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Introduction

The emergence of Russia as one of the most economically stable countries in the world may be attributed to the role played by the Bolshevik Revolution, with the main architects being Lenin and Stalin. Basically, this revolution led to the death of communism dynasty of Czar that was characterized by cutting off of Russia from the rest of world, poor infrastructure and logistic systems, and extra-large army taking preference in factory investment in expense of consumer goods manufacturing. The result of this was massive hunger in the economy and rising commodity prices, prompting the emergence of revolution. However, with the leadership of Lenin, Bolshevik Revolution campaigned for socialism and using non-war strategies, called for social liberty in control of factories by workers and ownership of property, as well as renunciation of secret diplomatic ties that had denied Russia access to external donors.

Basically, 1917 marked the beginning of economic turnaround fro Russia and the genesis of ‘ Power to Soviets’ slogan. Prior to this period, Russian industries were in crisis with massive shut-down of factories and increasing unemployment being the norm. According to the Togovo-Promyshlennaya Gazetta, this closure of industries was influenced by factors such as: shortage of cotton, grain and other raw materials; rising wages for the workers; declining orders in most industries; lack of fuel; and declining profits in the industries[1].

Indeed, some regions such as Moscow Industrial Region and the Southern Russia were the most affected. As from July 1917, the rate of unemployment

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skyrocketed as the supplies of fuel and other raw materials became scarce[2]. Additionally, the economic crisis continued to worsen, leading to acceleration of class conflicts which became manifested through; 1) workers became more confrontational and profits continued to shrink, 2) owners of industries became more cautious and less willing to re-invest in their businesses or take new orders[3].

By the month of June of the same year, employers in Petrograd were surprised that they had made a mistake by accepting a concession policy instead of repression policy specifically after the February Revolution. This paper will discuss the Bolshevik Revolution and the rule of Lenin and Stalin between 1917 and 1953, and their long-term impact on Russian economic development.

Lenin and the Revolution

By 1917, the policies of the Provisional Government were becoming unpopular, causing disappointment as many people regarded them as nonrevolutionary policies of the government. In effect, Lenin and Bolsheviks came out as the most progressive advocates of the need to put back power in the hands of Soviets and in effect, coined a slogan ' All Power to the Soviets' which gained a lot of acceptance among the masses due to its intention to bring radical social, economic and political reforms[4]. Bolshevik seized power in October of the same year, an action that was welcome by many workers in Petrograd who had become tired of the largely corrupt Kerensky's government. This action by the Bolshevik was regarded as installation of a revolutionary government by the people despite there being

disagreement on how the government was supposed to operate in terms of policy and organization[5].

Stalin and the Revolution

The Revolution era made Lenin to discover the organizational prowess demonstrated by Stalin and flavored by his tendency to obey orders. As a result, Stalin was rewarded with the position of Commissar for Nationalities following the October Revolution[6].

In the successive years, Stalin and Trotsky greatly pursued different lines of policies whereby, Stalin came to be associated with ‘ Socialism in One Country’ policy which aimed at making the revolution in Russia stronger than spreading the revolution outside Russia. On the other hand, Trotsky favored ‘ Permanent Revolution’ policy that aimed at spreading the Bolshevik Revolution to other parts of the world. However, upon Lenin’s death, Stalin moved swiftly, outwitting Trotsky at every move and consolidated his power to rule[7].

Economic impact of Bolshevik Revolution (Lenin and Stalin)

Immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution, the new regime adopted ambitious steps to transform the economy. The first set of changes was the transfer of land from the aristocracy to the peasantry and nationalization of foreign trade[8]. As War Communism became unpopular among the people, Lenin introduced New Economic Policy (NEP) which aimed at encouraging the element of private enterprise in agriculture and industry, while at the same time giving permission to peasants to grow enterprise after being issued with

a license. On smaller industries, the impact of the policy resulted into the enterprises being denationalized.

What became evident during this period was the fact that there was rapid industrialization and introduction of collective farming. It can be concluded that this was the period when capitalism came to dominate Russian economy which was to remain influential in later years. Another important aspect to note during Lenin era was that, on realizing that the majority of the people who had participated in the Bolshevik revolution were poor and could not afford educating their children, Lenin introduced free education which seemed also to be a relief to illiterate adults who had harbored desire to get educated but could otherwise not afford. Evening classes were introduced especially to cater for the needs of the working adults and what was observed in these classes was the tendency of learners to be taught on aspects of communism. Indeed, these policies and changes came to impact Russia economically in the long-run as more people got education, key sectors of the economy improved, and labor laws ensured the working system in Russia's industries had to change almost forever and adapt to new models which again dictated production. When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin assumed power; however, he turned out to be a dictator with time, terrorizing his opponents and making adverse policies.

Primarily, Stalin 'crippled' NEP policy by ordering the taxation of the capitalists who had enjoyed immunity during the Lenin regime. In effect, many of these capitalists who found it impossible to cope with the new laws were expelled to Siberia. More importantly, Stalin regime came to enact an economic policy, 'The First Five-Year Plans' which was implemented <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-and-the-southern-russia-were-the-most/>

between 1928 and 1933. Under this plans, Stalin was convinced that for a strong country to be realized, the economy was supposed to be strong, thus the need for industrialization in Russia. At the same time, Stalin was convinced that the peasant class needed to embrace socialism and from this, he indicated preference to the policies of War Communism.

The initiation of the first Five-Year Plan which was spiced by the collectivization drive resulted into Stalin substituting the NEP model in favor of the former. Consequently, the goals of the new plan were identified and comprised: accelerated industrialization of Russia; adoption of socialized farming; removal of the private enterprises and the development of education and transport. To ensure the realization of these goals, the government established a state planning commission to oversee the operation of the economy and as a result, Gosplan took over direct command of the production system including proposing measures to be initiated in the inputs export/import market. After this first plan, a ' Second Five-Year Plan (1933-38)' was introduced. This largely emphasized on upgrading of efficiency and techniques in industry, leading to light industries being built that produced mostly consumer goods that were to be used by the Russian population. As a result, consumption increased greatly.

Conclusion

Bolshevik Revolution was as a result of growing dissatisfaction within the Russian population on the dysfunctional of key institutions in economic, political and social environment.

After the revolution, the country experienced the rise of two powerful leaders; Lenin and Stalin who, to great extent, impacted on the key institutions in the country. Indeed, their greatest impact was experienced in the economy through initiating profound changes. Moreover they established policy work that was to see Russian economic landscape change for a long time.

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