Mints**
How the Revolution Was Won
3. **A. Razgon**
The First People's Parliament and Government
4. **Y. Polyakov**
The Civil War in Russia: Its Causes and Significance
5. **D. Golinkov**
Secret War Against Soviet Russia
6. **V. Startsev**
What the Soviets Are and How They Arose
7. **V. Drobishev**
How the USSR Began to Manage the Economy
8. **V. Selunskaya, V. Temyushev**
Facts and Fantasy About Collectivisation in the USSR
9. **V. Yesakov, A. Nenarokov**
From Illiteracy to Universal Secondary Education
10. **F. Petrenko**
Socialism: One-Party and Multi-Party Systems
11. **S. Fedyukin**
The Socialist Revolution in Russia and the Intelligentsia
12. **A. Yermonsky**
The Path to Peace—a View from Moscow
13. **V. Borodin**
Industrialisation in the USSR: a Programme for All Soviet Working People
14. **S. Gillilov**
Solution of the National Question in the USSR
15. **N. Savenkov**
From the Republic of the Proletarian Dictatorship to a State of the Whole People

Юрий Поляков
ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ ВОЙНА В РОССИИ:
ПРИЧИНЫ, СУЩНОСТЬ, ЗНАЧЕНИЕ

на английском языке

Цена 35 коп.



THE TRUE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

Written by Soviet historians with the general reader in mind, the 15 booklets in the series "The True Story of the Russian Revolution and the Building of Socialism" are under the general editorship of Academician Isaak Mints.

The booklets cover a long period of time—from the eve of the October Revolution in Russia to the present day.

Their purpose is to help readers abroad gain an understanding of the reasons for the socialist revolution in Russia, to give an account of the course of the revolution and of its aims and to show the importance of the revolution for the advance of the peoples of the USSR and the course of world history.

Each booklet is illustrated with photographs.



Novosti Press Agency Publishing House



Progress Publishers

Professor Yuri POLYAKOV (b. 1921), Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, is a prominent Soviet historian. On graduating from Moscow University he specialized in the history of the October Revolution, the Civil War (1918—1920) and the early years of Soviet rule. Prof. Polyakov has written over 200 studies and is joint author and editor of several standard works, including "A History of Moscow", "A History of the USSR from Ancient Times to the Present Day" and "World History".