

name of the country from Russia to the Union of
In 1922 the Communists changed the official
nesses and to sell what they produced for a profit.

manufacturers and farmers to own their own busi-
departure from Marxist theory, NEP permitted small
some private businesses to operate. In a startling
attempt to stimulate the economy, Lenin allowed
remained under government control. But in an
steel, railroads, and large-scale manufacturing
Economic Policy, or NEP. Major industries such as
caused. He announced a plan called the New
chaos that both war and government policy had
In 1921 Lenin tried to bring order out of the
dous power but was extremely inefficient.

bureaucratic administration that wielded tremen-
of 16 and 50 to hold a job. It also erected a huge
the government required everyone between the ages
the principle that those who would eat must work,
under state control all major industries. Applying
a policy of nationalization, in which it brought
Under war communism, the government carried out
an economic policy called war communism in 1918.

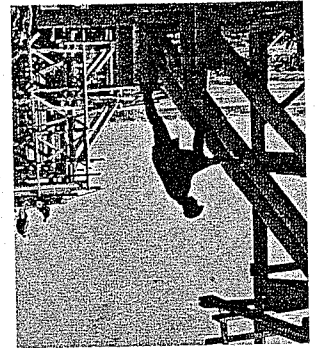
known as Lenin, and the Bolsheviks had introduced
war, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (ool•YAH•nuhn), also
In their struggle for survival during the civil

Lenin in Power

—adapted from *Behind the Urals: An
American Worker in Russia's City of
Steel*, John Scott, reprinted in *The
Global Experience*, Volume 2, 1987

as you should. People will fall, but we are building
blast furnaces all the same, aren't we?"
don't pay as much attention
know how to be careful. You

"You ploughboys don't
ever, blamed the workers.
folding. The foreman, how-
need to improve the scaf-
companions talked of the
aid station. His shaken
he was carried to the first-
scaffolding. Badly injured,
the day a rigger fell off the
surface. Three hours into
work, for ice coated every
ground. It was hazardous
weld fittings to the blast furnaces 100 feet off the
It was 35 degrees below zero when the team



Soviet construction
project

Storveller
The

Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or the Soviet Union. During this time, Lenin and other Communist leaders also completed a new constitution. This constitution stated that the USSR was a Socialist state, meaning that the government controlled the means of production.

In theory this state, called the dictatorship of the proletariat, was controlled by workers. But in practice the leadership of the Communist party controlled the workers. It was, as German Communist party member Rosa Luxemburg observed: "... a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians." The classless society envisioned by Marx was, in the Soviet Union, a pyramid, with the party boss at the top and the peasants at the bottom.

The non-Russian nationalities in the USSR did not fare much better than the peasants. Because Lenin did not want to break up the old Russian Empire into independent states, he gave each major nationality its own republic with its own bureaucracy. In reality, however, the central government in Moscow still made the important decisions for these republics. In spite of the government's talk about equality for all nationalities, the Russians remained the dominant group in the Soviet Union and largely determined its policies.

Trotsky and Stalin

In 1922 Lenin suffered two strokes that left him permanently disabled. He died two years later at the age of 54.

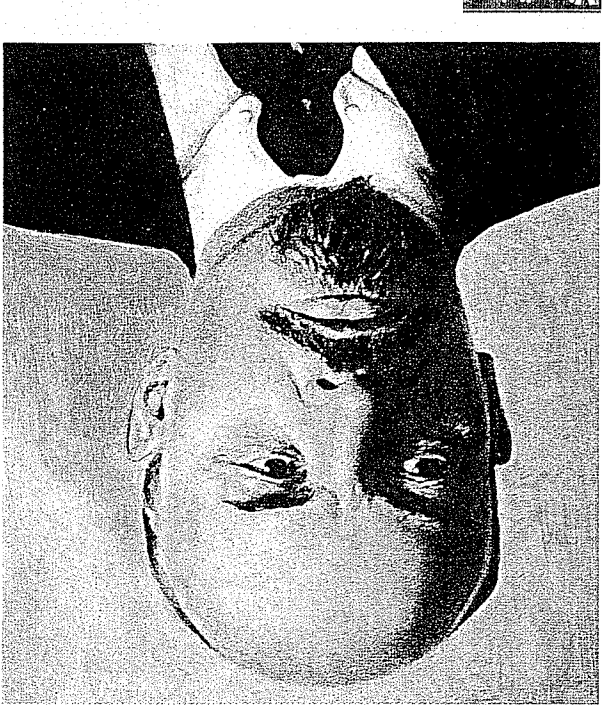
The struggle to succeed Lenin began during his final illness. The two main contenders for the position were Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. Next to Lenin, Trotsky had been the most important person in the Communist party. He had played a key role in the Bolshevik Revolution and had built the Red Army into a powerful fighting force. Trotsky came from a middle-class background and was a scholar who contributed many new ideas to the Marxist movement. He was also a speaker of great power and eloquence.

Born in Georgia, a territory south of Russia, Stalin was the son of artisans. A seminary student in his youth, Stalin was punished for reading books about revolution and social conditions, including novels such as *Les Misérables*. Stalin later renounced Russian Orthodoxy and became a Marxist revolutionary. Unlike Trotsky, Stalin was a skilled administrator. In 1922 he rose to the important post of secretary general of the Communist party.

Trotsky was better known than Stalin, both at home and in the Comintern (Communist International), an organization of Communist parties from all over the world. Moreover, Trotsky had been closer to Lenin. Nevertheless, Stalin managed to outmaneuver Trotsky politically. As secretary general, Stalin had the authority to appoint and remove officials. He gradually gained control of the party bureaucracy. As soon as he was securely in power, Stalin exiled Trotsky to Siberia and then expelled him from the Soviet Union. Trotsky eventually settled in Mexico City, where he continued to write about communism and the Soviet Union. An assassin acting on Stalin's orders murdered him in 1940.

Trotsky and Stalin held fundamentally different views about the path the Soviet Union should follow. Like Lenin, Trotsky believed in the theory of a "permanent revolution." He believed that only when the Russian Revolution had touched off uprisings all over the world could Socialists build an ideal society in the Soviet Union. Stalin, in contrast, declared it possible and necessary to "build socialism in a single country." By this he meant that the Soviet Union should concentrate on growing strong first, before it tried to spread revolution around the world.

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Warning
 Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) helped put the Soviet Union's economy back on its feet in the early 1920s. In what way did NEP depart from Marxist theory?