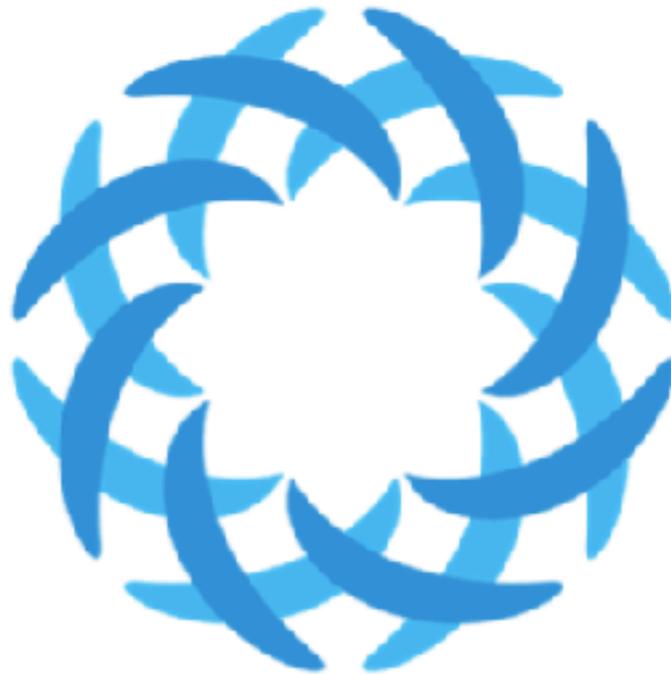

Soviet Central Committee

Industrialization

St. John's Preparatory School • Danvers, Massachusetts • 9 December 2017



SJPMUN XII

building a better tomorrow

Letter from the Chair,

Dear Delegates,

My name is Byron Papanikolaou, I am a senior at St. John's Prep, and I will serve as your chair for the Central Committee's session on the direction of the Soviet economy. I have been involved with Model UN since freshman year, and am excited for the opportunity to chair this committee, as well as to meet you all in December. Yet, in addition to Model UN, I serve as president of the Young Socialists Club as well as a Senior Officer of the Philosophy Club. Below you will find background information to guide you through your research. Whether you represent Bukharin's Right Opposition, Trotsky's Left Opposition, or the Stalin loyalist "Centre" faction, I encourage you to research where your faction stood in the industrialization debate, as well as the particular interests of your assigned figure. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at my email below.

Thank you,

Byron Papanikolaou '18

bpapanikolaou18@stjohnsprep.org

Chair, SJP MUN XII

Committee Description

Composed, as Lenin put it, to function as “supreme authority of the party,” the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union appoints members of most leading positions of the party, and approves the decisions of the seven-member Politburo. Therefore, the Central Committee would be responsible for approving any new plan for rapid industrialization or for the conservation of Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP). The number of members varied, though in this period, 1924, it would have fifty-three members, each of whom would be elected by the congress of the Communist Party. Ultimately, this committee, as the de-jure leading body of the Soviet Communist Party, has the power to pass resolutions relating to the overhaul or preservation of the Soviet agrarian economy. Resolutions can be passed by a simple majority, and the committee will operate under standard parliamentary procedure.

History of the Problem

The new Soviet Union emerged from the Russian Civil war in an economic and leadership crisis. With Lenin’s death in January of 1924, and the end of a bloody Civil War in 1922 that claimed over 5,000,000 lives, the first “Workers’ State” was now politically isolated.¹ Furthermore, it lagged behind in dangerously its industrial capability, having removed the medieval institution serfdom only

¹ "Russian Civil War." In *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, edited by John Merriman and Jay Winter, 2267-2272. Vol. 4. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. *World History in Context*

63 years earlier in 1861. Additionally, the revolution itself posed an ideological contradiction; pure Marxist philosophy predicts that a dictatorship of the proletariat can only emerge in an industrial nation, like Germany and England. Marx asserted that a society must make the transition from feudalism to capitalism before it can evolve from capitalism to socialism.

By the time of revolution in 1917, Russia had only undergone meager attempts to industrialize through Finance Minister Sergei Witte's programs. By that year, the empire only had a proletariat of 1,000,000 workers, compared with France and Germany having a majority of their populations belonging to the working class.² Orthodox Marxism contends that the "vast majority" of the proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie minority. Therefore, how could a dictatorship of the proletariat emerge without a proletariat?

In response to the dilemma (as well as a measure for winning the civil war), Lenin instituted a policy of War Communism, which arranged for the military and state control of all private industry. Yet, by 1921, production dropped to about one fifth of the prewar totals.³ For this reason, in the same year, the Bolsheviks composed the "New Economic Policy," a liberalization of the markets that was

² "Sergei Witte." In *Historic World Leaders*, edited by Anne Commire. Detroit: Gale, 1994. *World History in Context*

³ Russian Civil War." In *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, edited by John Merriman and Jay Winter, 2267-2272. Vol. 4. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. *World History in Context*

aimed at building a capitalist base from which socialism would arise. In the words of the party, the NEP served as the “production of the means of production.”

Statement of the Problem

Both the former Central Powers and Entente of the Great War intervened on the side of the Tsarists during Russia’s civil war. With the Soviet faction having defeated the faction backed by practically the entirety of the industrial world, the young nation found itself diplomatically isolated. The also young Weimar Republic found itself in a series of tumultuous inflation crises with French forces occupying the industrially strategic Rhur Valley, and the French and British economies (although, primarily the French) found themselves increasingly focused on reconstruction rather than foreign aid. The United States simultaneously retreated into isolationism, backing out of the League of Nations that it had helped to form.

Despite attempts at growth, the NEP’s effects were minimal in the USSR’s attempts to gain parity with the Western world. For this reason, Leon Trotsky’s “Left Opposition’ in the Central Committee began to call for rapid industrialization to “produce the means of production.”⁴ Nikolai Bukharin's Right Opposition, in this debate aligned with Stalin’s “Centre,” (who later switched sides on the industrialization debate) sought the preservation of the NEP, and opposed rapid industrialization, which,

⁴ Ramnath Narayanswamy, review of Peasants, Class, and Capitalism: The Rural Research of L. N. Kristman and his School.

Bukharin believed, would be carried out at the expense of the peasantry.⁵ Now this committee divided into the followers of Trotsky, Stalin, and Bukharin, must decide whether to preserve the NEP, abolish it in favor of rapid industrialization, or to find a third way to modernization.

Bukharin and all in his faction sought to maintain Russia's status as a purely agrarian nation.

While Trotsky saw industrialization as instrumental in the formation of socialism, Bukharin saw it as a purely capitalist scheme to further enslave the peasantry. Following in Peter Kropotkin's tradition, Bukharin (and his supporters) desired a Russia made of self-sufficient farming communities.⁶ In fact, agrarian communes outside of noble control had begun to materialize even before the fall of the Tsar. He and his faction sympathized heavily with the Ukrainian anarchist faction of the civil war, the Makhnovists, led by the charismatic Nestor Makhno. This faction was ultimately crushed by Trotsky's forces, and this instance of socialists fighting socialists helped ferment the deeply rooted divisions of the party.⁷

Trotsky, as a proponent of global revolution, perceived a need for the new Soviet Union to exponentially increase its industrial might. As the only country whose socialist revolution had succeeded, Trotsky believed that if Russia were to expand the revolution, it would need a westernized industri-

⁵ "Sergei Witte." In *Historic World Leaders*, edited by Anne Commire. Detroit: Gale, 1994. *World History in Context*

⁶ Ramnath Narayanswamy, review of *Peasants, Class, and Capitalism: The Rural Research of L. N. Kristman and his School*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

al machine that could be easily transformed into a war machine. Such a position would later be adopted by Stalin after Trotsky's exile, although with much less regard for human life. In a strict reading of Marx and Lenin, Trotsky perceived the Russian Revolution as premature, since it occurred in a highly agrarian nation, thus skipping to a society's socialist stage before its necessary capitalist stage.⁸

Stalin's so-called "centre" faction had very little of an ideology of its own. It sided with Bukharin's agrarians initially for political convenience to eliminate Trotsky. It then took Trotsky's pro-industrialist position to eliminate Bukharin. The primary purpose of Stalin and his supporters in this committee is to increase Stalin's power and standing in the party in any way necessary, while weakening both sides by potentially playing them against each other.⁹

⁸ Fitzpatrick, Sheila. 1999. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 181.

⁹ Service, Robert (2004). *Stalin: A Biography*. London: Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-333-72627-3.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent, if at all, should the USSR industrialize?
2. Who should replace Lenin? (Remember to consider faction loyalty)
3. Should the Soviet Union seek to spread the revolution, reconcile with the capitalist nations, or retreat into isolationism?
4. How much power should be delegated to the local soviets (the workers' councils)?
5. What should be the governing status of the ethnic minorities of this union? Keep in mind that this committee has many non-Russian members.

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