THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNISM 2

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COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY

- Marxism itself was never practically applied on a national scale, but various examples of communes can be found in history.
- Nationally, so called Marxist ideology takes on a whole new character.
- First applied in 1917 in Russia after the successful Bolshevik Revolution (then USSR).
- Most prominent leader = Vladimir Ilyich Lenin – first to apply Marxist ideology to a national government.

Nicholas II with his family (including four nephews) in January 1916. His wife (not in the photograph) and children were murdered with him too a half year later. To the left of the Tsar an officer is in attendance. On the extreme right of the picture is the Tsarevich, next to him the Grand Duchess Anastasia.
LENINISM – significant differences from doctrinaire Marxism

(1). Lenin argued for the existence of a VANGUARD - an elite group of strong leaders (“professional revolutionaries”)

decidedly non-Marxist idea; Lenin does not agree w/ “Rev. from Below”

Lenin thought a Marxist Revolution in Russia required special organization, that Marx’s idea of a mass proletarian party was doomed b/c not enough people had developed appropriate class consciousness among the Russian working classes

Lenin is therefore impatient & wants to lead the disorganized masses;

Marx waited for history, Lenin made it

Lenin is therefore the 1

st MARXIST REVISIONIST
(2). Lenin’s belief was that tight organization could effect socialism even in a pre-industrial society, therefore REVOLUTION CAN OCCUR IN NON-INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETIES

→ this skips stage 2 of Marx’s Dialectic Materialism (Feudalism → Communism)

• but the vanguard is required to direct the peasant masses who replace Marx’s industrial proletariat (therefore hammer & sickle)

• Lenin is pragmatic where Marx was dogmatic
• (3). Also following in Marx’s footsteps – “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism” (published in 1916)
• like Marx, Lenin argued that capitalism caused wealth to concentrate, leading to monopolies, robber barons...
• Lenin – this results in less available wealth for consumers, so cos. must expand into foreign markets; in 19th c., this took form of imperialism
• these markets contributed cheap raw materials & absorbed overproduction staving off the capitalist collapse
• colonialism is therefore linked to capitalism
• b/c of this, exploited colonies, even if they’re non-industrial, can go directly to socialist revolution
• (4). **DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM** – deals w/ post-revolution party/gov’t organization (Lenin’s vanguard becomes **CPSU**, so Soviet communism has a gov’t unlike Marx)

• Dem. Cent. combines two contradictory tendencies:
  - (A) democracy, free debate are key to formulation of party policy
  - (B) but once a policy decision is made, debate stops = centralism

• this is adapted by future Soviet dictators & used to reinforce central gov’t control

• **PARTINOST** – the Party proclaims ideological truth/ “follow the Party line” (**Pravda**)

• (Lenin dies 1924 – creates an ideological/power vacuum)
• **TROTSKYISM** – Leon Trotsky
• was Lenin’s ideological colleague, his likely successor & co-leader of the revolution, founder of Red Army
• his main ideological contribution: **WORLD/PERMANENT REV.**
  ➔ belief that socialism couldn’t survive if surrounded by class enemies on all borders, he therefore wants to export revolution
• disappointment of WW1:
  Socialism v. Nationalism
    – for him, WW1 was a capitalist war and proletarian brothers lost their chance to unite
• Trotsky’s fate: Lenin’s death in 1924 led to a power struggle w/ Stalin
• (exile, Mexico City death in 1940)
• **STALINISM** – Josef Stalin (Man of Steel)

• an opponent of Trotsky, ideologically opposite to Marx

• “Socialism in One Country”

• wants to modernize & industrialize the USSR & to lead by example, not to export revolution

• to achieve this, firm state control is required (**REV. FROM ABOVE**) 

• 5 yr. Plans, Kulaks, Collectivization, Socialist Realism, Great Purges, Vozhd
• **TITOISM** – brand of comm. associated w/ MARSHAL JOSIP TITO, Yugoslavian Dictator from 1945-80

• important because he pursued soc. principles unlike those of Stalin

• Yugoslavia was not part of *Iron Curtain* – they secured their own liberation from Nazis in guerrilla war, w/o Red Army

• therefore, Tito did not feel obligated to Soviets ...also, he hated Stalin...

• Tito’s ideology:
  – that socialism need not be Soviet-directed
  – pursue a neutralist foreign policy, independent of Soviet directives
  – internally, less coercion than Stalin – state terrorism existed on a smaller scale
• style of gov’t less dictatorial - a humanistic socialism?

• Practical applications (not found in USSR)
  – workers right to strike
  – INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY – not controlled by dictator
  – Free exchange of ideas – less state propaganda & censorship, criticism permitted

• held fragile Yugo. confed. together

• when he died, divisions boiled over into civil war
• **KHRUSHCHEVISM** – Nikita (1953-64)  
  • was the 1st enduring successor to Stalin  
  • up to him to address the excesses & failures of Stalinism – such as neglect of consumer industries (still a problem), of peasants...  
  • Khrushchevism is a movement away from Stalinism  
  • inaugurated policy of **DESTALINIZATION** - denounced Stalin in a 6hr. speech before Politburo  
  • somewhat of a cultural/intellectual thaw  
  • appearance of more freedom, less repression  
  • internationally adopts policy of **PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**  
  • stated that war is not the best way to bring about a comm. world  
    – mvmt. away from Leninist/Trotskyist principles  
    – the real world did pre-empt many of his ideals (Cuba, etc.)  
  • he does keep the Leninist idea of the Vanguard, that the Comm. Party should remain supreme (PARTINOST)
• **MAOISM**
• version of Marxism attributed to Mao Zedong, comm. leader of China 1949-76
• like Tito, Mao disliked Soviet/Stalinist version
• Mao thought he was the true Marxist
• Wanted complete equality – Mao tunic, all carried Mao’s Book of Quotations
• Wanted to eliminate all social distinctions
• Esp. true in 1960’s **Cultural Revolution** – attempt to restore ideological purity
• But like Lenin, he adopted the idea of a vanguard - that Party held all power
• **MAO’S APPROACH TO REVOLUTION:**
• advocated **GUERRILLA WARS** in **AGRARIAN** societies to aid in world wide spread of comm. (like Trotsky)
• such wars had to be violent, well planned & executed
• revolutions to proceed in 3 stages:
  – Organizational – objectives set
  – Guerrilla war
  – Conventional War
• Pursued this himself and supported others: Korea, Vietnam – Ho Chi Minh
Deng Xiaoping (1977-97)

- Gang of 4 Trials
- New Democratic Revolution
- Tiananmen Square
GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL (1985 -91)

very much a revision of Marxist ideals, even an abandonment

his policy hinged on GLASNOST (openness), much of which involved exposing previous errors & admitting past mistakes, both political & economic

as for eco. failures, Gorbachev inaugurated a new policy of economic reform – PERESTROIKA

admit faults of the economy, such as inefficient production, wasteful labour...

adopted a FREE MARKET stance – not Marxist, but pragmatic

in USSR, this transition proved very difficult – very poor economy
• more protests also permitted
• **DEMOKRATIZATSIYA** is another element of Glasnost – Political (Democratic) Reform
• this was tested by Yeltsin and some rebellious republics
• was not intended to be an abandonment of Marxism, just an admission that eco. restructuring was necessary...