



# Communism in Crisis

Lenin & Stalin in Power

# Basil Dmytryshyn

- Wrote in the 1960s-1980s
- Polish, but escaped to USA after being imprisoned by both Germans and Russians during WWII
- Speaks many languages
- Expert on Russian history from 700s-1991; Ukraine
- Revisionist, anti-Stalinist historian
- **Thesis**: Stalin used excessive cultural and social regimentation to accomplish his industrial and agricultural goals

# Russian Civil War (1919-1920)

- **Reds** (Communists) vs. **Whites** (anti-Bolshevik, Mensheviks/SRs, monarchists & supported by West)
- Last Romanovs executed (July 17, 1918)
- Lenin calls for “**Dictatorship of the Proletariat**”
  - Uses force to put down all opposition→
  - Cheka create “**Red Terror**” (250K murdered)



# War Communism (1920)

- Nationalization
- Drafted all men < 50; Women worked in industry
- Peasants farmed to feed army/workers



# Lenin's Reforms & NEP (1921)

- Some private ownership @ local level
  - Indicates Russia is not ready for Communism
- Politburo est. single-party state
  - Allowed local elections; candidates were Communist
- Religion suppressed; Marx
- Mass media pushed propaganda



# Foreign Policy

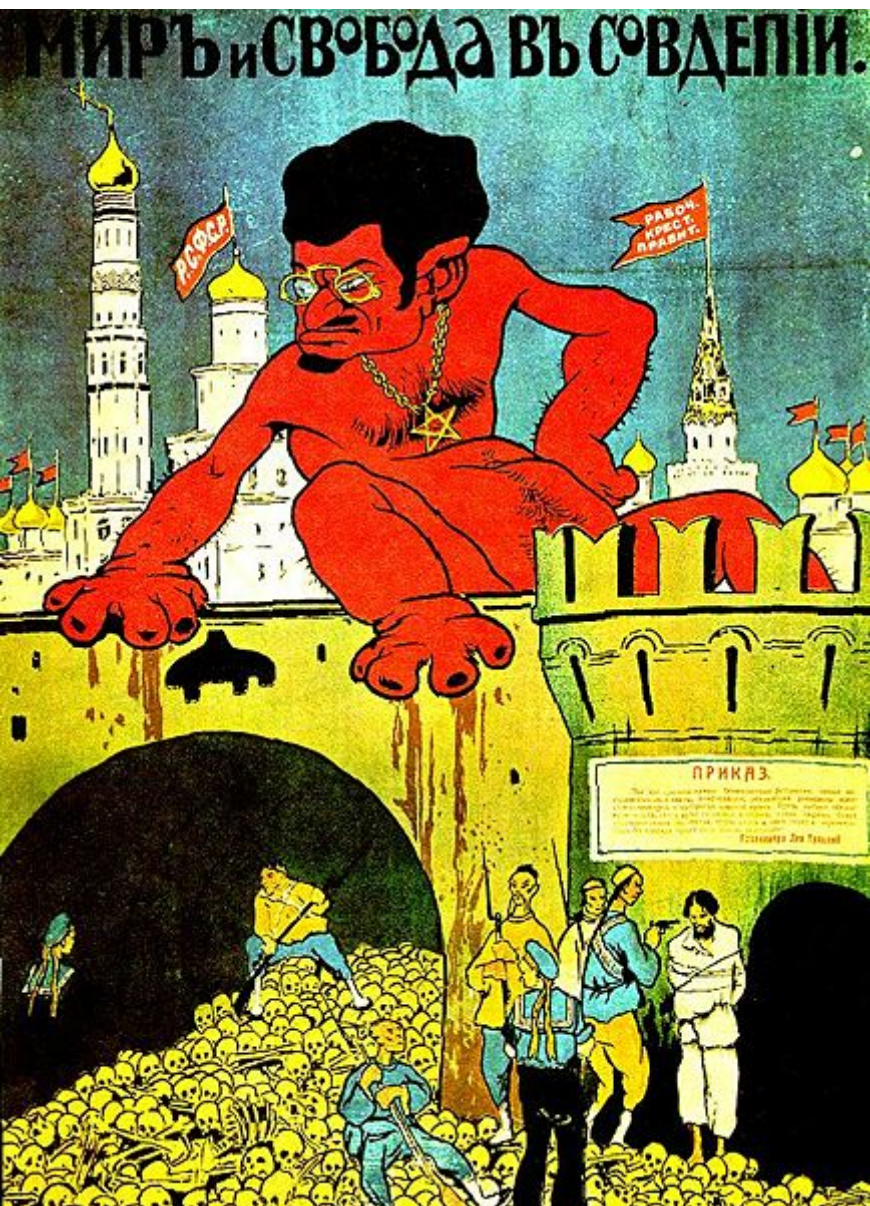
- Worldwide Communist takeover → Comintern est.



# Lenin's Death (1924)

- USSR established in 1922
- Lenin dies of a stroke with no clear successor, but it's likely he would have liked Trotsky
  - Stalin vs. Trotsky → Stalin wins.





## Perspectives of Trotsky

# USSR Under Stalin

- State would “wither away” (176)
- Rewriting History
  - Can’t question Lenin
  - 1930 – Universal primary ed.
    - Classroom discipline returns; create good workers for State
  - 1934 – Changes education system for history
- Teaching of Russian language; “**Communist virtues**”
- No more free love → family & marriage stressed (177);
  - “**Mother Heroine**” – 10+ Children
  - No more “hooliganism” → death!



- **Five-Year Plans** (1928) – established quotas that industry had to meet; ended privatization (goal: 250%)
  - First two Five-Year Plans were effective in building heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods, quality, and rewards for workers
- Forced **collectivization** of agriculture returned peasants to serfdom → poor econ policy, over-bureaucracy, peasant indifference (174) → 10 million starving



# Classes vs. Classless Society (179-180)

- Marxist historians: Truly classless by definition
- Others: USSR was just like any other country
- Others: Obeying vs. Commanding Class (D)
  - Stalin could “freeze” workers through planned econ
  - Paid skilled and unskilled workers differently (1931)
  - Rewards for Stakhanovites and others (Boxer the Horse)



# Purges

- Causes (different historiographical theories)
  - Scapegoat to cover up economic failure of 5 Year Plans
  - Eliminate Opposition
  - Terror inherent to Totalitarianism → submit to state
  - Stalin's own madness/paranoia
- Different from Lenin
  - Numbers involved & non-party casualties
  - “Show trials”
  - Forced confessions of guilt



- Occur 1933-1939; 300K “purged”; 35K from army
  - **Reign of Terror** – Politburo member Kirov assassinated in 1934; used as an excuse to execute whomever Stalin wished
  - No defense allowed, eliminated “Old Bolsheviks,” Red Army
  - **Kulaks** – shot or sent to **Gulags**
  - Great Purge – Torture, public confessions, executions
  - Trotsky – Murdered in Mexico
- After purges, only loyalists remain – Khrushchev, Molotov, Malenkov, etc.

