

NEP AND THE STRATEGY OF A RAPID DEVELOPMENT

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2110

NEP

New Economic Policy (NEP), the economic policy of the government of the Soviet Union from 1921 to 1928, representing a temporary retreat from its previous policy of extreme centralization and doctrinaire socialism. The policy of War Communism, in effect since 1918, had by 1921 brought the national economy to the point of total breakdown. The Kronshtadt Rebellion of March 1921 convinced the Communist Party and its leader, Vladimir Lenin, of the need to retreat from socialist policies in order to maintain the party's hold on power. Accordingly, the 10th Party Congress in March 1921 introduced the measures of the New Economic Policy.



THE MAIN MEASURES OF NEP

These measures included the return of most agriculture, retail trade, and small-scale light industry to private ownership and management while the state retained control of heavy industry, transport, banking, and foreign trade. Money was reintroduced into the economy in 1922 (it had been abolished under War Communism). The peasantry were allowed to own and cultivate their own land, while paying taxes to the state. The New Economic Policy reintroduced a measure of stability to the economy and allowed the Soviet people to recover from years of war, civil war, and governmental mismanagement. The small businessmen and managers who flourished in this period became known as NEP men.



RESULTS

But the NEP was viewed by the Soviet government as merely a temporary expedient to allow the economy to recover while the Communists solidified their hold on power. By 1925 Nikolay Bukharin had become the foremost supporter of the NEP, while Leon Trotsky was opposed to it and Joseph Stalin was noncommittal. The NEP was dogged by the government's chronic inability to procure enough grain supplies from the peasantry to feed its urban work force. In 1928–29 these grain shortages prompted Joseph Stalin, by then the country's paramount leader, to forcibly eliminate the private ownership of farmland and to collectivize agriculture under the state's control, thus ensuring the procurement of adequate food supplies for the cities in the future. This abrupt policy change, which was accompanied by the destruction of several million of the country's most prosperous private farmers, marked the end of the NEP. It was followed by the reimposition of state control over all industry and commerce in the country by 1931.

The NEP succeeded in creating an economic recovery after the devastation of World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the Russian Civil War.



THE STRATEGY OF A RAPID DEVELOPMENT

In 1928, the NEP was finished. The Stalinist leadership passed to the forced construction of socialism. It set the goal of accelerating the industrialization of the country and mass collectivization of agriculture.

The course for socialist industrialization was set by the 14th Congress of The All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) held in December 1925. This course was implemented during the pre-war five-year plans. Priority was given to heavy industry and its core - machine building. On this basis, it was planned to carry out the reconstruction of all branches of the national economy, strengthen the country's defense capability and ensure the economic independence of the USSR.



INDUSTRIALIZATION

The planned tasks for the first five-year period (1928-1932) proposed an increase in industrial production three times compared with 1928, and twice as much as in the second five-year plan (1933-1937) in 1932. The third five-year plan (1938- 1942) there was a new doubling of industrial production.

For 12 pre-war years (1928-1940) the country has made an unprecedented leap in the growth of industrial output. About 9,000 large industrial enterprises entered the country. The production of electricity increased from 5 billion kilowatt-hours - in 1928 to 48 billion kWh - in 1940 (ten times); oil production increased from 11.6 million tons to 31.1 million tons (almost three times); smelting of pig iron increased from 3.3 million tons to 14.9 million tons (four times). In absolute volumes of production, the USSR already in 1937 came out on top in Europe and in second place in the world after the United States.

The industrialization of the country ensured the economic independence of the Soviet Union, created conditions for the reconstruction of all sectors of the national economy, strengthened the defense capacity, contributed to the quantitative and qualitative growth of the working class and the scientific and technical intelligentsia.



COLLECTIVIZATION

Mass collectivization of agriculture was also accelerated. It was carried out forcibly, with the application of measures of terror and lawlessness. During the years 1930-1931, 381 thousand kulak families were evicted to remote areas of the country.

The results of mass collectivization show that by the end of the First Five-Year Plan 61.5% of the collectivized in the USSR and 93% of peasant holdings by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan period. In the course of collectivization, agricultural production fell. For example, the number of cattle from 1928 to 1934 decreased from 60 to 33 million head. The policy of forced collectivization led in 1932-1933, to hunger in the regions of the North Caucasus, the Volga region, Ukraine, Western Siberia and Kazakhstan. In these granaries of the country several million (according to historians, from 3 to 7 million) people died of hunger.

Despite the fact that collectivization was painful, with serious inflections and errors in the pace and methods of its implementation, it contributed to the growth of labor productivity, increased volumes of agricultural production, ensured the possibility of creating a reliable food fund, which was of no small importance for the economic victory in the Great Patriotic War .

But at the same time, mass collectivization led to a significant change in the way of life of the peasantry, subordinating it to the command-and-will methods of the Stalinist regime.



CONSTITUTION

Changes in the society that occurred during the first two five-year plans (1928-1937) were reflected in the Constitution of the USSR, adopted in December 1936. In this Constitution, the political main Soviet Union proclaimed the Soviets of Working People's Deputies, and the economic basis - socialist ownership of the means of production.

The supreme body of state power (instead of the congress) was the Supreme Soviet, consisting of two chambers: the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities, and between its sessions - the Presidium of the Supreme Council. The suffrage also changed: elections became universal, equal and direct in secret ballot.

The Constitution of the USSR in 1936 was rather a democratic facade of a totalitarian state than a reflection of reality. This, in particular, is evidenced by the fact that it was in 1936-1938. the peak of mass Stalinist repressions. It was in those years, on the orders of Stalin, that loud judicial political processes were conducted.



STATE SOCIALISM

As a result of the first two five-year plans, a social system was created in the USSR, which is defined as "state socialism". Socialism - because there was a socialization of all means of production, the liquidation of private property. State - the functions of disposing of property and political power began to be carried out by the party-state apparatus, the nomenclature and, to a decisive degree, their leader - J.V. Stalin.



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