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## ABSTRACT

## A State under Siege: Military Origins of Command Economies

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This dissertation develops a war-centered theory of collectivist regimes. I argue that in a large-scale war of coalition alliances, belligerent nations launch extensive programs of economic mobilization and establish centralized institutions of economic regulation. Because exterior states are likely to restrict interior states in their access to the international markets, measures of centralization are likely to be more extensive among interior states than exterior states. Deprived of free access to global markets, even the most economically developed interior states deplete their domestic resources. Such states experience shortages of goods, social unrest, crisis within ruling elite, military setbacks, and, due to the combined effect of these conditions, state breakdown. Under conditions of economic polarization, a total collapse of authority may unleash coercive redistributive action of the lower classes directed against the better-off classes and institutionalization of redistribution through nationalization of economic assets by the state.

My comparative analysis of economic and political transformations in five European nations (Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia) during World War One (1914-1918) supports the war-centered argument. The exterior nations that maintained access to the world economy (France and Great Britain) survived total war. The interior states (Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia) experienced breakdown. In Russia, where the old system of authority had become completely paralyzed, the state collapse resulted in massive redistribution of economic assets and institutionalization of the collectivist form of social organization.

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## **Part I. Introduction**

### **The Rise and Demise of Collectivist Regimes**

One of the most dramatic features of social change in the twentieth century was the rise and demise of communist and fascist regimes. For several decades these violent and anti-liberal forms of political organization represented a mortal challenge to capitalist democracies. In the mid twentieth century, when communism was on the rise, many observers thought that capitalism was giving way to socialism, in one variety or another. Collectivism dominated, individualism was in retreat. Some scholars thought that the triumph of socialism was inexorable and wondered if capitalism had any chance to survive (Schumpeter 1942).

Even in the 1980s the communist system was commonly viewed as stable and durable, albeit neither effective nor democratic. For many Western intellectuals socialism still embodied a human quest for equality and social justice. Leaders of Third World countries chose between different models of socialism as a developmental strategy. Social scientists examined pathways of transition from capitalism to socialism. These scholars would have been shocked if someone told them that in few years they would be studying the reverse transition. Predictions of the fall of communism and the triumph of free market economy were seen as coming from the realm of pure fantasy.

By the end of the century everything changed. Like the fascist regimes a half century before, communist regimes became either discredited or defunct. Command economies lost in competition against market economies and most Western intellectuals abandoned their fascination with socialism. It no longer appealed to the leaders of the Third World countries. In

spite of the fanfare of an imminent communist paradise on Earth, the lifespan of these regimes turned out to be remarkably short.

### Existing Explanations of Collectivist Regimes

It appears as if everything that can be said about communism and fascism has already been written. We know that collectivist regimes have been brought to power by mass social movements driven by radical ideologies. To achieve the lofty ideological goals proclaimed by their leaders, these regimes sought to subordinate all private interests to strategic goals of the state-organized collectivities. Political control and administrative regimentation permeated all social institutions and spanned the public-private divide. By enveloping individuals with a totalizing ideological discourse, authorities sought to create a new type of personality completely dissolved in a collectivity.

In nations where collectivism triumphed, operations of markets were either subordinated to the national goals or suspended entirely. In partially socialized (corporate) economies, private actors continued to operate but markets have been subordinated to corporatist macro-institutional arrangements coordinating interests of the state, the employers, and the employees. In completely socialized (state socialist) economies, the state came into possession of all major productive assets of the nation and market operations have been suspended.

In their ideological proclamations, leaders of collectivist regimes, particularly of the communist variety, boasted to represent a higher form of economic and political organization than the one offered by a capitalist society. They promised not only to catch up and overcome capitalist countries in economic and social arenas but also to create a society of justice, prosperity, and equality. Some of their technological achievements and social accomplishments, let it be acknowledged, were truly spectacular. In a very short period of time, the Soviet Union

reached military-strategic parity with the United States and took the lead in space exploration. Social welfare services, provided in most communist countries, including free education, free health care, and retirement pensions, were unprecedented in their scope and universal access. In the long run, however, collectivist economies proved to be ineffective. Being able to run mobilization campaigns around ambitious economic projects, they failed to keep their promise in providing their citizens with quality goods and services, something that market economies did much better. These seemingly mundane things proved to be decisive in the end. Communist regimes had lost economic competition with capitalism. In communist countries, not only were citizens becoming disillusioned with the system, but also the new leaders launched economic and political reforms that made these societies more compatible with the realities of both the outside world and the aspirations of their own citizens.

As mentioned above, social scientists seem to know everything there is to know about collectivist regimes. Voluminous histories of such regimes have been written, read, and regularly reprinted. Do we need another study of collectivist regimes? Is there anything new that we can learn from it or something that was neglected?

As unorthodox as it may seem, I think that social scientific research of collectivist states, free from ideological predispositions and hidden political agendas, is still at its initial stage. For many decades, the confrontation with collectivism prevented an objective social inquiry of structures and institutions of these societies. Unsurprisingly, many studies of collectivist regimes have been written by uncritically adopting terminology and interpretative schemes invented by ideologues of collectivism, despite the fact that most Western scholars rejected its ideology and practices. In a curious fashion, the fall of communism showed the superiority of market



democracies and the utopianism of the Marxian project, but left the question of why communism had emerged unanswered.

Of course, historical accounts of collectivism are abundant but these narratives beg an explanation. The goal of social scientists is developing theoretically grounded explanations, not recounting history *wie es eihentlich gewesen ist* (as it really did happen) over and over again. Certainly, uncovering new evidence, adding new details, or bringing attention to neglected dimensions of change advance our knowledge. Still, even the most detailed histories of the collectivist states cannot substitute for a theoretical explanation of such regimes.

Do not existing comparative studies, one may inquire, develop such a theory? Surprisingly, they do not. Most comparative studies of collectivist regimes do not take us beyond generalizations, albeit perceptive and insightful generalizations. None of these studies alone or even all of them together explain the origins of collectivist regimes. Their best contribution is providing building blocks for such a theory. Let's review three such perspectives: a totalitarian perspective, a social engineering perspective, and a paths-to-modernity perspective.

1. A totalitarian perspective. To accentuate the monistic, violent, and coercive nature of the twentieth century collectivist states, generations of scholars employed the concept of totalitarianism. In the 1950s-60s this school of thought dominated studies of communist and fascist states. Yet, the heuristic potential of a totalitarian perspective remained limited. First of all, totalitarian regimes have never been "total" in the sense that they have been able to control every aspect of life of every individual, as more recent research has shown. Perhaps the Soviet Union under Stalin has come closer to this model than any other collectivist state but even Stalin's regime could not manage and control everything. Collectivist regimes, as repressive and

violent as they were, had proven to be more totalistic in aspirations than actual practices (Overy 2004: 173).

This terminological problem does not suggest, of course, that the representation of collectivist regimes in the totalitarian school was somehow inaccurate or incomplete. On the contrary, most explorations in the totalitarian paradigm suffered the opposite problem, the “surplus of history,” so to speak. Consider the Hannah Arendt’s (1951) monumental study, for instance. Everything Arendt claimed about the origins of totalitarianism was accurate or at least not incorrect as much as it was grounded in empirical evidence. The problem was that Arendt discussed many political and ideological developments at once without identifying which factors were absolutely essential for the rise of totalitarianism and which were not. In such studies “causes tend to get lost in a muddle of narrative detail and never separated out sufficiently to make their autonomous dynamic clear” (Sewell 1985: 58). As a result, lost in chains of occurrences, a reader has to accept or dismiss a narrative as a whole. Even with all its undeniable merits, Arendt’s study cannot be measured against the standards of comparative historical sociology (see Baehr 2002).

In general, as the very progenitors of the conception of totalitarianism, Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski (1965: 19) noted, the conception of totalitarianism represented a descriptive model based on generalizations across cases. It worked well as a tentative conceptual device but its proclivity to narrate and describe rather than explain rendered it a poor guide to demystifying collectivist regimes (Kershaw 2000). The totalitarian model depicted the end result of historical development but lacked a coherent theoretical explanation of its causes (Mommsen 1980).

2. A social engineering perspective. Some scholars viewed collectivist regimes as the developmental projects driven by radical political ideologies of high modernism which proved to be disastrous in their long-term consequences. In their analyses they prioritized the role of ideologically driven transformative social agency such as visionary, charismatic leaders and technocratic elites (North 2005, Scott 1998). In this respect they shared the modernist bent of the totalitarian school.

As most social scientists are well aware, agency matters. In the end, people make history, not abstract “factors” or causal configurations. Nevertheless, we also know that revolutionaries and planners did not transform societies as they wished: structural conditions constrained their actions. Discussing various scenarios of struggle for socialism, James Scott (1998), for instance, highlights Rosa Luxemburg’s conception of a spontaneous collective action as a viable alternative to the conspiratorial practices of Leninism. Luxemburg, a “physician and midwife” of the European proletarian revolution, believed in the creativity of spontaneous collective action by the working class. Why wouldn’t revolutionary leaders just follow the Luxemburg’s guidelines then? Unfortunately, Scott does not discuss the fact that in 1917 the Russian Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs) pursued a strategy similar to Luxemburg’s prescriptions. It did not work. Mass collective action of the working class did not make any progress towards socialism as long as the leaders refused to take state authority. In the meantime, the economic situation rapidly deteriorated. The real issue became not a gradual socialist policy versus a radical socialist policy, but elementary survival of the urban population. No matter who took power, the masses demanded radical and immediate solutions: peace for nations, land for peasants, and bread for workers. Revolutionary leaders were compelled to act within a narrow

frame of structural opportunities. The SRs and the Mensheviks, who hesitated taking decisive steps, were left, as we know, in the “dustbin of history.”

In the end, the largest collectivist states that emerged in the backward agrarian countries such as Russia or China were least of all exemplary of high modernism. How were revolutionary leaders or their vanguard parties, the tiny political minorities, able to transform these huge traditional societies? Revolutionary violence alone would not work; without some popular support such action would soon degenerate into sectarian terrorism. Masses of illiterate or semi-literate peasants were indifferent to abstract ideological theorizing. How did revolutionary state builders transform these societies? The social engineering school neglected the fact that revolutionary leaders and political vanguards expressed the interests of large class coalitions and popular social movements, which were determined by structural, mostly economic, conditions.

3. A paths-to-modernity perspective. Drawing from the fact that most collectivist regimes emerged in less developed countries, some scholars highlighted the peculiar developmental trajectories of these states that pushed them towards collectivism, such as delayed industrialization or a failure to commercialize agriculture (Gerschenkron 1963, Moore 1966). A paths-to-modernity approach did not suffer the modernist bias of the totalitarian and social-engineering perspectives; in contrast, it traced origins of collectivist regimes back to various patterns of global underdevelopment.

This approach, however, was not completely successful either. Only a few agrarian countries that failed to commercialize agriculture and retained strong peasant solidarities ended up as collectivist regimes. Although the first communist revolution had erupted in Russia, contrary to Barrington Moore, it was not precisely a “peasant revolution,” as the more recent research has shown: the collective action of the working class and other low urban strata was

indispensable for the revolution to happen (Bonnell 1984, McDaniel 1988). Moore's emphasis on the conservative coalition of capitalists and landed classes in explaining fascism proved to be equally questionable in the light of recent research. It missed the critical point that fascists had represented more a bottom-up popular movement than a product of a reactionary coalition of the propertied classes (Mann 2004).

The demise of communism in Eastern Europe brought about an additional challenge to a paths-to-modernity perspective. If a long-term orientation towards collectivism in countries like Russia did exist, these regimes had to be more durable and would display strong residual collectivism after the communist governments had gone. Nonetheless, the East European states and even Russia abandoned the collectivist mentality with a breathtaking speed. The concerns about possible return to communism that were popular in the Western media in the mid 1990s proved to be unjustified. A categorical rejection of the ideology of collectivism and egalitarianism in these countries casts doubts about the assertions that communism in these parts of the world originated in durable institutional or cultural region-specific legacies. Perhaps the communist collectivist organization has had more recent structural origins.

Of all early theoretical approaches to studying collectivist regimes, Alexander Gerschenkron's (1963) conception of "late development" showed the greatest promise. According to his argument, which borrowed heavily from Trotsky's (1937) notion of "uneven and combined development," the delay of industrialization in backward countries such as Russia led to accumulation of immense social tensions which resulted in revolutionary explosions and dictatorial regimes coming to power. To catch up with the pioneers of modernization, the new authorities had to propel the forced-speed industrialization using the full potential of the modern

state. Thus, origins of collectivist regimes, according to Gerschenkron, should be sought in imperatives of forced-speed industrialization of backward nations.

Gerschenkron's argument, however, raised new questions. Many backward societies, as we know, existed (and still exist) virtually unchanged for centuries yet their leaders displayed little willingness to modernize these societies. How did economic modernization of more advanced nations trigger the "delayed industrialization" of backward areas? How did they come to perceive themselves as "backward" all of a sudden? How would a dramatic change challenging entrenched interests of traditional elites come about? Finally, why would some modernizing states adopt a collectivist form of social organization?

Theda Skocpol's magisterial work "States and Social Revolutions" (1979) was pivotal for explaining the nature of such transformation. Skocpol showed how the collectivist regimes in Russia and China (like a modern bureaucratic state in France) have been brought to power by mass social revolutions. International pressures, domestic disputes within elites, and widespread peasant revolts worked together to bring about the collapse of old regimes. The ensuing vacuum of authority was filled by the revolutionary state-builders who have been able to mobilize popular support and construct modern bureaucratic states. Thus, the modern collectivist states in Russia and China came into being as a result of a sweeping revolutionary change.

In contrast to the earlier voluntarist accounts of revolutions, Skocpol insisted that ideologies of revolutionary leaders served as poor predictors of the revolutionary outcomes. According to some commentators (e.g., Burawoy 1989, Sewell 1985), that was a major limitation of her study. Can, they inquired, such a structural, non-voluntarist approach explain the specifically collectivist outcomes of revolutions in Russia and China? "A glaring difference between the outcomes of the French and Russian revolutions was that private property was

consolidated in France and abolished in Russia. Can this difference be explained without taking into account the different ideological programs of the actors in the French and the Russian Revolutions?" (Sewell 1985: 59) Sewell claimed, that in order to explain this difference, Skocpol introduced ideology surreptitiously, in the guise of the notion of the "world-historical context," claiming that socialist models were not available in 1789 but were well known in 1917.

No doubt, the world-historical contexts of these revolutions differed and not only in the content of ideologies. Consider this: the French Revolution began in a time of peace while the Russian revolution (and later the Chinese Revolution) erupted amidst the devastating wars. Did this fact affect the revolutionary outcomes? Unfortunately, Skocpol did not take the opportunity to theorize on that. She viewed war more as a catalyst of change rather than its primary structural determinant. Skocpol sensitized scholars to international contexts but, like most scholars before her, eventually placed a greater weight on the internal determinants of these revolutions.

#### Towards a War-Centered Theory of Collectivist Regimes

Why did scholars neglect the potential of war-centered explanations? War loomed so large behind the scene of events that one wonders how it was possible to neglect it. A part of the answer is that for a long time social science did not possess adequate conceptual tools for studying states, wars, and their coevolution. The society-centered approaches, either functionalist or Marxist, dominated studies of social change. To explain various patterns of change, sociologists examined either aggregate characteristics of modernization or specific configurations of class structures. The state was not taken seriously as an independent actor and the complex processes of state-making (and state-breaking) remained lamentably undertheorized (Skocpol 1979, 1985).

Similarly, sociologists did not pay much attention to war as a historical event, a complex interactive engagement transforming states, economies, and societies. War was viewed as a negative, inhumane, destructive, and exceptional deviation from the normal political process. Despite the fact that there has not been a single year since 1816 without at least one war going in the world (Ferguson 2002: 29), sociologists, with few exceptions, did not study military conflicts, leaving this subject almost entirely to historians and political scientists. As Anthony Giddens (1985: 22) once remarked, “Opening any textbook of sociology, the reader will find there discussions of most modern social institutions – the family, class, deviance, etc. But it is very unlikely that he or she will discover any discussion of military institutions, or the impact of military violence and war upon modern society.”

Only in the 1980s social science began making a turn towards a deeper understanding of the state-ordered institutional reality in which social actors operated. Social scientists became increasingly aware of the fact that modern societies indeed represented nation states, operating within a nation-state system (Giddens 1985, Mann 1988, Migdal 1988). A better grasp of the explanatory centrality of states as “potent and autonomous organizational actors” represented a landmark in studies of social and political change (Skocpol 1985).

As much as scholars studied states, they became increasingly sensitized to the fact that internal state structures were coeval with interactions among states and that most of the time these interactions have not been harmonious. In his path-breaking studies of European state formation, Charles Tilly (1975, 1985, 1990) examined war-making and state-making as intertwined and mutually constitutive processes. He showed how the rulers’ pursuit of war induced them to extract resources from the populations and promote capital accumulation. Various patterns of resource extraction, capital-intensive, coercion-intensive, and capitalized-



coercive, have crystallized, according to Tilly, in the various institutional designs of the European states.

The military-fiscal approach to state formation was further advanced by Brian Downing (1992) who studied state formation in the early modern Europe. Downing contended that the early modern military revolution (1500-1650) destroyed institutions of the European medieval constitutionalism and gave rise to a military-bureaucratic form of absolutism. This happened in several but not all European countries. The states that enjoyed major economic and geographic advantages (foreign resource mobilization, alliances, advanced economy, and geographic location) were able to avoid such an outcome. The states that did not enjoy such advantages had to create more centralized and coercive bureaucratic apparatuses for internal resource extraction.

#### Revolutions in War-Making

Historically grounded, context-sensitive studies, like the Downing's comparative research, are, however, rare exceptions among the numerous explorations on war in general. Many of these explorations contend that "deadly quarrels" always existed, that they corresponded to some innate aggressive tendencies of human beings or conflicting interests of different social groups. The conflict among states was viewed as one of the manifestations of such characteristics (Giddens 1985: 30). In a similar way the evolution of warfare was perceived as a simple linear progression (larger armies, better weapons, etc.). Scholars commonly neglected the fact that war-making passed through several different "modes of warfare" and that etiology of complex forms of organization of war in the twentieth century could not be reduced to clashes of primordial tribes.

In the last two decades some researchers came to see change in warfare as a succession of several military revolutions (e.g., Boot 2006, Murray and Knox 2001). According to Williamson

Murray and MacGregor Knox (2001), for instance, modern warfare underwent five revolutionary transformations: creation of the modern state and the modern army in the seventeenth century, mobilization of a nation for war effort in the late eighteenth century, industrialization of warfare of the mid nineteenth century, mechanization of mass killing in the early twentieth century, and emergence of weapons of mass destruction in the mid twentieth century. These epochal metamorphoses were cumulative, and every new innovation in warfare was embedded in the structural frameworks created by the previous transformations. Using different terminology,

I call these five transformations bureaucratization, nationalization, industrialization, totalization, and instrumentalization of war respectively.

*The bureaucratization of war* (beginning circa 1500) refers to the emergence of the large standing armies and introduction of modern rational organization in war making in Europe. This change, known as the early modern military revolution, was prepared by several structural transformations: the invention and the common use of gunpowder weapons, the greater role of infantry, the increasing size of the armies, the new supply system as well as the better training, organization and discipline of the troops. As the cumulative result of these changes, the army was transformed from an armed mob into a large, complex, hierarchically structured organization existing on a permanent, full-time basis and separated from the rest of society (see Downing 1992, McNeill 1982, Parker 1988). Most of the time war was a way to settle the accounts of sovereign princes who were supposed to wage war in such a way as to minimize the harm done to both their soldiers and the civilians. In return, the population had no right to interfere in quarrels between their monarchs (Fuller 1961: 21; Howard 1976: 21; Van Creveld 1991: 37).

*The nationalization of war* (beginning in the 1790s) refers to the transformation of war from the affairs of sovereign princes into the conflicts of sovereign nations. In revolutionary France, the state ceased to be a property of the monarch and became an embodiment of the nation. In August 1793, the French National Assembly “permanently requisitioned” all citizens for the national service, including not just men but also women, children, and old people. The army thus became a nation in arms. Seventy years later, during the American Civil War, both sides, the Union and the Confederates, practiced involuntary male conscription. In the 1860-70s, after several decades of experimenting with various forms of recruitment, all large European states, including Austria, Italy, Prussia, and Russia, were compelled to follow suit and institute universal male conscription (Howard 1976: 75, Van Creveld 1991: 39).

*The industrialization of war* (beginning in the 1840s) refers to the *coordination* of war and industrial production. Until the mid nineteenth century there was no permanent coordination of the means of waging war and the mass production of standardized weapons (Giddens 1985: 54). Only in the nineteenth century did industrial capitalism make this institutional nexus possible. Large public and private works became primary suppliers of armies and navies with weapons of war. Another landmark was the nineteenth century revolution in transportation and communication: “Steamships and railroads proved capable of moving men, weapons, and supplies on an entirely unprecedented scale. This in turn meant that most of the male population of European countries could be trained for war and actually delivered to the battlefield” (McNeill 1982: 223).

*The totalization of war* (beginning 1914), the term borrowed from Martin Shaw (1987),<sup>1</sup> refers to the subordination of economy and other social institutions to the needs of war. It

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<sup>1</sup> Quincy Wright (1942) used a similar term, the “totalitarianization of war.”

signifies the transformation of the whole nation into one integrated fighting unit. Differently from the traditional warfare characterized by separation of the fighting army and civilian population, this kind of war was distinguished by the coordinated effort of the whole society and the unprecedented extent of militarization of the economy and all other major social institutions under unitary command (Chickering 1999, Forster 2000). The home front became as important as the battlefield, and people at home became military targets. The comprehensive economic mobilization, often called “war socialism” or “military communism,” represented a final stage of “caging” of economic institutions by the state.

*The instrumentalization of war* (beginning 1945) refers to increasing dissociation of the military institution from the rest of a society. In the era of weapons of mass destruction large conscription armies of well-drilled infantry turned obsolete; the new high-tech armies became small, mobile and professional. Weapons of mass destruction allowed war with no draft, or training, or discipline (Mjøset and Van Holde 2002: 78). War making became a strictly professional business. In a sense, the instrumentalization of war manifested a somewhat ironic return to war as a sport of princes, or as Michael Mann (1988: 184) calls it, “spectator-sport militarism,” which is a contestation, where most citizens had little stake and were involved only as spectators from a safe distance.

Every revolution in war making, including the industrialization of warfare, caused a major imbalance in the global system of international relations and an intensification of interstate competition. As a rule, initially only one state adopted a novel military organization or a new military technology. Successful usage of the strategic advantage resulted in a period of political hegemony of the first-comer state, which could be relatively long or short lived, depending on the responses of its strategic contenders.

Historically, contenders resorted to two major means of bridging the gap: forming anti-hegemonic alliances and catching up with the new forms of military organizations, which generated imbalance in the first place. In this respect, an adaptation to the challenge of industrialization of war, which eventually precipitated total war, followed the same dual pattern: building an anti-German coalition alliance (a Franco-Russian alliance) and catching up with Germany in military organization and technology (Kennedy 1987).

### What is Total War?

The last decade was marked by a great surge of interest in studying the total wars of the twentieth century. The most essential feature of this new wave was a considerable effort to interpret total war in theoretical terms. Military historians attempted to move beyond individual case studies and develop a synthetic conception of total war (Black 2006; Broadberry and Harrison 2005; Chickering 1999, 2000; Chickering and Förster 2003, 2005; Diehl 2003; Ferguson 2006; Förster 2000; Neely 2004; Strachan 2000, 2005).

In the course of their debates, most researchers agreed that World War One (1914-1918) and World War Two (1939-1945) did in fact represent total wars. Among the key features of total war, scholars included an unprecedented span and intensity of the battle, extensive use of machines, anonymity of combat, drastic change in the system of supplies, disappearance of a clear-cut distinction between soldiers and civilians, new methods of fighting such as strategic bombing and unrestricted submarine warfare, mass atrocities and genocide (Förster 2000).

Yet, despite some conceptual advances, the discussion ended inconclusively. After having produced four edited volumes on total war, the leading experts in the field asserted that researchers had failed to generate a definition of total war (Chickering and Förster 2005). This acknowledgment was indicative of serious epistemological difficulties involved in such

enterprise. Any concept with an adjective “total” (a total war, a total mobilization, or a total state) does not have an ontological referent because none of the real-life social phenomena attain a quality of being total or absolute. All real wars only approximated the ideal type of total war (Forster 2000). To conceptualize them as total wars meant to assign them dimensions they did not possess (also see Black 2006).

The other difficulty, which came to light in a debate about the American Civil War (1861-1865), was the multidimensionality of the concept (Rohkrämer 1997). A number of American (but not European) historians viewed the conflict between the Union and the Confederacy as the first total war (e.g., McPherson 1988). They differed, however, in their justifications of such interpretation. Some scholars emphasized the fact that it was the first conflict involving industrial societies that used conscript armies, industrially produced weapons, modern strategy, and railroad transportation (e.g., Hagerman 1997).

Other historians interpreted the final part of the conflict as total war due to the magnitude of destruction, enormous losses of life among combatants and civilians, and waging war until unconditional surrender. Sherman’s march through Georgia and the Carolinas and the doctrine of “scorched earth,” which the Union commanders employed, were indicative, in their view, of war totality. According to this line of thought, blurring the line between soldiers and civilians and mass reprisals against noncombatants were the most distinct features of the Civil War as a total war (McPherson 1988, 1997).

In my view, neither of these characteristics suffices to classify a conflict as total war (also see Neely 2004). On the one hand, history knows many industrial wars waged using modern weapons and modern technologies which in all other respects were quite local and limited. On the other hand, military historians do not find any difficulty in pointing to devastating pre-

modern wars waged in most barbaric ways (Fellman 1997, Förster 2000). It was not the disappearance of the line dividing civilians and the military *per se*, I suggest, but a specifically structured, institutional pattern of civilian inclusion, which made modern war total.

The possibility of total war originated in the fact that large armies of soldiers had to be armed and supplied with weapons and munitions. That did not constitute a major problem throughout most of the nineteenth century as long as soldiers were armed with rifles and regular cannons that consumed a relatively small amount of munitions, which could be manufactured and stockpiled before the conflict erupted. The situation changed with the invention and deployment of automatic weapons such as machine guns (1884) and quick-firing field artillery (1893); these new weapons consumed enormous amount of munitions (Van Creveld 2000). With the outbreak of war, the demand for such munitions skyrocketed so that belligerent nations had to initiate emergency measures for production of munitions. This industrial mobilization, in turn, required bringing in huge new contingents of industrial workforce and creating conditions necessary for their work (housing, provision supply, social services, etc). The ultimate, albeit not universally adopted, measure of total warfare was the compulsory mobilization of civilian populations for munitions production. In such an organized and systematic way, civilian populations became included in the conduct of war and, in consequence, became a target for military action.

In the light of these considerations, it is obvious that neither the American Civil War nor any other conflict of the nineteenth century should be viewed as total war. To be considered as total war, a military conflict should involve the following measures of social mobilization undertaken on both sides of the conflict: drafting large multi-million armies, deployment and use of automatic weapons, national economic reorganization for large-scale production of munitions,

mass mobilization of civilian population for military production, and state-regulated provision of goods and services for the civilian workforce

It would be wrong to neglect the novelty of the twentieth century's wars on terminological grounds. The critical difference between these wars and earlier conflicts was that conduct of war in the twentieth century brought about an entirely new phenomenon, a *comprehensive and systematic (albeit not always successful) reorganization of economy and society around large-scale industrial production of weapons and munitions.*

#### A War-Centered Conception of Collectivist Regimes

Selective affinity between total industrial war and the rise of totalitarian states was noted long time ago (e.g., Aron 1955, Laswell 1941, and Von Mises 1944). However, it was one thing to posit that “garrison states” originated in total war, the other, more difficult, task was to identify the structural mechanism of causal determination. How did total war contribute to the formation of such states? Drawing from the analysis of two “mass mobilization regimes,” Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, Bruce Porter (1994) outlined a five-step conception of the “totalitarian path of state formation.” According to his conception, (1) an all-out industrial war generates powerful centralizing pressures that enlarge the administrative apparatus of the state, (2) military defeat causes the collapse of the traditional regime, (3) the disintegrative effects of war destroy or substantially weaken civil society, (4) a mass oppositional movement captures the bureaucratic center and forms a new regime, and (5) the new regime centralizes power and atomizes all opposition by mobilizing society for war (1994: 213-214).

Porter correctly noted that “totalitarianism was conceived in war and armored in conflict” (1994: 195). Despite the impact of the ideological precursors of communism and fascism (Jacobinism, militant nationalism, imperialism and social Darwinism), none of these influences



alone nor even all them collectively could generate such a radical break with the past as the totalitarian regimes exemplified (Porter 1994: 212). Only total war created these structural conditions. The key structural condition for totalitarianism created by war, according to Porter, was its degenerative effect on civil society. He described war's effect on civil society in the following passage:

In modern political systems, the main counterweight to centralized power accumulating indefinitely is civil society: the vast complex of traditional and private institutions such as universities, churches, professional associations, cultural organizations, trade unions, private clubs, and business firms, all of which wield sufficient social influence to resist encroaching state power. If World War I had merely destroyed the existing autocracies of Russia and Germany, while leaving their civil societies intact and healthy, the result might have been the assumption of state power by the latter – primarily by the bourgeoisie – but also – especially in Germany – by representatives of organized labor... But because World War I also gravely damaged civil society in both countries, the way was left open for the state – its bureaucratic core larger than ever because of the centralizing effect of World War I – to be captured by highly organized, disciplined mass movements able to act decisively and ruthlessly when society was least able to defend itself (Porter 1994: 213)

Historical evidence, however, does not support Porter's thesis of war inflicting a great damage to the civil society. In Russia, for example, the First World War generated a great surge of patriotic enthusiasm and mass participation of civil society in the war effort. The wartime contribution of local self-administration units (*zemstva*) and urban municipalities was immense.

Along with associations of industrialists these organs tried to compensate for the weakness and ineffectiveness of state authorities in economic mobilization. Even in the final stage of war the impact of civil society was significant. The Moscow State Conference in August 1917, convened to debate on Russia's war effort, attracted the attention of the all major groups of Russian society and called for uniting political forces for victory. It is true that war also generated a radical mass movement which eventually defeated the moderate forces. However, this change happened only after the political crisis of August 1917, which paralyzed the central state authority.

Weimar Germany before the Nazi's rise to power also cannot be viewed as a state with an irreparably damaged civil society. Trade unions, political parties and professional organizations thrived in the new democratic republic. Of course, the political realities of the Weimar "organized capitalism" were heavily underwritten by the corporatist arrangements but that was also true for the Wilhelmine Germany.

But let us accept Porter's argument for a moment: in both Russia and Germany war immensely strengthened the bureaucratic state apparatus and critically weakened civil society. Did it happen only in wartime Germany and Russia? What about other belligerent nations? Was the state-centralizing effect insignificant in other countries? Was the society-weakening effect negligible in other nations? Furthermore, if collectivism was the fate of defeated nations, as Porter argues, why would some defeated nations manage to preserve capitalism? Finally, why did some of the defeated nations end up as communist regimes and other nations as fascist regimes?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Shaw (1987: 617) raised similar questions: "We must ... ask whether the effects of total war are uniform: have tendencies towards commandism and supra-legalism been common to all societies mobilized in such wars? Why has total war led to totalitarian states in some societies and not in others? ... Sociologists of war will be

### Logistical Exigencies of Global War

That Porter's argument cannot address these important questions comes from the fact that it left aside probably the most essential aspect of total war: its logistical component. In the following section I will extend the Porter's argument while focusing mainly on this neglected dimension.

A comprehensive economic mobilization for total industrial war, initiated by belligerent nations, placed economic and political institutions of these nations under enormous strain. None of them was well prepared for the "revolution in logistics" that World War One had initiated (see Van Creveld 2000). Whereas some nations possessed a limited economic potential for waging the all-out industrial war, other nations lacked a modern administrative apparatus capable of mobilizing necessary resources. Either way, as war protracted, such states began experiencing severe economic setbacks.

Many small states with lower industrial capacity had few chances in the economic war against powerful industrial states. Nevertheless, low economic capabilities of individual states did not always preordain their defeat. In both world wars, the allied nations pooled their resources. A combined economic and military power of coalition alliances, not individual states, decided the outcome of these wars. Even a less economically advanced nation could resist a stronger enemy if it relied on the massive material and military support of its allies (Broadberry and Harrison 2005; Stubbs 2002). When a weaker state came to exhaustion of its own resources, such support was absolutely indispensable. Timely support from allies allowed it to stay in the

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suspicious of any attempt to argue that the effects of war-mobilisation are restricted to those states which can be described as fully 'totalitarian'. Clearly all societies involved in total wars undergo radical change..."

war even if domestic resources came to depletion (Kennedy 1984).<sup>3</sup> The critical organizational task in such junctures was to bring these indispensable resources from resource-rich nations to their embattled allies.

### Bringing Geopolitics Back In: Interior States and Exterior States

Historically, shipping bulky goods by sea was more efficient than transporting by land. In modern Europe, for example, countries that had access to seaborne routes (Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and England) received a major boost for their commercial and cultural development. They used this geographical advantage for building vast colonial empires and extracting resources from their colonial possessions. Scholars have identified a strong causal association between extensive naval capabilities and global political hegemony (Mahan 1890/1987; Modelski and Thompson 1988).

Clearly, not all states enjoyed these advantages. From the viewpoint of their access to resources from overseas, all nations could be divided into the exterior states and the interior states. The exterior states, or the “coastland” in the terminology of geopolitics (Mackinder 1919/1962), were located in the geographic fringes of the mainland. Historically, they enjoyed an easy access to the main routes of seaborne transportation. The interior states, or the “heartland,” were located closer to the geographic center of the mainland. Their access to maritime routes was constrained by their geographic location and by the exterior states.

In time of peace, when international trade was not seriously obstructed, an interior location did not prevent the mainland countries from importing goods from overseas. In some

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<sup>3</sup> Vasquez (1993: 259-260) has observed that world war has elements of a relay race in which the less economically sound members of coalition were sustained by their powerful allies taking over the economic burden of the war at crucial points. Coalitions were successful, he claimed, not so much for their initial pooling of resources as for their ability to provide relief to allies just before they were exhausted and collapse.

respects the interior location could be even economically advantageous. The situation changed in time of war when the exterior nations could resort to naval blockade against the enemy states. In a protracted industrial war, a land-locked location would become a major strategic disadvantage.

### From Global War to State Breakdown

This geopolitical dichotomy provides a promising vantage point for addressing the issue of variation in war outcomes. According to a military-fiscal perspective in comparative historical sociology (Downing 1992, Tilly 1990), interior states, deprived of geographic advantages, assistance of allies, and extraordinary wealth at home, are likely to deploy coercive measures of administrative resource allocation. One may suggest that given the importance of resources for waging industrial war, this proposition may be even more pertinent for modern industrial warfare than for pre-modern conflicts. Also, due to greater state capacities, in modern war such measures may be even more extensive. They may involve such radical measures as governments taking over munitions production, distribution of scarce raw materials, allocation of workforce, and rationing of food.

Centralized allocation of resources, if it is timely and effectively implemented, can prolong resistance. However, even the most centralized and coercive political institutions would not help if the state, deprived of external assistance, comes ultimately to depletion of its domestic resources. Shortages of necessary consumer goods may cause massive social unrest, which, if combined with political crisis and military setbacks, may result eventually in a collapse of a central state authority.

Depending on the underlying cause of such collapse, one may distinguish two types of state failure: a *type 1 failure*, which refers to state failure due to *lack* of resources and a *type 2*

*failure*, which refers to state failure due to its *inability* to mobilize resources. A type 1 failure usually happens if the state has a limited resource base. A type 2 failure happens if the state has an ineffective administrative apparatus. Either way, both types of failure during war are likely to result in state breakdown.

### From State Breakdown to Coercive Redistribution

Several states experienced breakdown in total war but not all of them became collectivist regimes, as we know. The different outcomes beg us to scrutinize the circumstances that allowed such a dramatic transformation: this question leads us to a few propositions.

Institutionalization of collectivist regimes involves nationalization of the major economic assets of the nation. Such state-directed socialization of economic assets may be considered as a specific case of *coercive redistributive action*, in which one actor forcibly acquires the properties of other actors. Under normal circumstances, a large-scale coercive redistributive action is unlikely. Most economic assets constitute private property. The state's protection of property rights, predicated on asymmetric distribution of power resources among the authorities and the bulk of the population, prevents coercive redistributive action (Boix 2003).

A large scale industrial war increases probability of coercive redistributive action in three ways. First, sooner or later most belligerent nations begin experiencing shortages of necessary goods and, unless the government introduces drastic measures ensuring equitable distribution, polarization among the rich and the poor. Second, total war involves drafting and arming millions of individuals from low ranks of a society that under normal conditions does not possess weapons. When in the army, these rank-and-file servicemen also acquire habits of organization, discipline, as well as military training that can be used not only against enemy troops but also

against their domestic enemies, whoever they are. Finally, total war may result in a disintegration of a central authority and paralysis of law-enforcement institutions.

Under conditions of sharp social polarization and scarcity of basic consumer goods, a complete state breakdown may unleash massive coercive redistribution of economic assets. Poor classes may begin seizing land, houses, financial assets, and productive facilities belonging to the better-off classes. In these circumstances one cannot exclude a possibility that a redistributive coalition of lower classes may seize power and legalize coercive redistributive action through nationalization of economic assets by the state. Nationalization of primary economic assets (e.g., industrial facilities, commercial enterprises, banks, and land), if it takes place, represents a crucial step towards the institutionalization of a collectivist regime.

#### A State-under-Siege Theory of Collectivist Regimes

A war-centered “state-under-siege” conception of collectivist regimes outlined above may be summed up in three simple propositions:

1. In a large-scale industrial war of coalition alliances, belligerent nations launch extensive programs of economic mobilization and establish centralized bureaucratic institutions of economic regulation. Because the exterior states are likely to restrict the interior states in their access to the international markets, measures of economic centralization are likely to be more extensive among the interior states than the exterior states.

2. Domestic capabilities of the interior nations are constrained due to their limited economic potential and/or restricted administrative capabilities. As war protracts, even the most advanced interior states come to depletion of their domestic resources. If they are denied access to imports, such states would experience shortages of goods, social unrest, crisis within the

ruling elite, military setbacks, and, due to the combined effect of these aggravating conditions, state breakdown.

3. Under conditions of scarcity and unequal distribution of vital resources created by war, a total collapse of a central state authority may unleash coercive redistributive action of the lower classes directed against the better-off groups and, as a culmination of this process, seizure of power by a radical redistributive coalition, which institutionalizes coercive redistribution through nationalization of economic assets.

Thus, the theoretical argument outlined above suggests that a large-scale industrial war is likely to create structural conditions for the total state breakdown and, potentially, coercive property redistribution leading to the emergence of collectivist states.

#### Which War to Study?

As I indicated above, not all large-scale industrial conflicts among nations turned into total war. Many wars of the second half of the nineteenth century (the American Civil War, the German War of Unification, and the Boer War) involved large armies of conscripts and industrially produced weapons, but neither of these conflicts turned into total war involving systemic reorganization of the whole society.

On the other side of the continuum (of industrial wars) there was the Second World War, the most devastating global war in the history of humankind. Almost 57 million (or 2.4 percent of the entire world population) died during the war, including 37.8 million civilians (Ferguson 2001: 36-37). This war resulted in the emergence of several collectivist states in Eastern Europe and Asia (including the People's Republic of China).

The conceptual problem that disqualifies World War Two for the purposes of this study is that its "net" effect on the creation of collectivist states (the PRC, the East European states) is



difficult to ascertain because the first collectivist state, the Soviet Union, already existed and exerted much influence in foreign affairs. One may argue persuasively that the emergence of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Asia was nothing else but the outcome of the Soviet communist expansionism.

In all respects, the Great War (1914-1918) seems to be the best case for studying the rise of collectivist regimes. It was an industrial war of attrition of entrenched and immobilized armies in which most European states had been involved. The Great War saw the highest rates of military participation in all history (Ferguson 2001: 31). It initiated economic mobilization on a scale unseen in history and was an unprecedented world-historical global cataclysm with huge political repercussions.

#### Which Countries to Select?

Thematically, this study continues a long-standing tradition of the comparative historical analysis: it is concerned with causal configurations that produce a major outcome, examines historical processes over time, and uses systematic and contextualized comparison of several cases. Following the canon of the genre, this study asks “big” questions about large-scale outcomes that are regarded as substantively important (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003). In all respects this research exemplifies something that scholars have called a “second wave” comparative historical research, with its focus on “big structures, large processes, huge comparisons” and a tendency to employ structural explanations of social phenomena (Adams, Clemens, and Orloff 2005).

This study limits itself to examining the military conflict among the European great powers.<sup>4</sup> It excludes from consideration the non-European great powers of the time: the United States and Japan. The United States' participation in the war was relatively short; this nation entered the war only in April 1917 and the bulk of their troops arrived in Europe only in the summer of 1918. Similarly, Japan's military campaign in China on the side of the Allies was also brief (August 1914-May 1915). Finally, this study excludes one major European nation, Italy, which entered the war in May 1915 but did not take part in active military action until late 1917. That leaves us with five European great powers: Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia.

These five nations are selected because they share several common features that allow consistent comparison. First, all five countries were the largest belligerent nations that mobilized multi-million armies, bore the primary burden of war and suffered the heaviest losses in the battlefield. Their wartime economies can be viewed as large independent units with their own endogenous logic of institutional change. Second, by 1914 all these countries had passed at least the initial stage of industrialization (most of them were among the leaders of the European industrial development); this fact allows exploring change in industrial institutions, the primary arena for state intervention and control. Third, all these countries were involved in the conflict from its beginning until its final stage. As I indicated above, some other states either entered the war later (e.g., Italy and the United States) or went out of the war long before its conclusion (e.g., Serbia and Romania).

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<sup>4</sup> Great powers are usually defined as large, military strong states that have persistent ability to control events beyond their borders and play a major role in international politics (Howard 1976:13). They are relatively self-sufficient in strategic terms. In the international relations literature seven nations are commonly classified as the great powers in 1914: France, England, Russia, Germany, Italy, United States, and Japan (Levy 1983, Mearsheimer 2003).

### Is This Approach Different from the Realist Studies of War?

Studies of great powers are common in the realist tradition in the international relations theory (e.g., Levy 1983, Mearsheimer 2003, Papayoanou 1999, Taylor 1952). This research in comparative historical sociology goes beyond the conventional realist theorizing in three important aspects:

First, it highlights the historically specific nature of most European great-powers. Most of these states, except for France, were empires, large, hierarchically-organized, semi-bureaucratic monarchies. In contrast to modern nation states, particularly representative democracies, the rulers of the European semi-absolutist states were not accountable before their subjects. To one extent or the other, monarchs drew their legitimacy from traditional, mainly religious sources (Eisenstadt 1963). They thought that their sacred authority could not be challenged by their subordinates and owed their legitimacy more to recognition by other dynasties than to their own subjects. As much as they followed tradition, their decisions cannot be interpreted as purely rational. Surely, by the early twentieth century most European empires underwent significant structural rationalization and bureaucratization. However, their transition from traditional, pre-bureaucratic forms of authority, mostly feudal or patrimonial, to modern bureaucracy was quite asynchronous. Such constitutional nations like Great Britain and France advanced on the path of state rationalization ahead of Germany and Austria-Hungary and much farther ahead of Russia. Before 1914, all European empires remained more economically and politically pre-modern than it is commonly viewed (Mayer 1983).

Second, this study points to a significant political structuration and interdependence within the European great-power system. Contrary to the popular imagery in the classic realist theorizing, the early twentieth century European politics represented anything but anarchy. It was

very structured and hierarchical. The primary mechanism that governed was the balance of power. In the nineteenth century this balance of power was maintained since the defeat of Napoleon and the peace settlement in Vienna in 1815. The balance of power was critically challenged by the unification and rise of the imperial Germany in 1871. France, which suffered defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, felt most threatened and concluded a strategic military alliance with Russia in 1894. At the same time, the German expansionist push for colonies antagonized the status quo power number one, the Great Britain, which eventually joined the Franco-Russian alliance in 1907. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, on their part, formed the Triple Alliance. Thus, two large coalition alliances dominated Europe. Most of the smaller countries aligned with the either side. In the beginning of war, the members of the Entente agreed not to negotiate separate peace treaties with the enemy states. The “iron braces” imposed on the members of the coalition alliances restrained diplomatic maneuvers on either side and made the future of the European empires critically dependent on each other’s fate.

Third, this study points to the embeddedness of the European imperial states within the structures of the world economy. By the early twentieth century, European powers reached a high level of economic interdependence. Even before industrialization the long-distance trade tied various regions of Europe into large commercial and financial networks (Jones 1981; Wallerstein 1974, 1979, 1989). The industrial revolution, particularly its second phase, intensified economic integration (Pollard 1979). When the Great War erupted, the conflicts severed economic ties between different regional parts of the European economy. It is important to understand that wartime economic autarky of continental nations resulted not only from the deliberate efforts of maritime nations to exclude them from the world economy but also due primarily to the fragmentation of the interdependent European economy as a whole.

### An Analysis to Follow

The dissertation consists of three parts. In the first part I examine the rise of command economies among five European great powers. Following the logic of my “state-under-siege” argument, I suggest that measures of economic centralization should have been more extensive and radical among the interior states (Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia) than the exterior states (France and Great Britain). In the second part of the dissertation I explain the collapse of the interior European empires during the war (Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns and Romanovs). Land-locked location and shortage of resources caused greater bureaucratic centralization among these states; eventually, these shortages also caused massive social unrest and the collapse of these empires. In the final part I explore why state breakdown resulted in destructing capitalism in Russia and maintaining, with all major institutional modifications, capitalism in Germany. This difference, I suggest, was due to the scope of state breakdown: a total collapse in Russia and a partial breakdown in Germany. In the conclusion I elaborate on why my argument should be interpreted as a historically contingent theory (see Paige 1999), which should not be applied (without serious modifications) to studying the origins of the second-generation collectivist states.

**Part II. Chapter One: Military Origins of Command Economies:  
World War One (1914-1918)**

Explaining Variation in Bureaucratic Centralization

Despite broad variation in their ideological and political features, all collectivist regimes have had a similar institutional structure, a centralized administrative mechanism of resource allocation on a national scale, known as a command economy (Kornai 1992). In order to understand the institutional evolution of collectivist regimes one should examine the evolution of command economies.

As an ideal type, a command (or a state-controlled) economy refers to a system of direct state control over production, distribution and consumption of resources. In contrast to indirect forms of economic regulation that are commonly adopted in most industrially developed countries, a command economy involves not a market but an administrative allocation of resources as a dominant mechanism of economic organization. In a command economy the state not only establishes rules of the game but also becomes the key or the only player in the field of economic transactions.<sup>5</sup>

How and why do state-controlled economies emerge? It is unlikely that compulsory state regulation at the national level can be introduced under normal circumstances. First, in the absence of extreme coercion only few economic actors would give up their economic freedom and succumb to the regulating power of the state. Second, state agencies do not necessarily intend to or are able to bear the burden of full-scale economic regulation. In other words, there

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<sup>5</sup> The notion of a state-controlled economy does not apply exclusively to the level of a whole national economy. One may speak of a state regulation of a specific resource (e.g., oil) or an industry (e.g., arms production). A national economy thus may represent a complex of several regulated and unregulated industries.

must be a set of very unusual structural configurations and occurrences that give rise to command economies.

The central premise of my study is that state-controlled economies emerge as a specific form of economic mobilization during (or in preparation for) a large-scale industrialized war or, as it is often called, a total war. Concretely, modern command economies or, at least major structural elements of thereof, first emerged among the major belligerent powers in Europe during the First World War (McNeill 1982, Porter 1994, Scott 1998).

Although the fact that bureaucratically administered economies originated in the economic mobilization of World War One is broadly accepted among scholars, the existing literature does not address the issue of a broad variation in state regulation. The statist economic systems that appeared in interwar Europe differed dramatically: a state socialist economy in Soviet Russia, corporatist economies in fascist Italy and later in Nazi Germany, and capitalist economies with a substantial degree of state regulation (welfare states) in Britain and France. Given that institutions of state-controlled economies crystallized during the First World War (Porter 1994) it is reasonable to think that some states advanced towards a model of a state-controlled economy much farther than other states.

In accord with such an assumption, Scott (1998: 98) argues, for example, that German “war socialism” stands out as a unique experiment in state economic intervention and large-scale social engineering. It was German economic mobilization, according to Scott, that invented a modern planned economy and achieved spectacular success in such areas as industrial production, munitions and armament supply, transportation, price controls, and civilian rationing. Scott insists that it was the technocratic model of centralized organization of a national

planned economy developed by Rathenau and Moellendorff that inspired the economic policies of the Russian Bolsheviks after the Revolution of 1917.

If European nations differed in the extent and institutional patterns of economic mobilization during the First World War, and if German “war socialism” represents an outstanding example of state-controlled economy (see Hardach 1977, Larin 1928, McNeill 1982, Porter 1994, Scott 1998), the next question would be how one would explain such variation. I develop three alternative explanations on this account:

The first argument is a state-centered explanation. It is rational to suggest, drawing from Weber and many contemporary political sociologists, that most centralized and bureaucratized modern states (e.g., Germany, Britain and France) were able to implement more extensive, more interventionist measures of wartime economic regulation than “weak” states in backward agrarian societies, torn by social and ethnic contradictions and hindered by a predominance of patrimonial administration, localism, inefficiency, and corruption (e.g., the Austrian-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian Empires). In other words, the greater state capacity and state effectiveness, the greater the degree of state control and state intervention.

The second argument is an institutional explanation. Perhaps it is not state capacity but the structure of the economy that matters. A more centralized and monopolized corporate economy (like German “organized capitalism” before the war) is more consistent with a rational bureaucratic control than a decentralized economy of the earlier, laissez-faire capitalism (like a free market capitalism in Great Britain). The institutional explanation incorporates the older Marxist theory of state-monopoly capitalism which claims that socialism arises as an organic product of the structural transformations in the capitalist mode of production and that state-monopoly capitalism is an immediate predecessor of state socialism. Whichever theoretical



framing, the argument has an appeal of the obvious: it is easier to control and monitor a few large and “legible” economic units than a multitude of small, “illegible” structures. During the war the industrial economies featured by a high degree of concentration, integration and monopolization of capital have greater likelihood to be transformed into state-controlled economies than decentralized free market economies.

The third argument is a resource dependence explanation. A continuous supply of manpower, weapons and munitions plays a decisive role in a total war. If a state has abundant, easily available resources necessary for waging war then it does not need to disrupt normal economic processes and to employ extraordinary administrative methods of resource mobilization characteristic of a command economy. If, on the contrary, a state has insufficient war-related resources, then its war-economic policy is more likely to employ coercion-intensive administrative methods of resource mobilization (Tilly 1990). The “shortage” does not always emerge as a “natural” lack of resources but also can be created deliberately by establishing a regime of blockade or economic sanctions against the enemy state(s). At any rate, a command economy, according to this approach, is a function of wartime shortage and scarcity.

#### A Total War: Factories Quick!

In its broadest sense the notion of a command economy refers not to the nature of the property rights but to the institutional environment, in which economic actors operate. A national economy may include a large public sector but if it operates in a predominantly market environment and responds to the mechanism of demand and supply, it is still a market economy. If, on the contrary, most economic organizations are nominally private but function in an administered environment, this is a command economy.

To explore a transition from a market to a command economy one needs to examine the primary mechanism of allocation of goods in which an average economic actor operates. In a competitive market economy, assumed here to be a baseline model (which is a very strong assumption), a productive firm is involved in several overlapping markets: goods, raw materials, services, finance, workforce, etc. Therefore to examine transition to a command economy one needs to explore structural transformations in these institutional arenas. If market mechanism allocates goods, materials, labor, finance and services, then one should speak of a market economy. If an administrative mechanism comes to dominate all (or most) of these institutional arenas one should speak of a command, or a state-controlled economy. I will examine a transition from market to command in four major arenas: munitions productions, raw materials distribution, workforce allocation, and provision supply.

The first, most immediate, economic challenge for all major states was production of arms and munitions. In the first months in the war all major European armies experienced a catastrophic shortage of munitions, known as a “shell crisis.” In the following months demand continued to increase very fast. How did the major European nations respond to this crisis? What measures of industrial mobilization did they employ? How did the mechanism of economic regulation change as a result of these measures? The field of industrial production will be the first arena for exploring change in the governance structures of economic relations.

The second task was obtaining necessary raw materials for mass industrial production. The exponential growth in production of these munitions and supplies proportionally increased demand for raw materials. If an economy needs to produce a million shells per month then manufacturers need proportional stocks of metal for producing shells. If a state raises an army of five million recruits and places contracts for five million uniforms then manufacturers need a

corresponding amount of cotton, wool, and leather to produce and deliver these items.

Presumably, states differ in parameters of their domestic resource base and effectiveness of resource-extracting mechanisms. Some states could rely on domestic resources whereas other states could also draw necessary materials from international markets. How did these nation-specific sets of conditions, arrangements and constraints frame the structural mechanisms of resource allocation? The mechanism of allocation of raw materials will be the second institutional arena for studying the governing institutions of economic systems.

The third task was mobilization and allocation of the industrial workforce. In order to produce unprecedented amounts of arms, munitions, machines and supplies, manufacturers needed large contingents of skilled and disciplined workers. With the outbreak of the war a great proportion of workers were drafted in the army. The war caused major dislocations in distribution of labor power and placed additional strain on labor relations. How did the states respond to the challenge of the total war in the area of workforce regulation? The wartime patterns of workforce regulation will be the third institutional arena for investigation.

The fourth task was establishing regulation over the allocation of food. The task of feeding the army and the urban population turned out to be the most serious organizational challenge for state agencies in most countries. The states differed in the reproductive capacities of their domestic agriculture, effectiveness of mechanisms of food mobilization and access to the international food markets. How did the states respond to these challenges and what institutional outcomes resulted from these organizational transformations? The change in the mechanism of allocation of food will be the fourth institutional arena to be investigated in this study.

### Great Britain

The outbreak of the war in August 1, 1914 brought little change in life of the subjects of his Majesty King George V. According to the Defense of the Realm Act, adopted on August 4 the government acquired large statutory power but except for few emergency measures (taking over railroads, extending insurance of private ship-owners, and introducing rationing of imported sugar) the Liberal government of Herbert Henry Asquith indicated no intention of disrupting the daily routines of people. The government policy expressed the general opinion. Most Britons thought that the war would be over by Christmas the latest. In full accord with the celebrated phrase coined by H.E. Morgan of W.H. Smith and turned into an advertisement slogan by Harrods, both people and authorities were committed to “business as usual” (Ferguson 1999: 255).

#### (1)

British economic and social development before the war emblemized a triumph of the laissez-faire, free market capitalism. The nation’s political inheritance was decidedly utilitarian, liberal and individualist (Bourne 1989: 191). State involvement in economic progress, compared to the economic policies of the continental nations, was minimal. The Liberal government, which won a landslide victory in the general elections of 1906 and remained in power for a decade, pledged adherence to unrestrained freedom of free trade, both inside the country and abroad. The large-scale war was deemed undesirable and therefore unlikely; military expenditures, except for large outlays for shipbuilding, were kept at the lowest possible level. If a war began, British officials reasoned, the Royal Navy would blockade the continental coast and by depriving the enemy of supplies bring the aggressor to a quick surrender (French 1982).

Not a surprise that the decade before the war was not very auspicious for the British arms industry. One of the sources of munitions was a complex of state-owned factories in Woolrich, Waltham Abbey, and Enfield, called the ordnance factories. The Liberal government, based on recommendations of the Government Factories and Workshops Committee (the Murray Committee of 1906-07), decided to reduce the size of ordnance factories and put the burden of army supply on private companies. The labor force of the government factories was reduced by half in the years before the war. Although the managers insisted that they need a force of at least 15,000 men to maintain their work, the committee cut their employment to 10,600. Almost half of the Arsenal machinery was laid aside as reserve and by 1910 most of it was so decayed as to be useless (Trebilcock 1975: 152-153).

The other source of munitions consisted of the private armaments manufacturers, including Vickers, Armstrong-Whitworth, the Coventry Ordnance Works and others. These large armories were expected to contribute to arms production should the state factories become overburdened during the war. However, while the private arms manufacturers were advised to “look after themselves” it was not easy to do in the absence of government contracts. In the decade preceding the war major armaments producers, particularly Armstrong, were in decline. Some other munitions companies, like Vickers, worked with large contracts with the navy and conducted much of their business overseas but had essentially no contracts for the army. The arms industry was not prepared for the supplying a large military force for protracted land operations (Ferguson 1999: 103; Stevenson 1996: 27; Strachan 2001: 1065-66).

The unprecedented scale of the fighting overtook all, even most imaginative prewar plans and calculations. Neither military nor civilian authorities were prepared for such prodigious demand in men as well as weapons, munitions, uniforms, food, forage as one that emerged in the

Western front. In the aftermath of the scandalous “shell crisis” in May 1915, which sealed the fate of the Liberal government and brought to power a Coalition government (headed, as was the previous one, by Asquith), a new agency, the Ministry of Munitions, with a new chief, David Lloyd George, was formed and entrusted with the task of organization of a national effort of economic mobilization.

Differently from other officials, Lloyd George realized that existing industrial facilities, public and private, could not produce enough weapons and munitions and that the whole industrial potential of the nation should be mobilized for the war. All works of the country ought to be turned to manufacturing war materiel.<sup>6</sup> The French system of sub-contracting in which large and more experienced plants retained the most difficult processes and outsourced simple operations to new establishments suggested an appropriate organizational model (Gray 1918: 15).

Lloyd George’s intention to expand munitions production by contracts with non-arms manufacturers responded to wishes of many groups and associations of local entrepreneurs. The most prominent was the Leichestre Munitions Committee formed by the local businessmen who wanted to produce munitions and offered in January 1915 a scheme whereby the efforts of individual firms could be combined. Similar initiative groups and committees mushroomed at Hull, Bradford, Leeds and other cities. The Ministry decided to take a chance. In March the Leichestre group obtained an order from the War Office for production of 1,000 4.8 inch shells a week. This experiment proved effective and opened the torrent of similar orders to other local groups.

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<sup>6</sup> This idea contradicted the view of the War Minister Lord Kitchener who argued that the resources should be directed to the existing army contractors. Lloyd George spent much effort to convince other statesmen that his approach is correct (French 1982: 23).

In early summer 1915 a mechanism of industrial mobilization was set in action. In few weeks, the Ministry of Munitions directed by Lloyd George, organized a nation-wide network of “Boards of Management” responsible for munitions production. The Boards of Management were offered two major alternative schemes for manufacturing shells. The first option, the “national shell factory” scheme, was applied in districts where easy concentration of men and machines in one industrial facility was possible. Production of shells in such districts was concentrated in one factory. The second option, the “cooperative scheme,” was applied where conditions did not allow concentrating production in one workshop. Under the second scheme, the Board arranged for the manufacture of the necessary components with local engineering firms and provided premises for the assembly.

The members of the Boards were nominated by the local manufacturers but appointed by Lloyd George and acted on behalf of the government. The Boards of Management were to follow the Ministry guidelines and manufacture what they were asked to make, not what they wished. To ensure close control over production, the Ministry established area offices. These offices controlled the implementation of munitions programs and were charged with gathering information, regulating matters of labor supply, production technologies and other aspects of manufacturing programs (Adams 1978: 64-67).

The new production schemes that utilized potential of non-military industries (including such unlikely militarists as former bridge-builders, motorcar-makers and even jewelers) provided about twenty five percent of shells for the army (Adams 1978: 57). This contribution was indispensable but insufficient. The problem was that these workshops produced mostly small- and medium-caliber shells, whereas the army under conditions of entrenched positional warfare experienced even a greater demand for high explosive large-caliber shells.

To meet this demand the Ministry initiated a program of construction of new state-owned factories for production of large-caliber shells, called “national projectile factories” (Adams 1978: 68). The state financed the construction of these factories and they remained the property of the state. Private companies loaned managers for new workshops who became employees of the Ministry of Munitions for the time of service. The factory in Leeds was the first in a long list of the newly built workshops. With building new factories the whole countryside became a one large factory. In total about seventy national factories were constructed by the end of 1915 and over 200 by the end of the war (Hardach 1977: 82).

Finally, the Ministry went on to buy stocks of weapons and munitions from overseas, mostly North America. These shipments became particularly important in the last two years of the war. In 1917 Lloyd George placed orders with American firms for 926 million rounds of small arms ammunition, 31 million shells, 1.2 million rifles, 1,400 gun carriages, 42,000 trucks, 3,400 airplane engines, and 866 aircraft (Hardach 1977: 98-99). In the end of the war the United States produced one third of all British artillery (Stubbs 2002: 104).

On the eve of the war British army obtained arms from four sources: old arms manufacturers, cooperative production schemes, new industrial facilities, and imports. The work of the Ministry of Munitions, which coordinated the whole mechanism and the by the end of the war turned into a large bureaucratic organization employing 25,000 persons, is universally considered as a paradigmatic example of a successful state-directed industrial mobilization. When the small productive capacity of the arms manufacturers became apparent, the state built up the modern munitions industry and its infrastructure anew, from scratch. Can we consider now the wartime British munitions industry as an example of “war socialism” in action? Is there



enough evidence to suggest that in the process of industrial mobilization an administrative regulatory mechanism displaced the market?

It is definitely true that industrial mobilization involved massive, unprecedented measures of state intervention and control. But it is not the nature of property rights or a measure of government's intervention but the nature of the dominant mechanism of allocation of goods which indicates whether an economic relationship is governed by the market or by a hierarchy. The crucial fact was that a massive state intervention did not eliminate a contractual relationship as a primary form of economic organization in the process of production and market of finished goods.<sup>7</sup> The Ministry concluded contracts with fixed prices; it did not control daily operations of the private workshops. The primary forms of state involvement were coordination and assistance, not command and compulsion. The characteristic style of work of the Ministry's "men of push and go" was entrepreneurial, not managerial (McNeill 1982: 327, Wrigley 1982: 40). According to Lloyd George himself, "the Ministry of Munitions was from first to last a business-man organization" (Lloyd George 1933: 147). By bringing new manufacturers to arms production, building new factories, and buying munitions abroad the government inadvertently promoted decentralization and diversification of the industry and sponsored competition among the manufacturers. If one source of supply proved ineffective the government turned to an alternative source of goods. In a word, British munitions industry still operated as a fairly competitive capitalist system, not an administered economy. Standard prices and standard profit rates, not competition among buyers, were the only substantial deviations from capitalist organization.

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<sup>7</sup> The most visible form of state intervention was control of profits. In September 1915 the standard amount of profits was defined by the Ministry as the average amount of profit in two years before the war plus twenty percent above. Within six weeks after being requested by the Minister of Munitions, the owner was required to deliver auditing accounts. Auditing must have been done by a chartered or incorporated accountant (Grey 1918: 37-38).

(2)

Britain's industrial mobilization was not constrained by a lack of raw materials (Strachan 2001: 1065). The nation was able to rely on large stocks of its own raw materials and imports from overseas. Although domestic production of coal and iron ore declined slightly during the war (to 90-95 percent of the prewar level), the output of semi-manufactured goods such as pig iron and steel increased (to 105-120 percent). From 1915 to 1918 Britain imported from the United States 3.6 million tons of ferrous metals, 1.1 million of nonferrous metals and 1.0 million tons of lubricating oils and waxes. The government also purchased and imported large shipments of cotton, flax, wool, jute, kips, and hemp. Access to raw materials from overseas, particularly the United States, was the key factor in the war. Without these resources the Entente most likely would be defeated (Stubbs 2002: 103).

Because the British companies maintained access to international markets of all necessary raw materials they were not compelled to resort to any centralized schemes of raw materials procurement similar to ones instituted in the Central Powers. That does not mean of course that the market of raw materials remained absolutely unregulated. High freight rates raised prices for imported iron and steel. In order to maintain armaments production going, in early 1916 the government fixed maximum prices for all finished iron and steel goods and forbade all speculative trading in iron, steel, copper, zinc and some other metals. To prevent possible importation of steel to Germany it placed restrictions on export of iron and steel to neutral countries (Gray 1918: 39-40).

In 1916 the government launched far more extensive measures of regulating supply of certain strategic resources, called the Priority Regulations. As applied to steel, for example, the regulations established that no order for high-quality steel should be accepted by manufacturer

unless it is approved by one of the governmental agencies. The contracts and permits for steel production were divided into three classes, according to their strategic priority. Class A included contracts of highest priority (Admiralty, War Office, Ministry of Munitions, etc.). Class B included work of indirect importance for war, which required a Ministry of Munitions permit. Class C included all Ministry of Munitions permits for work which does not contribute to war (Gray 1918: 43-44).

The most far-reaching measures of direct state administration in resource supply were undertaken in coal industry. In March 1917 the government took formal possession of coal industry and a Coal Controller (Mr. Guy Calthorp) was appointed to regulate supply of coal. The government bureaucracy had neither intention nor experience to manage mines directly, however. In summer 1917, an agreement was reached (later promulgated as The Coal Mines Control Agreement) which provided that mines be continued under the existing ownership subject to the right of the Controller to take over. Profits equal to the highest profits in any one of the three years preceding the war were guaranteed. If profits exceeded this figure, the excess had to be divided between the Treasury, less profitable mines, and the colliery operator (Hurwitz 1949: 177-178).

In September 1917 the Controller introduced the Coal Transport Reorganization scheme. According to this scheme, the nation was divided into twenty areas. Between these areas transportation was to take place strictly in accordance with certain principles. Consumption should be as near the producing point as possible. An area producing less coal than necessary for its own needs should not send its product to other areas. Coal passing from one area to another should follow main trunk lines and move from north to south and west to east.

District coal and coke committees, acting for the Controller of coal mines, assumed administrative powers for supply of coal. All private businesses and consumers were asked not to take any initiative. Every colliery owner was required to inform the committee of his sales of coal and of the area supplied by the purchaser. The committee informed what supplies were to be diverted elsewhere. In August the Coal Controller took the final step and issued an order to limit the consumption of coal. According to the Household Coal Distribution Order, consumption of coal in larger London and some neighboring districts became rationed (Triebel 1997, Gray 1918).

Despite these radical measures of administrative regulation the predominantly market-based infrastructure of transactions with raw materials was not substantially undermined. The state intervened selectively, only in those areas where the shortage of goods (like coal) threatened to undermine economic mobilization and social stability. These ad hoc measures did not mean instituting a permanent mechanism of comprehensive and planned allocation of raw materials at the national level. The government control was accepted as a forced and a temporary measure. The state and economic agencies remained institutionally separate actors. The “visible hand” of the state regulations was put on the economy “from above,” but because it did not transform economic infrastructure it also could be easily removed after the war.

### (3)

How did the war affect the labor market in Great Britain? Like in other institutional arenas the change in mechanism of allocation of labor force was piecemeal; the practice of “business as usual” had a strong inertial grip in this arena too. Because in 1914 Great Britain was the only large European power which did not have a system of universal male conscription it did not experience such a huge spasm of industrial workforce like one in France, the nation which

immediately drafted 3.8 million men for the war. Nevertheless already in the late 1914 the Lord Kitchener's decision to raise the army of a million and an enthusiastic response of thousands of Britons to his appeal (immortalized in the poster "Your King and Country Need You") began affecting the labor market. By November 1, 1914 a million of men enlisted in the army and by the end of July 1915 two million recruits volunteered for the troops (Grievess 1988: 11, 16). Already in November 1914 there appeared shortages in the engineering trades and in the woolen and worsted industry (Hurwitz 1949: 85). By the time of the "shell crisis" in May 1915, various branches of munitions industry (mining, metals, engineering, shipbuilding, chemicals) lost from 16 to 24 percent of their workers (Hardach 1977: 79; Wolfe 1923: 14).

The early attempts to retain skilled workers working in munitions industry by issuing special badges protecting them from overzealous recruiters were only partially successful. The flow of the workforce to the army continued. To compensate losses of labor force the manufacturers began recruiting non-unionized unskilled workers and female employees. This policy named "dilution" was based on several principles: no worker in a munitions workshop was to be used in any task which required skill of a lesser degree than he possessed; any shortage of workforce should be reduced through employment of men unfit for the army, women, and juveniles; skilled workers can be replaced by unskilled dilutees by division of complex operations into simple tasks (Adams 1978: 104).

This practice, however, confronted a fervent opposition of the trade unions. Enlisting of many skilled workers to the army and influx of new non-unionized employees undermined the position of unionized workers vis-à-vis employers. The government, empowered by extraordinary wartime statutes, appealed to the patriotism of the workers. In the series of talks the government, manufacturers and trade unions negotiated agreements (The Shell and Fuses

Agreement and the Treasury Agreement) which stipulated that unions would consent with limited use of unskilled labor, forego strikes for duration of war, and accept compulsory arbitration of labor conflicts. In return employers promised that workers would not suffer material loss.

Not all unions have accepted these conditions, however. In spring and summer 1915 a surge of labor disputes in mining and munitions industries threatened to undermine efforts of economic mobilization. In response to the crisis, the government promulgated the Munitions of War Act of July 2, 1915. This act became both the cornerstone of the government's labor policy and the most decisive measure of state intervention in Great Britain.

The Munitions of War Act prohibited strikes and lockouts in armaments industry. All disputes about wages and conditions of work were to be submitted for compulsory arbitration. The government was empowered to place any workshop under direct control of the Ministry of Munitions and declare it a "controlled establishment." The profits in such establishments were fixed as not exceeding the average profits in last two years plus twenty percent and all changes in wages should be approved by the Ministry of Munitions. Any rule restricting production or employment would be illegal. The Act made also illegal to hire a worker who had been employed on government contract work unless he possessed a leaving certificate. A worker who had quit the employer without permission was could not be employed for six weeks. All controlled establishments were to provide the government with full information about the workers employed, the machines used, and the nature of work undertaken. About two million workers – 30 percent of industrial labor force – were placed under jurisdiction of the Munitions Act (Bonzon 1997: 181).

Controlling workforce in munitions industry, however, could not solve the whole problem of shortage of workforce. To increase level of munitions production new contingents of workers, besides those already in controlled establishments, were necessary.<sup>8</sup> In regulating the workforce supply the primary emphasis was placed on voluntary mobilization. The first precedent of such mobilization came from Newcastle where so-called “king’s squads” of skilled engineers who agreed to place their services at the disposal of government contractors were organized. The squad volunteers agreed to go wherever they were needed, whenever their skills were required. In summer 1915 about 6,000 in the Newcastle area signed the agreement (Adams 1978: 91).

This initiative was absorbed and expanded to the national level by the Ministry of Munitions. The War Munitions Volunteers agreed to leave their regular employment and place themselves at the disposal of the government contractors, mostly at the controlled establishments, for the period required by the war. The terms of the agreement guaranteed to the volunteer that he would be paid either the wage he received in his home district or the wage prevalent for his craft in the area to which he was transferred, whichever happened to be higher.

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<sup>8</sup> A few new sources of workforce mobilization were exploited. As one of the measures, the government initiated a mass recall of skilled workers from the army. A Release from the Colors Department was created in the Ministry of Munitions in summer 1915 for these purposes. It employed two major methods of recall: an “individual release” scheme according to which employees submitted requests for their former workers known to be enlisted and a “bulk scheme” in which all skilled from the units which had not undergone advanced military training could offer themselves for interview and possible transfer to controlled establishments. Although command was transferred to the Ministry of Munitions, the recalled workers who returned to the factories remained soldiers. They remained subject to military discipline and could be transferred by the state wherever it deemed necessary. By the end of 1916, about fourteen thousand were placed with controlled establishments under the first scheme and twenty nine thousand men under the second scheme. Also, the government undertook a major effort to import skilled labor from the Dominions and the foreign nations. Because it confronted with many problems (lack of skills, higher wages in home country, high expenses of bringing workers to Britain, hostility of their employers and resistance of British trade unionists) only about two thousand Canadians and five thousand workers from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia arrived to British munitions factories. Somewhat more successful was effort to employ Belgian refugees who flooded into Britain after their country was occupied by Germany (Adams 1978: 95-97; Wolfe 1923:).

He was also guaranteed, if commuted to the factory outside his district, railway fare to and from his new job (Adams 1978: 91-92).

This scheme, however, did not meet the expectations of the government officials. Although in summer and autumn of 1915 more than 100,000 workers enlisted as volunteers, only 5,600 of them were transferred to the government work. The major reason for such minor success was that most of the workers were already at work on government contracts in munitions or other war-related industries. The employers of such volunteers, once contacted for release in numbers, generated a surge of official protests. In fall 1915 it was recognized that War Munitions Volunteers program failed (Adams 1978: 93). It also showed that further attempts to redistribute the existing pool of skilled workers would not be successful and that the government should turn its attention to other, alternative sources of labor.

In July 1915 the parliament adopted a National Registration Act. According to the Act, all men and women between age fifteen and sixty five were required to provide information about their name, occupation, skills, employers and other data. The registration took place on August 15, 1915, a Registration Day. This procedure provided government with vital information about available manpower and prepared grounds for introduction of army conscription and full-scale campaign for industrial mobilization.

Some statesmen viewed the registration as a step towards not only an army draft (which was finally introduced in January 1916) but also a compulsory industrial mobilization. The registration revealed that about 2,500,000 men of military age were still in civilian life and the authorities did not see any reason why they should not utilize this manpower for war-economic purposes (Grievess 1988: 64). The widely circulated ideas of a civilian draft and an “industrial army” were definitely influenced by adoption of the German Auxiliary Service Law on



December 5. On December 19, Lloyd George, who just replaced Asquith as a Prime Minister, announced a plan for universal national service. With these purposes in mind, a Ministry of National Service, directed by Neville Chamberlain, was established. On January 2, 1917 Chamberlain wrote: “I am evolving vast and revolutionary notions of turning the whole war industry of the country into a State owned concern in which every one should be only an officer or a private – and all the surplus should go to the State!!!” (cited in Grievés 1988: 83).

These ambitious plans went too far to be accepted by trade unions, industrialists and government bureaucracies. Differently from the German War Office acting on behalf of the omnipotent Hindenburg’s Supreme High Command, the Chamberlain’s Ministry of National Service clearly lacked authority to command already existing institutions involved in regulating workforce. Eventually it turned to be merely one of too many bureaucratic agencies dealing with labor. In August 1917, after futile attempts to centralize and rationalize the labor policy, embittered Chamberlain resigned because he “had nothing to do” (Marwick 1965: 253).<sup>9</sup>

The state intervention in employment relations and labor markets was extensive in wartime Britain. The government had extraordinary powers and was able to overcome trade union resistance. By pushing the policy of “dilution,” it transformed the composition of the industrial workforce. It significantly curtailed workers rights both with respect to their individual mobility and collective labor disputes. At the same time these regulations were restricted to controlled establishments in munitions industry and did not apply to the workers in

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<sup>9</sup> In one of his letters Chamberlain lamented: “The failure of National Service is due to several causes but one stands out beyond all the rest – the P.M. L[loyd] G[eorge] launched it without ever having thought out or understood what its functions were to be... He gave me just a fortnight to collect a staff, arrange their administrative functions, make myself acquainted with the outline of one of the most difficult & complicated of problems, settle my relations with other Depts. & invent a scheme... And presently as things were evidently not going well he turned his back on the whole affair & allowed any Dept to drive a coach & horses through the powers the Cabinet has given us” (cit. in Grievés 1988: 140). It seems the Lloyd George merely toyed with the idea of industrial draft but never really came close to implementing it.

not-controlled industries and trades. Wherever possible the state tried to avoid outright compulsion and preferred methods of voluntary work mobilization. The British government did not introduce anything similar to the German system of compulsory state service and industrial conscription.

(4)

Britain's economic mobilization would not have been successful without establishing an effective organization of production and allocation of food. During the first two years in the war, after the panic of the first days, neither food supply nor food consumption, except for difficulties with sugar (two-thirds of it were previously imported from Austria-Hungary), appeared to be major problems. That was possible mainly because Britain, in contrast to the Central Powers, was able to keep her seaborne supplies largely uninterrupted. Until the end of 1916 imports of food remained at about 90 percent of the pre-war level, - a remarkable accomplishment considering experience of other nations in war (Hardach 1977: 123).

That does not say, of course, that food supply was completely unproblematic. True, there was no food shortage, but because of the increased freight rates and wartime inflation, food prices grew. In June 1915 and June 1916 retail food prices were respectively 33 percent and 61 percent higher than in July 1914 (Hardach 1977: 124). However, compared to the other countries, price increase was relatively small and did not entail anything similar to the extensive measures of price control and centralized allocation of food established in Austria-Hungary and Germany in the first months of the war.

Even in 1916, when shortage of food in the Central Powers became noticeable, the British government was still determined avoiding any serious intervention in food business. Walter Runciman, the chairman of the Board of Trade and major opponent of state regulation,

argued: “The important thing is to provide plenty to the country. I do not say that prices can be left altogether to care for themselves. That is not possible. But the thing that we want to avoid in this country is... to put ourselves in the position of a blockaded people. Bread tickets, meat coupons, all those artificial arrangements are harmful, and they are harmful to those who have least with which to buy” (cited in Beveridge 1928: 23).

Only in the fall of 1916 did the government take first decisive steps towards regulating food supply. As in other countries, grain trade became the first arena for establishing state control. On October 10, 1916 a Royal Commission on Wheat Supplies under Lord Crawford took over imports of wheat; private trade was stopped. All private importers became government selling agents in proportion to their former trade at a fixed rate of remuneration. In April 1917 the government took over imports of flour and also expanded its jurisdiction over all large flour mills. The mills had to be managed by their former owners with guarantees of prewar profits.

Yet, with these drastic measures taken in consideration it should be noted that control of cereal supplies in Britain was secured not by compulsory requisition of domestic stores of grain and rationing of bread (as in Germany), but by controlling imports, flour mills, restricting the use of grain and voluntary measures of economy of food.<sup>10</sup> Instead of compulsory rationing of food, for example, the British government broadly advertised voluntary restriction in consumption of bread and other foodstuffs. The authorities sponsored the campaign to eat less food during the war. The appeals of this sort, promulgated by the Food Controller Lord Davenport, were published in newspapers and read in churches, chapels, and the Salvation Army barracks. Each citizen was recommended to restrict their consumption to four pounds of bread, two and a half

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<sup>10</sup> The wheat and rye was restricted to use as seed and in manufacturing flour for human food; the mills became the only legal market for wheat and rye. The good quality grain, unless used for seed, could not go anywhere except into the hands of the government through the controlled flour mills at fixed prices.

pounds of meat, and three quarter pound of sugar a week (Marwick 1965: 193). Pledge cards were sent to local communities to distribute to those willing to restrict their diet and earn the right to wear a purple ribbon as a sign of distinction. Movie theatres showed a special documentary on food crisis. Well-known public speakers visited the town halls with lectures on war nutrition. Raising vegetables became a patriotic duty of Britons (Barnett 1985: 115).

Meantime, in early 1917, due to resumption of German unrestricted submarine warfare, situation with imports of foodstuffs started to deteriorate. Between 1916 and 1917 food imports fell by 2.5 million tons and, between 1917 and 1918, by 1.9 million tons (Hardach 1977: 125). The food shortages multiplied, prices were rising, and queues outside food stores grew longer and turned more aggressive. The Times reported: “A brown fog and intense cold did not prevent the tea and margarine queues from assembling outside the shops yesterday. Some of the waiting lines were formed before dawn and included hundreds of people. The largest queues were near some of the multiple shops, at which 2 lb. of margarine were sold to each customer who could get inside before the supply gave out. In some of the suburbs yesterday no tea, butter or margarine could be obtained. At Coventry the workmen engaged in making munitions left work in order to take places of their wives in food queues” (cited in Beveridge 1928: 196).

In June 1917, after appointment of Lord Rhondda a Food Controller, the government began tightening control over major foodstuffs in the country. A new Food Controller established a network of statutory Food Control Committees throughout the country. In few months Lord Rhondda achieved impressive results.<sup>11</sup> By the end of the year, about eighty five percent of all

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<sup>11</sup> The Ministry of Food owned the whole supply of the staple foods and controlled their prices (bread, flour, meat, sugar, tea, cheese, margarine, imported bacon, ham and lard). For some articles the government exercised limited control of production as well as wholesale and retail prices (home produced bacon, ham, lard, and butter, milk, eggs, potatoes, fresh fish, jam, jelly, beer, and spirits). There were articles for which wholesale and retail prices were

the food consumed by civilians came to be bought and sold by the Ministry of Food at fixed prices; the private producers, importers, and distributors became de facto the government's agents. The food profiteer became "the ghost of a bygone age" (Chambers 1939: 422). The whole civilian population was catered for like an army; few things were left to chance or private enterprise (see Beveridge 1928: 2-3, 56-57, 163-164).

The Ministry of Food turned into a large bureaucratic organization. Just in one year, from June 1917 to June 1918, its central headquarters staff increased almost eleven times, from about 400 to 4,350. The organization of food procurement extended to the local level. About two thousand local food committees, appointed by local authorities, and a dozen of divisional food commissioners were established. These committees supervised controlled prices of food, inspected records of dealings, and enforced orders of the central authorities (Beveridge 1928: 57-60).

Meantime bureaucratic measures did not alleviate the problem entirely. The winter of 1917-18 was a severe testing time for the whole food supply system. In December 1917 food queues, especially for margarine, butter, bacon, and tea were registered in all major cities (Woodward 1967: 511). In January and February 1918 in London only the police counted 550,000 persons standing in queues every Saturday (Chambers 1939: 422). In response to the crisis local food committees began introducing ration cards for meat, sugar, butter, margarine, tea and other foodstuffs. In London, for example, a system of rationing of meat based on clipping coupons from the customer's ration card was introduced at the end of February 1918. From April

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controlled but not production or distribution (apples, strawberries, poultry and game, rabbits, syrup). Finally, there were few articles whose prices were not controlled (salad oil, vinegar, honey, spices, salt, wine).

7, 1918, meat rationing was expanded to the whole country. Rationing of tea and butter (by registration card, not coupon) soon followed meat (Marwick 1965: 195).

In July 14, 1918 the British government made the final step in establishing the comprehensive system of food control – the national system of rationing was introduced and the local schemes were integrated into one national system.<sup>12</sup> Every person in Britain received a ration book issued by the Ministry of Food containing detachable coupons for sugar, fats, lard and meat. Local rationing of tea and other items continued in places where local authorities deemed it expedient (Barnett 1985: 149). The national rationing system regularized and equalized food consumption. Food queues disappeared and the problem of food supply was essentially resolved. The system of rationing worked for several months and was discontinued after the war.

The access to overseas food markets had a critical role in resolving a food problem in Britain. By the eve of the war foreign producers (Canada, the United States, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand) made more than half of the British food market. The United States contributed more than any other foreign supplier. The flow of American pork and bacon, for example, by the end of the war became a flood. From 17,000 tons in January 1918, imports of bacon and ham rose to 88,000 in April, 93,000 in May, 66,000 in June, and 71,000 in July. Supplies on this scale soon began to outrun consumption. Also America provided large loans for buying food (Offer

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<sup>12</sup> “Rationing is a term of military origin. It means allotting to each member of a fighting force or a beleaguered population his appropriate share of food and other necessities, as determined by calculation of what he needs, or what supplies are available, and of the time for which they must be made to last. Rationing has two sides, negative and positive, restriction and distribution, the negative side of preventing any individual from getting more than his allotted share, and the positive side of enabling him to get that share regularly. A rationing system must be judged even more by its success on the positive side of distribution, than by the completeness of its restrictions. Before the war ended, every State in Europe was a beleaguered city. Britain, like all the rest, came ultimately to ration many though not all essential foods. But she came to it slowly and through many phases of shifting policy, even after food control was established, and she never reached the stage of rationing bread” (Beveridge 1928: 182).

1989: 94, 376). These supplies and loans played a decisive role in Britain's endurance in the last stage of the total war.

As a result, measures of governmental food control in Great Britain were less extensive than in other countries. During the first two years of the war the government essentially refrained from intervening in food matters. Unlike in most continental countries, the state never formally established a monopoly on grain. The rationing of foods was introduced only five months before the end of war. Granted, food control worked better in Great Britain than in most countries where it was introduced. The key difference was that in Britain the distribution of supplies was easier because most foodstuffs were imported, and could be controlled on arrival at the ports or through massive bulk purchases in the countries of origin (Woodward 1967: 512).

(5)

The analysis of Britain's wartime economic mobilization shows that state intervention was an exceptional measure for exceptional circumstances, to be abandoned when the war was over. The power and responsibilities of the government increased but the nature of the capitalist state had not been transformed (Bourne 1989: 193). The state and economic agencies remained separate actors. Property rights were respected. The state intervened selectively, only in those areas where the shortage of resources threatened to undermine economic mobilization. This intervention did not eliminate contractual relationships as a primary form of economic organization though it often specified contractual terms. The primary forms of state involvement were coordination, assistance, and price setting, not command and compulsion. Since the governmental control was accepted as a forced and a temporary measure, these measures did not institute a permanent mechanism of centralized allocation of resources at the national level.

During the war the government restricted rights of laborers with respect to their mobility and labor disputes but these regulations were largely confined to munitions industry (and, of course, members of the military) and did not apply to the workers in other industries and trades. Trade union cooperation was contingent upon return to normalcy after the war and turned into dogged resistance whenever the government intended to break negotiated agreements. The government preferred methods of voluntary work mobilization and did not introduce anything similar to a compulsory industrial conscription. Measures of food control in Great Britain were less extensive than in other countries. During two first years in the war the government did not intervene into matters of food supply. The government never established a monopoly on domestically produced grain. Measures to increase food production did not begin until February 1917. The rationing of food was introduced on the local basis in late 1917 – early 1918 and the national system did not come into operation until July 1918, five months before the end of the military action. When the member of the British cabinet Arthur Henderson addressed the Moscow Trade Exchange Committee during his visit to Russia in 1917 he stated: “When we speak of an energetic intervention of the State in production with the idea of regulating and controlling it, we do not, of course mean socialist production nor State socialism, but the minimum of measures which is necessary in national business life, and which has already been realized in England” (cit. in Zagorsky 1928: 178). Despite all talk of “war socialism,” Great Britain remained a capitalist society at war.

### Germany

In Germany the outbreak of the war immediately created a national emergency. On the day of mobilization, July 31, 1914, the Prussian Law of Siege of 1851 was enacted in each of the twenty-four army corps districts into which the Empire was divided. This emergency law



delegated all authority to the deputy commanding generals of these districts.<sup>13</sup> On August 4, 1914, the Kaiser proclaimed that the war had suspended the domestic strife and that henceforth he “recognized no parties, only Germans.” German society was declared one national community, a *Gemeinschaft*. At the same day the Reichstag passed a special Enabling Act which became known as the *Burgfrieden*, an allusion to a social truce in the medieval fortress besieged by the enemy army. After adopting this act, the Reichstag, the lower chamber of the parliament, suspended its work and delegated its legislative powers to the Bundesrat, the upper chamber.<sup>14</sup> The immediate administrative responsibility for the nation’s mobilization for war was delegated to the military authority, the Prussian War Ministry, directed by General Erich von Falkenheyn.

(1)

Germany entered the war as a strong and assertive industrial power. Her total industrial output increased from 26.6 billion marks in 1873 to 48.9 billion in 1895 and to 100 billion in 1913 (Wehler 1985: 40). Such sound economic performance was based on rapid growth of the iron, steel and mining industries. Between 1870 and 1914 coal production in Germany increased eight times. Production of iron in the last fifteen years before the war increased almost five times, production of steel, due to introduction of new manufacturing processes (Thomas, Siemens-Martin blast furnaces) increased thirteen times (Fisher 1975: 4-5). In 1913 Germany produced 2.3 times more steel than Britain, 3.8 times more than France and 3.7 more than

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<sup>13</sup> This law specified that executive power passed into the hands of the corps commanders of these districts. Because these commanders accompanied their corps into battle, their executive powers devolved to their deputies, the so-called deputy commanding generals subordinated only to the commander-in-chief, the German emperor. Civilian officials at all levels were subordinate to the deputy commanding generals (Chickering 1998: 33; Feldman 1966: 31-32).

<sup>14</sup> Although the Reichstag was entitled to review the laws so decreed, it vetoed none of the more than 800 orders that emerged out of the Bundesrat during the war (Chickering 1998: 34).

Russia. In the most advanced sectors of economy, such as the chemical and electric industries, Germany was far ahead of its major European competitors.

German “late” industrial development was featured by high concentration of industrial production and heavy reliance on trusts, cartels, and other monopolistic arrangements. The spread of cartels, accelerated during the “Great Depression” of 1873-1896, was determined by risk-averting strategies of the German investment banks, key institutions responsible for the German economic breakthrough (Trebilcock 1981). Banks encouraged market- and profit-sharing arrangements to protect their massive investments to the heavy industry. In 1893 the Rhenish-Westphalian Coal Syndicate (*Rheinisch-Westfälische Kohlensyndikat*) was established. It monopolized 86 percent of coal production in Ruhr. In 1904 the Steel Works Association (*Stahlwerksverband*), the most important of the industry’s cartel organizations, was founded. By 1911 it controlled 82 percent of steel output. The Pig Iron Syndicate (*Roheisenverband*) after its reorganization in 1910 encompassed all pig iron producers (Feldman 1977: 18, 29).

Similar developments took place among new industries such as chemical and electric production. In 1904 three large firms, Bayer, Hoechst and BASF, formed a cartel and nearly monopolized the market of chemicals. By 1914 two companies, Siemens-Schuckert and the AEG (*Allgemeine Elektrizität Gesellschaft*), controlled about 80 percent of the German electric industry (Fischer 1975: 5; Levy 1966: 75). Thus, German industry acquired more of a collectivist design than competitive entrepreneurial economies in Britain, France and the United States long before the war (Trebilcock 1981: 70).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> To be sure the system of cartels implied a different type of management, as compared to a classical entrepreneur: “The cartel was the exact antithesis of the entrepreneur – who combines in one person the functions of financier, shop manager, merchant, and salesman. Fragmentation of the decision-making process was the mark of the cartel: commercial decisions were appropriated by its professional administrators at cartel headquarters; production decisions were governed by its technical staff; financial policy was largely controlled by its bankers. Further, these

The German arms industry was organized in a similar fashion. Although it included a few state-owned army workshops,<sup>16</sup> private firms controlled sixty percent of war-related production. Like in other German industries, one or two private corporations dominated the market of a particular commodity: explosives, for example, came from Nobel in Hamburg, optical instruments from Zeiss in Jena, small arms from DWMF in Berlin, artillery from Rheinmetall in Dusseldorf and Krupp in Essen (Epkenhans 2003, Stevenson 1996).

The Essen firm Friedrich Krupp AG was the most important army contractor. By 1914 Krupp had a workforce of 81,000 and the company's central works in Essen was the Germany's greatest industrial plant, using as much electricity as the whole of Berlin (Stevenson 1996: 18). During ten pre-war years of energetic expansion it completely re-equipped its Essen works and added about 25 hectares to its workshop area. In the summer of 1914 it increased its share capital from 180 million marks to 250 million marks. In the first year of the war it added thirty-five new workshops in Essen alone. Already in summer 1914 Krupp manufactured 150,000 shells of all calibers every month, and Germany's output for August was 170,000 (Strachan 2001: 1031-1032).

In short, as the Krupp's example indicates, German private manufacturers possessed a great productive capacity and an immense potential for expansion. The German government did not have to build new arms factories or arrange cooperative schemes of munitions production in

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decisions were not taken within an institution that was by spirit enterprising; on the contrary, the cartel was a deeply conservative organization aiming at the orderly exploitation of consumers and markets, the elimination of competition, and the pooling of profits" (Trebilcock 1981: 65).

<sup>16</sup> Six state-owned workshops in Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony were responsible for the production of artillery while a few other workshops produced rifles and ammunition. As in Britain, the state did not keep the public sector large enough to equip its forces in the event of war. The army workshops were adapted to the demand of peacetime, supplied only 40 percent of all army requirements and employed about 27,800 workers (10,000-11,000 workers in Britain) (Epkenhans 2003: 3; Hardach 1977: 56, Strachan 2001: 1029-1030).

civilian facilities, as in Britain. It could arrange production of most weapons and munitions in existing industrial establishments.

The key problem in German industrial mobilization was different. Due to high concentration and specialization in arms production a system of competitive bidding, common in Britain, was impossible. German industrial monopolies could manufacture enormous amounts of munitions but they also possessed a much greater bargaining power vis-à-vis the state than their British counterparts. German arms manufacturers could charge exorbitant prices for their production and that was exactly what they did (Feldman 1976). Their behavior was rational - manufacturers shared the common expectation of a short war and felt entitled to high premium for the risk they were taking in producing for a war that might end any day and that might lead to a sudden cancellation of their contracts (Feldman 1966, 1976). The government's interest was opposite, of course, - it did not intend to pay extravagant prices charged by the industrialists.

In early 1915 a solution was found in a cost-plus-profit system, a landmark of institutional change in German industrial organization. Under such a system the War Ministry was willing to pay for costs (material, risk and overhead), then labor and then a profit equal to five or ten percent on costs of production. The price therefore was not always predetermined in the contract but was tied instead to the costs of production. The new system was more flexible because it allowed increasing output without much concern of risk of contract cancellation. It was obvious however that such system did not encourage cost reduction. To increase profits some firms simply inflated the costs. To counteract this tendency the War Ministry introduced provisions for the examination of accounts and sending inspectors to the factories. Contracts included numerous clauses concerning the punishments for miscalculation of costs or late delivery (Feldman 1966: 60).

Not surprise the relationships between the War Ministry and industrialists soon became strained. The Ministry made enormous efforts to keep its expenditures within reasonable limits. In 1916, for example, the Ministry began to take a great interest in costs calculations of iron and steel. An expert in iron and steel production, Alfons Horten was appointed to direct the newly established Iron Bureau of the Raw Materials Section. It did not take Horten long to discover that the prices the army paid for certain types of steel were exorbitant. When the ministry asked the industrialists to explain and show evidence for their cost calculations, they agreed to do so only for a limited number of products. This reaction only increased suspicions of the War Ministry and added bitterness to its relations with the industrialists (Feldman 1976: 133). Soon however industrialists found a new powerful ally.

In August 1916 the new Supreme High Command under Hindenburg and Ludendorff launched a massive campaign for war production known as the Hindenburg Program or as a program of “total mobilization.” The new commanders came to power determined to match the Entente “man for man and gun for gun” (Feldman 1976: 126). In two days after assuming the command, Hindenburg instructed the War Ministry to dramatically increase war production. Using August 1916 level as a base, Hindenburg demanded that by May 1917 industry double the monthly output of powder to 12 000 tons and of light artillery to 3000 pieces, and triple that of machine guns to 7000. Targets for aircraft production, in which Germany lagged far behind Britain and France, were later set at 1000 engines and 1000 planes per month (Herwig 1997: 260).

The program meant nothing less than turning the existing system of economic planning upside down. Until 1916 rates of production of weapons and munitions were the result of complex bargaining of the Prussian War Ministry and the manufacturers. The volume of

production depended on the needs of the army and existing productive capacity of the industrial sector. The program of total mobilization, introduced by Hindenburg, put military goals first (McNeill 1982: 338). It demanded, in words of Moellendorff, “definite increases of production by a definite time and at any price;” the authorities were instructed to push the program with the understanding that “financial and other reservations can no longer considered” (Feldman 1966: 153). This request manifested a “triumph of decisionism” in economic mobilization (Feldman 1976: 141).

Such a commandeering approach to the nominally private arms manufacturers could only be possible in the situation of extreme structural dependence of arms producers on the state. Normally excess demand coupled with a small number of available suppliers leads to emergence of a seller’s market where a seller possesses a strong bargaining power vis-à-vis a buyer and can dictate conditions of a contract. But that is only possible if a seller is able to cater to a number of buyers. In a situation where there is a single buyer (the state) and a single seller (a monopolistic arms manufacturer), both parties are locked in an exclusive mutual dependence. The state cannot purchase munitions from alternative suppliers because of the blockade; the arms producing monopolies cannot sell produced munitions to anyone else except for the state (exports are prohibited). Under excess demand both parties are locked in the upward productionist race that can only be terminated either if the state runs out of money or producers run out of resources. Although a firm still operates as a private enterprise, its activity on the side of the output (a product) is structurally fixed.

A cost-plus-profit arrangement in German wartime industry signaled a remarkable departure from the operational schemes adopted in market-based industrial relations. Under cost-plus-profit system the producers obtained all incentives to transfer costs of production onto the

state. Such arrangements are usually associated with adjustment of demand, ongoing bargaining and economies of soft-budget constraints characteristic to state-socialist systems. Although German economy still was far from these transformations, instituting a cost-plus-profit system was a first important step towards a state-controlled economy.

(2)

Like any industrially developed country, Germany before the war was heavily dependent on imports of large quantities of various raw materials that made up to 45 percent of all imported goods. While Germany was completely self-sufficient in coal and low grade iron ore, it needed the high-grade iron ore (imported from Sweden and Spain) and rare metals (copper, tin, manganese, mercury, brass, tungsten, and nickel) to produce quality steels for manufacturing guns and shells. The components for powder and dynamite – glycerin, saltpeter, cotton, phenol, and toluene – were imported. The country had also depended on large imports of oil, timber, resins, hides, all cotton, almost all silk, large share of wool and other fibrous materials (Armeson 1964: 4; Herwig 1997: 255).

In August 1914 the British Navy began a blockade of German coast. While in the first stage of war the blockade was restricted to search and confiscations of the “absolute contraband” (arms and munitions), in March 1915, in reaction to Germany’s submarine attacks against the merchant ships, the Allies decided to stop all shipments to and from the ports of the Central Powers including “conditional contraband” (food, forage, fuel, clothing) and even goods from the so-called “free list” (raw materials such as ores, cotton and fertilizers). The broad range of measures was introduced to minimize German supply through the neutral countries (Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Switzerland). In 1917, after the United States joined the war

and the Allied blockade, the Central Powers became effectively isolated from the overseas markets.

The collapse of the Schlieffen plan of the *Blitzkrieg* and the Allied blockade launched against Germany created an economic situation entirely different from those in Britain and France. Because Germany had no longer access to international markets of raw materials it sought to concentrate on resource mobilization inside the country. Although decrease in some imports not related to munitions production did not affect military-economic mobilization, the lack of certain raw materials, such as additive and auxiliary materials for metallurgical and chemical processes (e.g., Chilean copper for manufacturing shell castings and saltpeter for producing gunpowder) threatened with disaster. These ominous bottlenecks affected the whole mobilization for war: there was no point of having more guns and rifles if there was nothing for them to fire (Strachan 2001: 1025). The country meantime was absolutely unprepared to this turn of events.<sup>17</sup>

The problem of shortage of raw materials first came to the attention of Wichard von Moellendorff and Walther Rathenau, the ranking officials of the electric concern AEG (*Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft*). On August 8, 1914 Moellendorff handed Rathenau, the head of the AEG, a memorandum in which he discussed possible negative effects of British blockade on supply of copper and suggested creating a national bureau for centralized allocation of metals. Later the same day, in his conversation with the head of the General Department of the

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<sup>17</sup> It is interesting that the problem of war economy, despite discussion in scholarly literature and popular press, did not enter plans and calculations of German officials before the war (Goebel 1930, Zunkel 1974). It did not occur to authorities that the government should take care of procurement of raw materials. Most of persons in command did not expect a long war in the first place. Those few who foresaw potential difficulties hoped nevertheless that supplies from the neutral countries, particularly the United States, would easily cover the German needs (McNeill 1982: 323, f.38).



Prussian War Ministry Colonel Heinrich Scheüch, Rathenau raised the issue of raw materials.

The alerted Scheüch immediately reported about the talk to the minister Falkenheyn. When Rathenau returned home he found a telegram from Falkenheyn inviting him to a meeting. On the following morning Falkenheyn accepted Rathenau's suggestions of immediate measures for organizing centralized allocation of raw materials.<sup>18</sup>

On August 13, 1914 the War Raw Materials Department (*Kriegsrohstoffamt* or KRA) of the Prussian War Ministry, headed by Rathenau, was officially founded and the next day it began its work. The department, which initially employed about forty officials, had much work to do. First the stocks of raw materials needed to be assessed, and a questionnaire was sent out to 900 firms. The next step consisted of setting up a system for allocation of raw materials. To deal with the problem the KRA developed a plan of cooperating with industrial associations and creating war raw materials corporations (*Kriegsrohstoffgesellschaften*) for each category of raw material (Pogge von Strandmann 1985: 190, f. 31).

By the early October first three war corporations came to existence: the War Metals Company (*Kriegsmetal AG*), the War Chemicals Company (*Kriegschemikalien AG*) and the War Wool Supply Company (*Kriegswollbedarf AG*). These three companies, particularly the War Metals Company established on September 2, 1914, were truly mammoth organizations. The

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<sup>18</sup> A few months later, in one of his lectures Rathenau remembered the meeting: "It was Sunday, August 9. I thanked the Minister and said that I am surprised that in the days of mobilization he was able to sacrifice his time for paying attention to the thoughts of a lay person. He answered, by pointing to his desk: You see, the desk is empty. The large work is done, the mobilization is past; not a single complaint came, and I have time to receive attendance. The conversation lasted a part of the morning and by its end, I obtained the consent of the War Minister to create an effective organization, as large as possible, with all means available, to solve the task imposed upon us. In this critical moment, the bold, responsible decision of the Prussian War Ministry brought the turning point to the area, of which I may speak to you. I wanted to say goodbye but the War Minister kept me there and, in unearned approval to me, suggested that I should take over organization of this work. I was not prepared but I was not given much time to think about it, so in few days I found myself accommodated in the War Ministry" (Cit. in Goebel 1930: 21).

War Metal Company, for example, combined about 30,000 firms under its aegis (Strachan 2001: 1022). By the end of the war the KRA was a massive bureaucratic organization, supervising about 200 corporations, employing over 20,000 people and divided into twenty-five departments with over 100 sections (Strachan 2001: 1023).

Most newly formed raw material corporations were organized as joint-stock companies; they did not pay dividends nor distribute profits, all profits accrued to the companies reverted to the federal state. Each corporation had a board of directors and a supervisory board. In addition there was a committee for valuation and distribution which was to mediate in the case of conflicting interests and which consisted of government officials and members chosen from the chambers of commerce. The war corporations had the task of registering and buying raw materials and distributing them to the firms that held military contracts (Chickering 1998: 37, Pogge von Strandmann 1985: 190, f. 31). They were also authorized to requisition all necessary raw materials.

The government exercised strict control over raw materials corporations through three institutional arrangements. First, the state could withdraw its guarantees which underwrote the companies' debts that in some cases were much greater than their share issue. Second, central or local government commissioners served on the boards of the corporations and were authorized to veto any decision. Third, the KRA as a whole had final authority in all important decisions (Strachan 2001: 1023).

Mobilization and allocation of non-ferrous metals offers a good example how the KRA worked. The Metals Department of the KRA was responsible for allocation of these metals. It was divided in three subsections: M(a) for foreign resources, M(b) for mining establishments and M(c) for confiscations, inventories, release, assignments, prices, and statistics. In close contact

with this department there were the Metal Registration Office, the Metal Mobilization Office, the Office of Metal Assignment, the Metal Release Office, and the War Metal Corporation.

On the “demand” side the work of the KRA included estimation of existing needs, analysis of possible measures of restricting the demand and delivery of the indispensable amount of raw materials. To determine the demand the Office of Metal Allocation collected mandatory reports of all procurement offices dealing with metals of the quantity of materials required. On the basis of such reports the procurement offices developed a uniform economic plan of metal allocation. The delivery of such metals was removed from free trade completely.

An example of planning copper production is illustrative. The director of the metal section of the KRA had on August 1, 1917 copper supplies of approximately 40,000 tons and monthly production of 5,000 tons. The monthly consumption was determined as 8,000 tons. From this followed that in the case of constant monthly supply the KRA would cover army needs from August 1, 1917 to September 10, 1918. Given this calculation the KRA computed restrictions for demand and communicated the result to the procurement offices under indication of length of the period, within which the reduction of quota should be accomplished. By imposing restriction and encouraging use of substitute materials the KRA was able to reduce the initial monthly consumption of copper from 10,000-12,000 tons to 5,000 tons (Goebel 1930).

On the “supply” side the work of the KRA consisted in acquiring (through the War Metal Corporation) all non-ferrous metals in the country and occupied territories. The first confiscation of these metals started already in August 1914. In spring 1915 there were comprehensive confiscations of copper, nickel, tin, aluminum, lead, and other metals. The supply of metals required a detailed classification of the metals both in their composition and in degrees of their processing. After all metals were centralized, any withdrawal from these supplies could take

place only with a release order. The director of the Metal Registration Office Porten explained: “This would have been nothing different, as if one would have shut down the whole industry to a certain hour and you would have given drop by drop permission for the continuation by the limited releases” (cit. in Goebel 1930: 42).

The stronger was the shortage of an individual raw material the more strict measures of control were introduced. The organization of rubber supply offers a good example of such measures. All efforts to produce artificial rubber had failed during the war despite the fact that from 200 to 300 patents had been granted. The occupied territories possessed only small quantities of rubber. The only possible way thus was the strictest control of rubber at home. All existing stores of rubber were confiscated. The work of collecting old rubber all over the country was organized. The government also resorted to privateering and contraband shipping of rubber by a commercial submarine. Each single order from confiscated supplies for army purposes required a special permission. The use of motor vehicles was strongly limited to military authorities only. All civilian consumption was restricted to use of regenerated rubber. By these measures the government succeeded in suppression of monthly consumption of rubber from 700 to 350 tons by the end of December 1914 and to 200 tons by the middle of 1915 (Goebel 1930).

With some other raw materials, like coal, situation, at least initially, was better. In 1913 Germany produced about 277 million tons of coal, including 190 million tons of hard coals and 87 million tons of brown coals. There was enough coal in Germany. However by the end of 1916 and early 1917 the situation changed. The predatory exploitation of existing mines due to the draft of many trained miners, the increased consumption of coal in nitrogen and aluminum manufacturing, together with the needs of military transportation extended over large distances caused an overall scarcity of coal. These shortages resulted in disorganization of supply and

subsequent organizational change. The section 0 of the KRA took over the direction of the general questions of mining and exemption of miners while the task of coal distribution was assigned to a newly created position of Coal Commissar. This official, appointed in February 1917, was responsible for all coal distribution in the country. The role of the Coal Commissar was immense. Not only was he responsible for allocation of all coal. Together with the War Office Coal Commissar was involved in deactivation and consolidation of factories in the industries non-essential for war, because lack of coal in winter automatically led to closing these workshops (Goebel 1930). Extensive measures of administrative allocation of coal were introduced for urban households. In Berlin, household consumption of coal became rationed in autumn 1917. The municipal instructions of coal ration coupon system included twenty three pages and eighty four paragraphs (Triebel 1997).

By 1916 the comprehensive system of economy, saving, and recycling was introduced in the sphere of raw materials. A corporate form of organization with specialized corporations in the various industries of resource supply, emerged as an organizational improvisation, proved itself effective. In a short period of time the KRA and the corporations were able to supply their industrial consumers with a sufficient amount of most raw materials. In two years in the war the army did not experience the lack of munitions. In some cases, when existing stocks of raw materials could not satisfy demand, new technologies for producing substitutes were introduced. For example, when the Chilean nitrates necessary for production of gun powder became unavailable, the KRA sponsored invention of nitrogen fixation, which liberated German munitions production from a dependence on imported nitrates.

To sum up, in contrast to British state-directed economic mobilization which was mainly directed towards increasing production of munitions, the focal point of the German economic

mobilization was the supply and optimal allocation of scarce raw materials. While British munitions program involved direct but relatively selective state intervention in the workings of the private economy in which state and private economy retained their institutional independence, German economic program involved an indirect but more comprehensive pattern of state-economy integration by means of the corporate control of raw materials allocation. The KRA and state-controlled raw materials corporations mobilized all war-related resources and created a massive bureaucratic mechanism for compulsory allocation of resources, the mechanism radically different from the market allocation. The introduction of centralized system of mobilization and allocation of raw materials made individual producers even more integrated into the state-controlled war economy. Now not only the output of an enterprise involved in military production was structurally fixed. Because the quota and price of raw materials were controlled by the state the input of production thus was also predetermined. The only variable factor in such system of production remained the labor force.

(3)

Although in the first two years in the war German war industry experienced some workforce shortages, the labor supply was not such an immense problem as the one in Britain and particularly France. Germany with its population of 66 million was a larger nation than Britain (46 million) and France (41 million). Even after the 1914 mobilization of almost four million Germans to the army the remaining male population of working age (about 17 million) still exceeded the corresponding numbers in Britain (about 14 million) and in France (about 6 million). In other words, there was some margin of available manpower that Germany could draw for war production.

The draft took from industries many skilled industrial workers (some companies in mining and chemical industries lost up to 50 percent of their workers) but the labor shortages were not sufficiently acute to demand new practices of workforce regulation. In Germany, like in other countries, many skilled workers were recalled from the army but, unlike such nations as France or Austria-Hungary, they were not placed under military regimentation and discipline. On the contrary, in Germany they were completely released from military service for the period of their exemption and were paid at a normal salary rate (Feldman 1966: 75).

However, the existing shortages of skilled workforce and pay differentials among the armaments firms were sufficient enough for many workers to start improving their wages by moving to better-paid jobs. In December 1914, for example, Vulkan-Werke, the largest producer of vessels in the Navy was complaining that it was losing workers to competitors. It did not take much time to find out that many of Vulcan's workers found their employment in Krupp's workshops in Essen that paid higher wages (Feldman 1966: 79).

In 1915 the problem of workers' mobility became headache for many arms manufacturers. Some officials proposed a decree refusing to award contracts that employed workers without permission of the previous employer (Feldman 1966: 76-77). Many industrialists called for curtailing workers rights and pointed to the Austrian system of militarization of workforce as an appropriate model for industrial relations in war time: "A colonel in the trenches can no more permit negotiations with his troops than [a factory owner] can permit his workers to make decisions about basic factory questions" (cited in Feldman 1966: 74-75). To safeguard labor supply they requested immediate adoption of a compulsory work law (Armeson 1964: 8).

The officials in the War Ministry resisted militarization of industry. They argued: “The workers are now fulfilling their war duty... with the greatest willingness. In this they are being strengthened and driven on by their unions. A military or legal compulsion to work will have a laming and destructive effect upon the readiness of the unions to help out. Pointing to the brilliant success of compulsory military discipline in the army misses the fundamental difference between service in the defense of one’s country, in which all members work for the common good without personal benefit, and the capitalistic work relationship, in which there is a profit for the employer from the performance of the worker” (Feldman 1966: 75).

The compromise solution to the workers’ mobility problem was found in establishing war boards which were designed to resolve issues of job quits. The first of such institutions was the War Board for the Metal Industry of Greater Berlin established in February 1915. The board composed of representatives of employers and workers, met weekly to judge if workers who wished to quit their jobs against the will of their employer should be allowed to do so. If the worker’s complaint was found to be just he could be permitted to quit and given a “leaving certificate.” If the complaint was not just the certificate would be refused. In many cases both sides were able to find a compromise solution in which part of the worker’s demand (higher wages) would be satisfied and he would stay on the job (Feldman 1966: 77-78). During 1915 and early 1916 the war boards spread all over the country.

Launching the Hindenburg program in August 1916 changed the situation with the workforce. The new target goals of manifold increase of arms production could be achieved only under conditions of bringing in large additional contingents of industrial manpower. By that time the margin of workforce available in the beginning of the war all but disappeared. The number of men under arms rose from 3.8 million in the first month of war to 5.7 million troops by the end



of 1915 (Stubbs 2002: 38). It became increasingly clear that existing methods of workforce supply would not meet the demands of the Hindenburg program. The negative initial attitude of state officials towards compulsory work started shifting towards greater acceptance.

One of the first German experiences of employing compulsory labor was use of the foreign workers, particularly ones from the occupied territories of Belgium and Poland. In early October 1916 the Supreme Command issued a decree ordering generals of the military zones in Belgium to make arrangements for the forcible removal of the “unemployed persons” from their respective districts. Beginning on October 23, 1916, forced deportations were inaugurated for all of the Belgian territory under German control. The deportees first would have to be placed into concentration camps in Germany before being assigned to industry. The Belgians were transported to the camps in crowded open trucks and cattle cars without heat or sufficient food, water, and sanitary facilities; they were exposed to the winter weather of rain and snow. The conditions at the camps were poor and the mortality rate was high. About sixty thousand Belgian workers were forcibly relocated to Germany in three months (Armeson 1964: 40).

Meantime the use of forced foreign deportees (less than 100,000 men) could not satisfy even a small portion of the skyrocketed demand of labor force. Even the recall of about 1,200,000 workers from the army became insufficient by summer 1916. The Supreme High Command insisted on nothing less but compulsory work service of all civilian population, including women. In his famous memorandum of September 13, 1916 Hindenburg wrote: “There are untold thousands of childless soldiers’ wives who just cost the state money. Also thousands of women and girls are running around doing nothing or, at best, pursuing useless occupations. The principle ‘He who does not work shall not eat’ is, also pertaining to women, more justified

than ever before in our present situation.” The Field Marshal concluded: “The entire German people should live only in the service of the Fatherland” (cited in Feldman 1966: 173).

On November 1, 1916 a new super-agency, the War Office (*Kriegsamt*) under General Wilhelm Groener, was organized. It was charged with the direction of all matters pertaining economic mobilization including recruitment, deployment, and feeding of workers (Herwig 1997: 261). The War Office, unlike the War Ministry was organized along military rather than bureaucratic lines (Feldman 1966: 192). The deputy commanding generals were subordinated in economic matters to the War Office; local war offices (*Kriegsamsstellen*) in the districts were established to implement orders of the central authority. Creation of the War Office was the last preparatory step before the most radical measure of work mobilization during the First World War. It was soon to follow.

On December 5, 1916 the Reichstag passed the Auxiliary Service Law (*Hilfsdienstgesetz*) designed to mobilize the nation’s human resources. All male Germans between the ages 17 and 60 not serving in the army were considered as mobilized for a “patriotic auxiliary service” (*vaterländische Hilfsdienst*) for the period of the war. The law stipulated that any worker quitting the job should obtain a leaving certificate from the employer. No one should employ a man without such certificate. Should the employer refuse to give a certificate, complaint may be made to a committee to be appointed in a local district and to consist of representatives of War Office, an employer, and the workers. Any company employing more than fifty workers should have a standing committee of the workers to bring all suggestions, wishes and complaints of the workers to their employer. The military authorities were to oversee the law and punish anyone who refused labor assignment with imprisonment up to one year or fines up to 10,000 marks (Herwig 1997: 260; Lutz 1969: 99-103).

Because the Auxiliary Service Law was adopted by Reichstag, in its final draft it lost much of the draconian character of the initial project. Hindenburg's insistence on women's service was dropped. Also, to great irritation of the Supreme High Command and industrialists, left and center delegates were able to insert provisions legalizing workers' transfers and establishing workshop committees for discussing and solving problems of production. These features allowed some researchers (Feldman 1966) calling the law a "triumph of labor." While this characterization of the law may be valid, the other aspect of this act also needs to be emphasized. The Auxiliary Service Law was the most comprehensive measure of introducing compulsory state service at the national level among all belligerent countries. In this respect it was an unprecedented measure of war socialism or, as Chambers (1939: 171) put it, "the first of the grand 'totalitarian' measures in our history."

(4)

The most serious problem of the German war-economic mobilization which the nation under blockade proved unable to resolve was a problem of food (Offer 1989). In this area the state introduced most extensive measures of regulation and control. By the end of the war, state agencies centralized all food supplies in the country and attempted to regulate nothing less than the quantity and quality of a daily food intake apportioned to every German. Like in other areas of government regulation, food control was introduced step by step.

The outbreak of the war in August 1914 caused disorganization in the national food market. Mobilization of large number of agricultural producers in the middle of harvest season disrupted the normal work of agriculture. The war also excluded Germany from international food supplies. In the prewar years the country imported about one quarter of its food: meat, milk, fish, eggs, butter, coffee, vegetable oil. Much of the fodder consumed by farm animals consisted

of shipments from overseas. In few months after the outbreak of the war all belligerent countries, one after another, banned exports of foodstuffs, forage and fertilizers. Food prices started climbing up.

Already in August 1914 some municipalities began establishing price ceilings for staple foods including bread, milk and potatoes. In a few weeks, however, these measures proved ineffective because wholesalers sent their goods wherever they could obtain best fixed prices and boycotted any town which imposed low prices in the interests of local consumers (Hardach 1977: 116). In October 1914 the federal authorities announced introduction of national price controls, applying initially to bread and later to potatoes, sugar, and some other goods. This system, however, did not work well either because fixing of individual maximum prices resulted in instant disappearance of the product from the market because the agrarian producers would turn to whatever products seemed most profitable. When maximum prices were introduced for grain and potatoes, for example, the farmers began feeding these products to livestock because prices of pork and beef were not regulated.<sup>19</sup> As a result about 3.2 million tons of flour had “disappeared” (Offer 1989: 26).

To reserve a necessary stock of grain for the next year, in November 1914 the Prussian state founded the War Grain Company. Initially nothing pointed to any particular importance of this measure. The company’s original purpose was to buy up about two million tons of rye for resale in spring and summer 1915. Although formally the corporation was private, owned by stockholders, the Prussian authorities held most of its stock. On December 3, 1914, however, the Bundesrat extended the company’s jurisdiction to cover all of Germany, and the head of the

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<sup>19</sup> When the government discovered that pigs became major competitors to humans for grain and potatoes it ordered a mass massacre of pigs. As a result in early 1915 about two million animals were slaughtered, an episode known as a Schweinmord.

Prussian company Georg Michaelis (a future Chancellor) took over the Imperial Grain Corporation (Yaney 1994: 76).

On January 25, 1915 Germany instituted a comprehensive state-directed system of supply and distribution of food. The Bundesrat declared a state monopoly on all grains in the country beginning February 1. It ordered all existing stores of wheat, rye and other cereals to be managed by the Imperial Grain Corporation. Only small amounts of grain less than 100 kilograms and seed grain could remain in private possession. By February 5, 1915 all owners of grain were obligated to declare and surrender their stocks of grain to the local authorities. Anyone who declined to do such declaration or found guilty in making false and incomplete declaration would be punished by six month imprisonment or a fine of 1,500 marks.

The government would pay fixed price for all expropriated grain. All mills were required to grind the grain which the corporation would send to them. The flour, which was a property of the corporation, would be delivered to municipal authorities, army administrations and navy administration and to them only. The delivery price of flour was fixed by the administrative authority in the district in which the mill was located with consideration of the original price plus the price for grinding. The mill was obligated to deliver the flour to the destinations determined by the authorities.

Regulation of allocation of grain was invested into the Imperial Distribution Center (*Reichsverteilungsstelle*), which was authorized to distribute grain to local municipalities according to their population until the next harvest. The local authorities were permitted to order what kind of bread be baked, prohibit or restrict the baking of cookies, regulate grinding of grain in the mills, restrict the delivery and purchase of bread and flour to fixed quantities and delivery places, prohibit delivery of a produce to bakers and retailers outside the district. The free trade of

grain and flour was prohibited. Bread rationing was introduced in Berlin in January and extended to the rest of the country in June (Feldman 1966: 102).<sup>20</sup> A ration card for bread allowed 2 kilograms of bread per person per week (Davis 2000: 310). The implementation of rationing was entrusted to local associations each of which covered several urban and rural districts (Hardach 1977: 117).

The Imperial Grain Corporation and the Imperial Distribution Center set a pattern for state regulation of other staple foodstuffs. In April 1915, an Imperial Office for Potato Supply was established. This agency was set up for purchasing large quantities of potatoes. Because of organizational difficulties and problems of centralized storage of potatoes the general requisition of all potatoes, like grain, was not considered advisable. The Office bought potatoes for reselling to the population. In 1915-1916 similar state corporations were formed for supply of meat, sugar, vegetables, fats, eggs, and many other foods, including sauerkraut (Chickering 1998: 44; Yaney 1994: 77). Subsequently rationing schemes were introduced for most foods. In 1916 the weekly entitlement per person was approximately as follows: 3.5 kg potatoes, 160-220 g. flour, 100-250 g. meat, 60-75 g. fats, 7 liters milk, 200 g. sugar, 270 g. spread containing sugar, 1 egg, 120 g. fish (Hardach 1977: 118). Every household registered at neighborhood shops where it would get the rationed foodstuffs (Offer 1989: 28).

In 1916 about thirty food directorates operated in the country. In the absence of an overarching centralized authority and proper administrative coordination with local military

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<sup>20</sup> In March 1915 Michaelis, who took formal charge of both company and directorate, received the title of *Reichskommissar*. Now as a state official he acquired the jurisdiction not only over his subordinates in the corporation but also over imperial and state officials. The corporation acquired a large network of local agents. These commissioners (*Kommissionäre*) were empowered to purchase bread, store it, mill it into flour and sell to consumers designated by the distribution center. During the summer of 1917 the commissioners extended their jurisdiction over the fodder grain (Yaney 1994: 77).

commanders their work generated much confusion and bureaucratic squabbling. The authorities were bombarded with insistent demands for nothing less but a military “food dictator” (*Lebensmitteldiktator*). Finally, to insure centralized control and oversight over national food supply the War Food Office (*Kriegsernährungsamt*, or KEA) was instituted on May 22, 1916. The Prussian official Adolf von Batocki was appointed the President of the KEA. With formal consolidation of allocating functions in the KEA the German food distribution system crystallized in its final and accomplished form. Like many other German administrative authorities, the KEA established the hierarchical system of bureaucratic offices throughout the Empire (Yaney 1994: 79).

Thus, in the production and distribution of food Germany was transformed into a full-scale compulsory economy (*Zwangswirtschaft*), in which market forces completely yielded to the rule of the manager. The state established a monopoly over all staple foods. For each kind of food there existed a state corporation which centralized and allocated food for the consumers according to strict rations. The centralized authority with dictatorial power was established for control and supervision of food provisioning. By the middle of the war, bureaucratic regulations had reached into every phase of food production and food allocation; they dictated the supply and price of seed and fertilizer, the varieties and quantities of food crops and livestock to be delivered, prices at which these commodities were to be sold, rations to be apportioned. The legal free market of food all but disappeared. All producers, distributors and consumers had to frame their economic decisions on the basis of legal and administrative directions and constraints (Chickering 1998: 44, 144).

The total economic mobilization in Germany under military dictatorship of Hindenburg and Ludendorff in the second phase of the war (1916-1918) produced an economic system different from a free market economy. The army controlled every aspect of German life (Dallas 2000: 54). In the sphere of arms production a top-down, managerial, decisionist approach displaced a free contractual relationship between the state and manufacturers. The military-bureaucratic regime and the monopolies, caught in an uneasy institutional symbiosis, sought to consolidate a commanding position over national economy and define conditions and terms of war-related production. Instead of fixed-price contract system, common in market economies, a cost-plus-profit system characteristic for administered, state-controlled economies was instituted. The manufacturers were ordered to produce arms, munitions and other war-related products and could not dispose of their products elsewhere but with the state. The “non-essential” industries that did not contribute directly to war-economic mobilization were shut down by the state. A unique bureaucratic mechanism for mobilization and centralized allocation of all national resources orchestrated by the KRA and state-controlled raw materials corporations was instituted. Planners, managers, accountants and engineers of numerous public and semi-public agencies came to replace old-styled private entrepreneurs. The Auxiliary Service Law established a compulsory state service and administrative direction of workforce instead of a contractual relationship of the free labor market. Under conditions of this law laborers were assigned to the factories and had to accept conditions of employment, regulated by the state, like it or not. Finally, possession and allocation of food was officially monopolized by the state. The state collected all eatable items in all controlled territories, stored them and rationed them to the laborers and others. The state decided on the quantity and quality of a daily food intake consumed by every German. Thus, in all major institutional arenas (production, raw materials,



workforce, and food) administrative mechanisms of command and compulsion began to dominate the market relationships.

### Austria-Hungary

With the outbreak of the war, Austria-Hungary, like its ally Germany, declared a state of siege. The decree of state emergency, signed by the Emperor Franz Joseph and promulgated on July 25, 1914, was based on the Austrian Law of May 5, 1869, which suspended civil and political rights of the citizens (freedom of speech, assembly, press) and transferred authority into the hands of the military administration in sixteen districts that constituted the war zone (later this area was greatly expanded). Although the Archduke Friedrich was named the Commander, the actual power in the Supreme Army Command (*Armee-Oberkommando, or AOK*), was bestowed to the Chief of the General Staff, General Conrad von Hötzendorf. The civilian government, headed by the Premier Karl Count Stürgkh, continued to function but the work of the parliament (*the Reichsrat*) was suspended for undetermined time.

(1)

Although it was Austria-Hungary that bore direct responsibility for provoking the all-European conflict in summer 1914, she was the least equipped, both politically and economically, to wage the all-out industrial war, in which her original quarrel with Serbia had turned into (Schulze 2005). Compared to strong centralized states of Great Britain, France and Germany, the political architecture of the Habsburg monarchy, best described as “*Absolutismus gemaessigt durch Schlamperei*” (“absolutism tempered by mess”) was a much more precarious construction. Since 1867 the monarchy consisted of two de facto independent states, Austria and Hungary, with two cabinets and two parliaments. These two “halves” were weakly tied together by the imperial policies and institutions. The economic, financial, and monetary policies were

not predetermined as common but had to be settled every ten years by a compromise settlement between two governments (Gerschenkron 1977: 8).<sup>21</sup>

Austria-Hungary was the least industrialized nation among the key belligerents. It produced ten times less pig iron and seven times less steel than her ally, Germany, three times less pig iron and almost two times less steel than her major opponent, Russia. The manufacture of munitions was woefully low (Stone 1975: 123). In the beginning of the war Habsburgs' production of weapons and munitions was comparable to the arms output of the island nation and the army minimalist, Great Britain (see Stubbs 2002).

The Austrian arms industry, like arms industries elsewhere, consisted of public and private enterprises. Rifles and munitions were produced in the state-owned workshops in Vienna and Weiner Neustadt, the new factory at Steyr delivered rifles and the Schwarzlose machine guns. Because of low military expenditures, however, these factories suffered a chronic shortage of the government orders (Stevenson 1996: 32). The production of artillery was dominated by a private manufacturer, Skoda in Pilsen. In the prewar years the company expanded; its labor force increased 60% between 1910 and 1913, to reach 9,600 workers (Strachan 2001: 1047). In 1913 the company even beat off Krupp and Vickers to win a contract for a new Hungarian artillery plant at Győr. However the volume of output, as compared to other European arms producers, remained small. The guns manufactured at Skoda used the outdated bronze barrels, lacked recoil

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<sup>21</sup> The monarchy had failed to develop a strong and robust national market which would integrate its constituencies into one coherent entity. Before the war, each part of the Empire moved in the direction of economic self-sufficiency. Each province sought to develop its resources independently to counter the industrial dominance of the better developed provinces. Trebilcock's (1981: 313) suggested an original "stellar" metaphor: "As with Germany, the industrial potential of the Dual Monarchy tended to burst through its political boundaries, establishing once again the trans-national nature of the industrial revolution. But where the German economy resembled a very dense star, affecting 'extraterritorial' industry by its gravitational force, the Austrian economy favoured rather the dying nebula, diffuse, random, its core less integrated or defined."

systems and protective shields. They were inferior in their quality and performance to the steel guns produced by Krupp and other major European armories (Stevenson 1996: 32).

Throughout 1914 and 1915, Austria-Hungary, which confronted the war on three fronts, - against Russia, Serbia, and, beginning May 1915, Italy, suffered a chronic munitions crisis. During the first winter in the war many of the Habsburg divisions had at their disposal only three to five thousand rifles, instead of normal twelve to fifteen thousand. Moreover, two thirds of these rifles were antiquated 1888 models. An average Austrian division was armed with thirty-two guns in the Balkans and forty-two guns in the Eastern front whereas one Serbian division possessed forty guns and one Russian division fifty-nine guns (Wegs 1970: 156). Although due to the different, more dynamic character of war operations at the Eastern front the Austrian munitions crisis did not appear in such sudden and dramatized form as on Western front, the challenge was essentially the same - Austria had to create the stocks of weapons and munitions it failed to produce in peacetime.

The task of economic mobilization in Austria, as in Germany, was assigned to the War Ministry directed by Alexander von Krobotin. During the war this administrative body turned into a large military-bureaucratic institution: the size and functions of this agency expanded and multiplied, a new coordinating office (*Präsidialbureau*) and ten new departments in addition to the existing fifteen were created. In addition to the new departments, a series of independent offices was established: Central Transport, War Telegraph, and other bureaus.

How did the war transform economic relations in the realm of industrial production? Austrian response to the challenge of industrialized war was most radical: militarization of heavy industry. To supervise arms production and the mining industry, the War Ministry assigned military directors to factories and mines placed under its jurisdiction. Although military directors

usually did not intervene in routine administrative and technical matters, they controlled all procurement and sales of commodities in the enterprises and made sure that factories used materials for military purposes only. They were required to report immediately on all bottlenecks in supply. Funding for operating expenses and investments came from the Ministry. A military director was subordinate to the district military commander in military affairs and to the respective inspector of the War Ministry in administrative and economic matters. The Ministry inspectors were divided in territorial groups. To discuss the issues of production, financial matters and labor affairs the inspectors met regularly in the War Ministry. In cases of acute need in the district the government could run a factory or a mine at a loss in order to meet the need. Military directors procured the necessary transportation for their factories and the food, housing, and other services for the workers (Wegs 1970: 45-49).

Thus, the War Ministry commandeered industrial production in a most direct and unambiguous manner. The market mechanism in heavy industry was essentially displaced by managerial control by the state agency. In this respect Austria-Hungary was ahead of all other European nations in the war. Yet, one should not overestimate the scope of the military-administrative control in Austria-Hungary. The system of military management was introduced only in few strategic sectors of economy (heavy industry, mining and munitions industry, railroad transportation). Other industries (textiles, food, agriculture, trade, construction, etc.) escaped military control and retained much of their pre-war character. The economy as a whole thus represented a heterogeneous system. In addition, the corporate system of raw materials supply (see below) was built on German model but it differently from German system. It lacked an institutional anchorage in the state. As a result the Austrian economic mechanism lacked the necessary institutional coherence and structural integration during the war.

In an attempt to ensure due coordination and uniformity in managing various sectors of the economy, in March 1917 the Austrian government created a set of new administrative bodies dealing with the key issues of economic management and having jurisdiction over public and private domains. The Main Central Committee was designed to function as an economic parliament for the whole of Austria. This body included the presidents of all war raw materials corporations and other representatives of the industry and the state. This economic parliament was designed to act as an advisory board for the executive body, the General Commissariat, divided into thirty six boards of experts, planners, and managers. The General Commissioner headed this administrative body and also presided over the Main Central Committee. In addition, for a better coordination of economic policies, an Interministerial Commission, which included all ministries related to war economy and headed by the Minister of Trade, was established on March 24, 1917. According to Redlich (1929: 132) the General Commissariat and the Interministerial Commission were the landmarks in the building “the great economic State of the future.” With establishing the General Commissariat and the Interministerial Commission Austria took another step ahead of Germany and other nations in building the coordinated state-controlled economy (Redlich 1929: 133).

To sum up, Austrian war-economic mobilization in the realm of production resulted in militarization of the heavy industries, the most radical solution to the issue of munitions supply among all belligerent nations. All major arms factories and mining establishments were supervised by military directors. These directors in turn were supervised by the inspectors of the War Ministry divided into the regional groups. By the end of the war a much broader but much “softer” administrative system was set atop the whole national economy. These measures of

administrative coordination indicate that Austrian system of military production represented a far-reaching experiment in wartime command economy.

(2)

Like Germany, Austria-Hungary was not self-sufficient in war-related resources and depended heavily on imports of many raw materials. Before the war Austria imported large amount of iron ore and coke from Sweden, coal from Germany, cotton from the United States, Egypt and India. The external resource dependence, as in Germany, was greatest in non-ferrous metals. The country produced annually only 4,000 tons of copper that covered one-ninth of the army demand. Domestic production met two-thirds of demand for lead and one-half of demand for zinc. Austria-Hungary was completely dependent on imports of tin and nickel (Herwig 1997: 240, Wegs 1970: 117).

The peculiar feature of Austria-Hungarian foreign trade was that almost 75 percent of its imports were transshipped through Germany from the Baltic ports. The blockade that the Allies launched against Germany affected Austria-Hungary equally. The German ban on exports and transits, introduced with the outbreak of the war, paralyzed trade between two countries. On the conference on September 24, 1914 the two allies decided to reestablish trade relations. Germany insisted, however, that the goods supplied to Austria should be used exclusively for war purposes and not for speculation. German government insisted on Austria introducing the centralized control of raw materials similar to the KRA.

The task of organizing centralized control over raw materials was assigned to the Trade Ministry. Already in October 1914, following the German lead, Austria-Hungary began establishing monopolies for supply and allocation of raw materials called *Zentralen* (the Centrals). Their primary function was to centralize individual raw materials. The share capital

for the centrals was generated by private firms and investment banks. The interest rates were fixed at the level of 5 or 6 percent; any profits above these rates were transferred to the corporation's reserves or to the state. As in Germany, the state officials served on the boards of directors with a veto right. Unlike in Germany, in Austria the state did not normally participate in these corporations either with capital or guarantees - the Ministry of Finance held that this was the concern of the industry to finance its purchases.

The first three corporations that dealt with cotton, wool and metal were created in the fall 1914. The functioning of the Metal Central, established on November 17, 1914, is a good example of how the raw materials corporations worked in Austria. This trust was formed because Germany, which supplied the large share of metals, had refused to deal with individual Austrian firms. On November 17, 1914 the munitions and cartridge case companies provided the capital for establishing a Metal Central in order to centralize allocation of the nonferrous metals. Formed as a joint-stock company with a profit ceiling of five percent, the corporation was to procure, store and provide all the nonferrous metals for the armament industry. Unlike most other corporations, the Metal Central possessed financial guarantees of the War Ministry. Although both the War and Trade Ministries had the right to veto any decisions of the Metal Central, the War Ministry's decision was to be followed in case of conflict.

The Metal Central entered the domestic market in early 1915 and, with its five hundred purchasing offices, soon monopolized the procurement of nonferrous metal. Because the Metal Central could legally purchase metals at above market prices, it was able to force other purchasing agencies out of business. The government supported and enforced the monopoly. On September 1, 1915 the authorities decreed that all copper goods of less than two thousand kilograms could only be purchased by the Metal Central. The absence of alternative buyers and

the high prices offered by the Metal Central forced all firms to deal exclusively with the Metal Central.

The Metal Central was empowered to requisition machinery and equipment from factories producing luxury and nonessential goods (e.g., brewing and electric enterprises) as well as government offices and private homes. In 1916-17, for example, by the order of the government, it confiscated and melted down more than 13,000 tons of copper church bells. By 1918 the Central collected such miscellaneous items as copper chandeliers, door and dinner bells, lightning rods, kitchen pots, door and furniture handles and latches, locks, hangers, organ pipes, and casings from shop windows (Herwig 1997: 240; Wegs 1970: 16-19, 117-118, 130-132). At the end of the war there were ninety one such *Zentralen*. They dealt with agricultural products, textiles, paper, chemicals, oils, fats, hides, leather, machinery, stone, clay, wood and other materials.<sup>22</sup>

To recapitulate, because of a limited resource base and foreign blockade Austria-Hungary confronted great difficulties in supplying its industry with necessary raw materials. Prodded by Germany, the Austrian government took initiative in establishing the war raw materials corporations (*Zentralen*) similar to the German prototype. Austrian *Zentralen* resembled German *Kriegsrohstoffgesellschaften* in all but one crucial respect – they did not have legal and financial guarantees of the government. Therefore, the institutional merger of the raw materials

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<sup>22</sup> Classified according to the principle of organization these agencies included war combines, war centrals, commissions, economic boards, and legal corporations. The war combines were state cartels formed by a decree of the government for allocation of a certain product. The decisions of a combine were compulsory for all members of the cartel. Their work was administrative and they exercised no commercial functions. The war centrals were private, limited liability corporations purchasing the raw materials to be distributed by the combines. The commissions were state agencies for control of an appropriate combine and supervision of the allocation of raw materials assigned to them. The boards represented the interests of certain branches of trade and industry. Their functions were mostly consultative. Legal corporations acted as official distributive agencies for the uniform handling of specific groups of goods (Redlich 1929: 117-118).



corporations and the state did not take place in Austria. In Austrian economy the system of raw materials supply was orchestrated by the state indirectly, rather than directly, like one in Germany.

(3)

The wartime economy in Austria-Hungary was characterized by massive use of compulsion in mobilizing workforce. By the state decree of July 25, 1914, which put in force the War Service Law of 1912, the government introduced the industrial conscription of all men under fifty not inducted into active military service (exempt categories included public officials, business owners, clergyman, farmers, and mentally disabled) (Wegs 1970: 210). The persons, covered under provisions of the War Service Law and inducted to work in industry, could not leave their jobs during the whole period of the war. The laborers were not allowed to organize unions; those who “disrupted” the operations were subjects to severe punishments (heavy fines, imprisonment, and transfer to the front). The factories where the workers demanded higher pay or better conditions of work were placed under military control and the workers were shifted in military list (*Landsturm*) with reduced rate of pay (Herwig 1997: 280). An enterprise placed under war service formed an army workshop with its whole personnel under martial law (Riedl 1932: 11). Most of the major firms, in fact all armaments factories, operated under war emergency laws. In 1916 the regulations were relaxed somewhat and workers were allowed to leave the workshop if they gave a two week notice and found work in other enterprise under war emergency law. But most regulations remained in place until the end of the war (Wegs 1970: 210-211).

One of the reasons why the government was able to establish such severe regime of production was because the Austrian working class was small and disorganized. Trade unions

were weak in comparison to their counterparts in Britain, France and Germany (Herwig 1997: 279). During three years in the war the Austrian working class remained calm and submissive. There were 104 strikes in 1914 but only 19 strikes in 1915 and 15 in 1916 (Herwig 1997: 282). Only in 1917, with a dramatic decline in living standard, the relations between employers and workers started to deteriorate. To forestall labor unrest the government created “complaints commissions” to regulate labor disputes. As in Germany, these commissions consisted of representative of manufacturers, workers and the army. Also, as in Germany, military representatives often took side of workers against employers. Finally and also as in Germany, the employers succeeded in pressing out pro-labor military commanders out of commissions. These commissions proved largely ineffective.

Overall, Austria-Hungarian system of wartime labor control almost completely eliminated the contractual element in employment relations. In the first days of the war the government instituted an industrial draft of all men (albeit with numerous exemptions). The traditional rights and liberties of the working class with regard to pay and job mobility were suspended. Any form of collective action was outlawed. Wegs (1970: 218-219) concludes: “The claim by one author that the “Austrian government only strove with half measures for halfway goals” could not include the actions of the War Ministry in regard to labor. The control established over labor by the War Ministry did provide the necessary labor for industry. Compared to the German measures, Austrian action was much earlier and more effective. Even though the measures of the military authorities deprived the laborer of much of his freedom, the absence of strikes and near full employment though 1916 attest to the success of the military action.”

(4)

Before 1914 the Danube monarchy was practically self-sufficient in staple foodstuffs (Haselsteiner 1985, Healy 2004). The outbreak of the war changed the whole situation. Because of mobilization of a substantial part of the rural population to the army and Russian occupation of the large agrarian province of Galicia the harvest of wheat in 1914 dropped compared to 1913 by one third. The yields of other crops also steeply declined. Before the war, if the domestic supply turned insufficient, the government compensated the difference by food imports, mostly from Russia and Rumania. With the outbreak of the war, these imports became unavailable.

The war caused disorganization in food markets. The army procurement offices purchased large stocks of food. Refugees from East Galicia demanded additional supplies. The population in the cities hoarded foodstuffs. As a result, already in October 1914 large cities began experiencing food shortages. The price of bread, as in other countries, immediately went up. The first reaction of the authorities, modeled on the German measures, was price control. In November 1914, a system of maximum prices was introduced for grain, flour, bread, and potatoes (Hardach 1977: 121, Riedl 1932: 47).

Such a policy could be effective if it was properly coordinated with the Hungarian authorities since it was “the other half” of the Empire that produced most food for the market. By establishing maximum prices the authorities made shipping of foodstuffs to Austria less profitable for Hungarian agriculturalists. The situation was complicated by the fact that in Hungary the 1914 grain harvest was about one-third less than normal and barely enough for her own domestic needs (Hardach 1977: 121). In January and March 1915 the Hungarian government issued decrees of a limited requisition of grain (Haselsteiner 1985: 90).

Simultaneously Budapest reduced grain shipments to Austria from 23 million to 4 million quintals (Herwig 1997: 277).

On February 27, 1915, a month later than the analogous measure in Germany, a state monopoly on grain was introduced in Austria-Hungary. The government prohibited all private dealings in grain and flour. In April 1915 ration cards were introduced for bread in Vienna and other cities (Herwig 1997: 274). A central body, the War Grain Control Board, was set up to organize and put in practice the monopoly of grain and flour. Certain fixed percentages of cereals were allowed to be retained by the farmers; the population was divided into two classes, the self-suppliers and the rationed. In early 1916 ration cards for milk, sugar and coffee were introduced; in autumn 1917 consumption of fats and potatoes became rationed (May 1966: 331).

By 1916 several state agencies dealt with food supply and allocation. Their overlapping jurisdictions created many administrative irregularities. To centralize the procurement of food in Austria on November 13, 1916 a Central Food Office was established and on January 5, 1917 a special Minister (Major General Anton Höfer) was appointed the head of the Office. On February 27, 1917 a Joint (Austrian-Hungarian) Food Committee under General von Pragenau was instituted; the Empire was divided into 31 inspection districts. Finally, to connect the authorities and consumers, a Food Council was set up, composed of persons familiar with economic situation, nominated by the Food Minister. This central body established a broad network of local food councils.

Thus, by the last year of the war, an apparently powerful bureaucratic organization had been constructed. The food situation meantime had grown worse. On paper, the whole organization seemed excellent; but in reality it was utterly ineffective. The Joint Food Committee had the power to suggest and persuade, not to command (Herwig 1997: 278). Other lower-

positioned food supply agencies had even less power. Meantime, most Austrian and Hungarian provinces, districts, and villages became self self-contained areas which raised protective trade barriers against each other. Peasants despised price controls and kept products from the market (Herwig 1997: 275).

In the winter of 1917-18, because the rural population resisted registration and confiscation of crops, the Hungarian authorities requested military assistance with requisitions. In January 1917 the Minister of War ordered the military commanders to place units at the disposal of the civilian authorities to help in seizures of crops. In early February 1918 field troops began assisting with the requisitions. By the end of March Hungary was thoroughly occupied by the troops confiscating grain. The policy of requisitions was met with a surge of protests in Hungarian parliament. Defending this policy the Hungarian Food Minister Windischgrätz explained: "The coercive measures are a last resort. They are the only way we have been able to manage to secure at least part of the food supplies the people need" (cited in Haselsteiner 1985: 99). All in all, the results of the requisition were insufficient to supply the civilian population and the army in 1918. The crisis of food supply and inability to resolve this crisis even with the use of the troops became evidence of the imminent state breakdown (Haselsteiner 1985: 99).

The analysis of the Austria-Hungarian wartime system of allocating food shows that the market mechanism was to a large extent replaced by an administrative system. The government introduced the monopoly on grain and established rationing of bread and other staple foodstuffs in early 1915. Private trade in grain was prohibited. A system of bureaucratic agencies was established for control and supervision of food supply and distribution. However, this extended food-extracting mechanism turned out to be ineffective. In 1917-1918 the army and the urban

centers experienced acute shortage of food. In the situation of paralysis of civilian authorities the army itself began requisitioning food from the countryside. Thus, militarization of industrial management and workforce regulation was finally supplemented by militarization of food supply and procurement.

(5)

How far did Austria-Hungary advanced on the road to a state-controlled economy before she finally collapsed in the final stage of the war? My analysis shows that her advance was substantial. In the first few days in the war Austrian-Hungarian authorities introduced a unique system of military management in heavy industries. All major arms factories and mining establishments were supervised by military directors and the War Ministry officials. To supply factories with raw materials the state established the raw materials combines similar to German corporations but without legal and financial guarantees of the state. Thus, in Austria-Hungary an institutional integration of the raw materials corporations and state agencies was not accomplished. In this crucial respect the institutional design of the Austrian command economy was less complete than the one in Germany. However, an industrial draft of all men population in Austria-Hungary was instituted long before the one in Germany. The system of workforce control and direction was also more stringent in Austria-Hungary than in Germany. The Habsburg government introduced the monopoly on grain and established rationing of bread in the early 1915, a month after establishment of a grain monopoly in Germany. In the final stage of the war, under conditions of the state breakdown the army itself took the task of requisitioning food from agricultural producers. Mitrany (1936: 88) claims that of all belligerents Austria-Hungary had to make the greatest economic effort in the war and the administrative arrangements made by her form perhaps the most complete case of its kind.

## France

On August 3 Germany declared war against France. Two days later, President Raymond Poincaré announced a “general state of siege” and called for a “sacred union” (*union sacrée*) of a nation in “a common indignation against a common aggressor.” In early August France accepted the full blow of the formidable German military machine. The German strategic plan gave only six weeks to defeat France and the advance of seven German armies seemed unstoppable. In two weeks France mobilized more than 2.9 million soldiers. In the heavy fighting the French Army suffered staggering losses and retreated to the west. By late August, when less than twenty miles divided the advancing German troops and Paris, situation became critical. On August 31, 1914 the French government fled to Bordeaux. Meantime the German army itself was exhausted by the long marches and incessant fighting. Miraculously, in the battle of Marne, French and British troops were able to stop Germans and push them back east for about seventy miles. After few more weeks of severe fighting, the front stabilized and the belligerents turned to the positional trench warfare.

### (1)

Before the war France developed an economy in which elements of liberal capitalism were intertwined with strong elements of syndicalism and bureaucratic regulation (Hautcoeur 2005). The economy was dominated by small or medium-sized family enterprises in consumer-oriented industries. Although in the pre-war years the economy progressively shifted towards capital-intensive heavy production and mass manufacturing, French industry still produced half as much iron and steel as Britain and a third as much Germany; it extracted seven times less coal than Britain and Germany each (Stubbs 2002: 96-98). In France corporations and cartels had

made only small inroads into the small business competitive market structure. Also the country preserved a large agrarian sector dominated by small peasant holdings (Kemp 1972).

Like other belligerent nations France failed to anticipate the possibility of protracted fighting. Her armaments sector was relatively small and gave employment to about 50,000 workers. In contrast to Britain and Germany, in France most weapons and munitions were produced by the state-owned workshops. The largest private company Schneider-Creusot employed only 12,000 workers (in Germany, for comparison, Krupp alone employed about 80,000 workers). The state munitions factories in Bourges, Puteaux and Tarbes produced most shells and artillery pieces, while workshops in Saint-Etienne, Chatellerault, and Tarbes produced arms for the infantry. About 75 percent of all munitions workers were employed in state-owned workshops (Hardach 1992: 59).

In late September 1914 the French army confronted an acute shortage of munitions. The Commander-in-Chief Joffre discovered that the existing stocks of shell supplies would be completely exhausted in fifteen days (Strachan 2002: 993). At the time when all French manufacturers produced 10,000 of 75-mm shells a day, some individual batteries were firing off 1,000 per day, and the High Command was demanding an increase in production to 100,000 per day (Hardach 1992: 59). The state agency responsible for army supply, the Ministry of War, headed by Messimy, was absolutely unprepared to such turn of events – “the Minister watched the vicissitudes of the battle like a distant spectator” (Renouvin 1927: 82).

On September 20, 1914 a new Minister of War Alexandre Millerand assembled major representatives of French heavy industry for a conference in the new government headquarters in Bordeaux. The burning issue was the reorganization of shell manufacturing in order to increase daily production to 100,000 shells (Hardach 1992: 60). In the conference it has been decided to



form twelve regional industrial groups each under leadership of a single person responsible for distributing military contracts and coordinating their execution (Godfrey 1987). Practically all companies available were enlisted and large government orders were distributed. This conference signaled the beginning of French industrial mobilization.

Although industrial mobilization was instigated by the government, it did not result in structural integration of the state and the industry as in Germany or even extensive government coordination and control as in Britain. French economic mobilization had a clear institutional separation between state agencies and private industry, and strong resistance by private manufacturers to government intervention. During the war government officials and industrialists permanently clashed over the issues of prices, insufficient production, quality of products, war loans and numerous other issues (Godfrey 1987: 212).

On the state side, the Artillery Branch of the War Ministry (only five bureaucrats at the onset of the war) became a kernel from which a bureaucratic apparatus for managing industrial mobilization emerged. In May 1915, when it became clear that the war would last for some time, the Artillery Branch was transformed into the Undersecretariat of State of the War Ministry. The new department consisted of three bureaus and seventeen sections and was responsible for artillery, military equipment, gunpowder, explosives and other munitions (Godfrey 1987: 184). As in Britain it was headed by a civilian official, Albert Thomas, a prominent socialist politician. In December 1916 the Undersecretariat became the Ministry of Armament and War Production, its tasks and responsibilities were significantly expanded (Godfrey 1987: 185; Hardach 1992: 65-66).

Despite all socialist rhetoric and ambitious projects of bureaucratic control including plans of nationalization, in reality few measures of the government seriously infringed on

economic rights and freedoms of private entrepreneurs. A moderate and pragmatic administrator, Thomas believed that in the critical time of war, company managers should be left in full charge of their factories. He consistently rejected all proposals of nationalizing munitions workshops and establishing controlled establishments, similar to the British model. His preferred policy was cooperation and coordination rather than compulsion and control (Hautcoeur 2005: 192; Hennebicque 1992: 95, 100-101).

On the industry side, private firms were organized into associations of manufacturers and functioned independently of the government. According to Porch (1988: 197), the General Secretary of the Comité des Forges (association of metallurgy and metal engineering firms) Robert Pinot virtually became the unofficial minister of munitions because only he knew the productive capacity of each producer. The core principle of private organization of munitions production was the division of industry into production groups, each led by a large company called the “group leader.” The group leader received the total order for the group and subcontracted parts of it to the other members.

The first production groups, Le Creusot and Saint-Chamond, were formed immediately after the Bordeaux arms conference of September 20, 1914. Soon other groups followed: Firminy, Loire, Montlucon, Penhoet, Belfort, Marine, Renault, l’Eclairage électrique and others. Three groups were directed artillery production and fifteen groups were involved in shell production. Because the technology was simpler for shell production, numerous new companies had entered the field. By the end of the war 375 different companies were involved in shell manufacturing (Hardach 1992: 67).

By the end of the war industrial mobilization transformed arms production which was predominantly state-operated, into a huge private industry spread all over the country. If in

August 1914, 75 percent of the workers in the arms industry were employed in state-owned factories, while 25 percent were employed in private industry; by May 1915 these proportions had been reversed, and the state share continued to decline throughout the war (Hardach 1992: 77). Although industrialists periodically asked the government to guarantee that it would buy all their production, this guarantee was never secured (Hautcoeur 2005: 192).

The French arms industry was able to adapt quickly to conditions of the industrialized war and achieve a spectacular success. Under extremely difficult conditions of occupation of the most developed industrial regions of the north and north-east, huge amounts of arms and munitions were manufactured in very short period of time. By 1918, French industry produced 1,000 artillery pieces per month, 261,000 shells and 6 million cartridges per day. Production of machine guns increased 170-fold and rifle production 290-fold. By the end of the war, economy manufactured 30 tanks a day, as well as trucks, cars, and airplanes (Porch 1988: 195). France became the arsenal of democracy, the key supplier of Allies with arms and munitions (Smith, Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker 2003: 63).

To sum up, industrial mobilization in France did not result in an institutional transmutation of the capitalist production. Throughout the war the industry retained the full right of free contract. It could accept or refuse orders of munitions and maintained its right to demand high prices because of the military emergency. Industrial mobilization did not change the private status of arms manufacturers, industry continued to consider the munitions production to be a profit-making business like any other. At the same time, in the process of wartime mobilization the French industry attained the higher level of structural self-organization, specialization and rationalization that allowed full use of specialization, mass production and planning in arms

manufacturing. Paradoxically, French industrial mobilization, with a socialist in the lead, has created an organized capitalism, not war socialism.

(2)

The structural transformations in the mechanism of allocation of raw materials turned out to be more significant than ones in the system of production. The German occupation of the resource-rich north and north-east of France created immense problems for industrial mobilization. Although the ten departments occupied by German troops represented only 6 percent of French territory and its population made up 10 percent of the national population, they contained the richest mining and industrial centers of France. Before the war the occupied territories produced 74 percent of French coal, 81 percent of pig iron, 63 percent of steel, 94 percent of copper, 77 percent of zinc, 81 percent of wool and 93 percent of linen (Fontaine 1926: 16-17).

Such a tremendous loss of the material resources in an industrialized war would be fatal unless France was able to obtain raw materials from her allies, primarily Britain. From 1914 to 1917 the value of French imports, in which raw materials made from 80 to 90 percent, increased fourfold. Britain, with her industrial potential, financial assets and the largest commercial fleet in the world, was willing to compensate French losses and provide France with necessary goods, credit and transport.

In two first years of the war French foreign trade was dominated by private merchants. By importing raw materials and food and reselling goods in short supply at the domestic market, private traders were able to make colossal profits. British markets were overloaded with orders. On several occasions British authorities requested restricting French imports, establishing price control and creating a centralized mechanism for allocation of imported goods inside the country.

When several appeals to the French authorities were left without consequences, in March 1917 the British government under Lloyd George imposed restrictions on exports to France.

This strong wartime measure threatened to undermine French war effort. On March 22, 1917, in order to establish strict control over foreign purchases, the French authorities decreed prohibition of all imports not purchased by the government. The government also introduced the system of exemptions from the general ban. To distribute exemptions the special committee headed by Senator Viger was appointed (Godfrey 1987: 93).

That was definitely not the best solution. Prohibiting all foreign supplies and making exemptions on an individual basis during the war promised to become a bureaucratic nightmare and could not satisfy the insatiable demands of French wartime economy. In 1917 the optimal mechanism was found in the system of state-controlled national consortia that centralized and rationalized foreign supplies.

In many essential features the French consortia resembled such corporate institutions like the German *Rohstoffgesellschaften* and the Austrian *Zentralen*. Renouvin (1927: 62) defined a consortium as “an association of dealers or of manufacturers, interested in the same category of goods, who centralized demands, purchased raw materials abroad, and sold the imports to the members of the association, under State supervision.” Although in principle the government assumed no financial obligations with regard to consortia and confined itself to supervision, in practice each consortium was attached to one of the state executive committees. It was a committee that supervised the consortium, supplied means of transport, and fixed the prices. In some instances the state undertook the purchase of the raw material and handled it over to the consortium against repayment of its expenses (Renouvin 1927: 62). In early 1918 there were about fifty products or materials for which the government instituted or was about to institute

consortia including all major raw materials. The government codified rules and procedures for forming consortia and their functioning.

The creation of consortia was initiated by the major foreign suppliers of French economy, Great Britain and the United States. The first corporation, the French Cotton Consortium, is a good example. In August 1917, the United States agreed to deliver large parties of cotton but insisted on a single French purchasing agent. After series of consultations of government agencies the French Cotton Consortium was established on October 27, 1917. The first French consortium was a private joint-stock company with capital of more than 11 million francs, to which all cotton manufacturers subscribed in proportion to their productive capacities. Its purpose was to undertake all purchase, import and sale of raw cotton directed to the cotton industry in France. It is noteworthy that purchases of cotton in the United States were made not by the Consortium but by the French state, after consultation with the Consortium about the quantities and qualities required. The Consortium was legally obliged to repurchase all the cotton bought by the state upon delivery in a French port, and to pay all insurance, credit, transport, and administrative costs. The Consortium resold the cotton to its members at a price set by the Ministry of Commerce (Godfrey 1987: 110).

For a better coordination of allocation of raw materials the government formed the inter-ministerial committees for each material that been used by several industries. Thus the Inter-ministerial Cotton Committee, composed of state officials and industrialists, was established on February 19, 1918 and given large responsibilities. The Committee was to centralize, coordinate, and control the requirements of the nation for raw cotton and all products manufactured from cotton. It was to determine which types of products made from cotton were to be manufactured in France rather than imported, taking into account the needs of the army, and the industrial

capacity, raw materials, and manpower available; and it was within the power of the Committee to take any necessary measures to ensure this manufacture. The Committee was also to ascertain the cost of producing various products in cotton, and to set the maximum price which would be charged for the product at each stage of its production. The Committee was then to assess which products were to be imported, on a basis of transport available, and to draw up a list of priorities among imported products. It was responsible for constituting reserve stocks of material, should this prove necessary (Godfrey 1987: 116).

Because raw materials were sold at uniform price to all firms it was difficult to force some non-members to participate in consortia and bear the costs of consortia activities. To solve this problem a system of differential prices for member and non-members was introduced. This measure prompted non-members to join the consortia. Also companies were forced to participate in collective insurance agreements by which those industrial establishments which had survived the perils of war intact would be responsible for helping those owners of factories which had been burned out, occupied by the enemy, or damaged in any other way by the war (Godfrey 1987: 117). In these and other ways French consortia helped to support small and medium-sized producers, which was different from the German experience.

Although French consortia resembled German corporations in many ways, there were a few important differences. First, most French consortia, unlike their German counterparts, did not grow out of trusts and cartels that existed before the war. French corporations were creations of the war. Second, emergence of consortia was directly instigated by foreign agencies, i.e. British and American exporters. This pattern of formation was similar to emergence of the Austrian Centrals but not the German corporations. Third, although consortia were controlled by the French government they did not have financial guarantees from the state. In France the

institutional merger of consortia and the state did not take place. Fourth, most consortia emerged in the last year of the war and existed only a very short period of time. In 1919 French consortia were dissolved.

The French consortia, more than German or Austrian corporations, emerged out of the development of necessities during the war. Defending the consortia against attacks of political opponents the Minister of Commerce Clementel argued: "It is not to be believed that consortia in the final analysis are anything other than an accidental, if possibly defensive, means of assuring during the war the general supply of our country. From them one can expect none of the services which cartels render. The consortium is not and seemingly cannot be an instrument of internal equilibrium and external commercial conquest" (cited in Godfrey 1987: 124). The French consortia, being a product of war mobilization and emergency resource centralization, did not survive the war.

### (3)

The most serious problem that French economy confronted during the war was the problem of human resources. In 1914 France had the population of only 40 million, much less than Germany's 66 million. The French male population was 19 million while Germany's was 32 million. The economically active male population was 12.6 million in France and about 20 million in Germany. During the first two weeks of the war 2.9 million of Frenchmen were mobilized and another 2.7 million reservists were mobilized in the following ten months (Hardach 1992: 60).

The indiscriminate draft created chaos and disorganization in French economy. In many cases mobilization of a manager and a few specialist workers was enough to bring a company to a standstill. Unemployment soared. In August 1914 only a half of all industrial establishments



remained open and only a third of all workers remained at work. By January 1915 metallurgy lost 39 percent of workers, chemical industry 41 percent, rubber production 50 percent, wood-working 69 percent, printing industry 62 percent, clothing and textiles 49 percent and transport 37 percent (Fontaine 1927: 22, 25).

Confronting the workforce crisis of an unprecedented scope the industrialists demanded return of workers drafted to the army. Because munitions production became a priority the employers were given a right to recall workers who had been mobilized at the outset of the war, from recruit depots and even from units at the front. By the end of 1915, in accord with the Dalbiez Law adopted in June 1915, about 500,000 former workers had been returned to the munitions industry (Hardach 1992: 61).

The workers released from the army remained on the service and were subject to military regulation. They were paid civilian wages, bore a distinctive badge, but were bound to the factory to which they were assigned and had neither the right of free association nor the right to go on strike. Such workers could be returned on the front for the slightest protest or indiscipline (Hardach 1992, McNeill 1982). In 1917-18, about 35 percent of the workers in Paris munitions workshops were technically in military service. They accounted for about 45 percent of workers in factories manufacturing tanks and airplanes but only 18 percent in factories producing shells and grenades (Bonzon 1997: 180).

The employers took advantage of the status of the recalled workers by cutting their wages. To prevent overexploitation of workers the government began reviewing wages in the arms industry. Thomas justified this interference in private industry by evoking the state's special duty to mobilized workers: "The military work force, in fact, in a special case. The right of free association and the right to refuse to work are denied to mobilized workers; the State

therefore is morally their guardian, so to speak, and its intervention is not only legitimate but often helpful. The high cost of living is making itself felt, some demands may be justified, and the decisions of arbitrators, expressed with tact and moderation, may be very useful” (cit. in Hardach 1992: 74).

Obviously obligatory assignments were beneficial for employers. In the mid 1915 industrialists began demanded obligatory assignments for civilian workers as well (Hardach 1992: 74). The government however refused to introduce obligatory assignments for all workers. The industrial conscription in France was not introduced.

Meantime suppressed wages and increasing costs of living embittered industrial relations. In 1917 the government introduced mandatory arbitration of labor conflicts. When the workers and owners involved in a labor dispute were unable to reach a settlement, the Ministry of Armaments acted as the ultimate arbiter. In addition the government passed decrees on minimum wages, first for the Paris region and then for the rest of France. The government also organized consultative committees in which workers participated, and a little later the “shop steward” system enabled workers to participate in discussions on a factory level. However, neither of these institutions provided co-determination or even any real influence. Instead of affording workers a real say in planning, these innovations were intended more to forestall demands for workers control (Hardach 1992: 68).

In general, except for the recalled workers placed under a military regimen and the prisoners of war, the French labor market retained freedom of contract. The workers could leave an enterprise as they wanted. They also could demand higher remuneration and better conditions of work. By and large they remained excluded from most functions of management. In a word, in

France the system of labor relations continued to function within the normal framework of the capitalist economy.

(4)

Before the war France was practically self-sufficient in food. The agriculture produced about 8 - 8.5 million tons of wheat, a quantity roughly equal to the annual consumption. The livestock supplied enough meat and dairy products. France produced more sugar than it needed. Her vineyards furnished ample supplies of wine and cider. Imports consisted of relatively small amounts of dried vegetables, oil seeds, rice, coffee, tea, and cocoa (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 155).

Due to mobilization of large number of agricultural workers and occupation of northern part of the country, French agricultural production decreased during the war. Between 1914 and 1917, wheat production dropped from 7.7 million tons to 3.7 million tons and rye production from 1.1 million tons to 0.6 million tons (Stubbs 2002: 112-113). In 1917 a deficiency in grain made about 4.5 million tons of wheat, more than a half of its pre-war production (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 156).

The first indications of wheat shortage appeared in early 1915 when pre-war supplies of grain in Paris became exhausted. To relieve the capital, the military authorities began requisitioning supplies around the countryside, a practice which was suspended after strong protests of merchants and local authorities (Godfrey 1987: 84). The situation with food supply still remained strained, however.

Fortunately, in contrast to the blockaded Central powers, France was able to compensate her losses by imported foodstuffs. The centralized import of food was something that French government never tried before. In October 1915 the government was authorized to purchase

grain and flour from abroad and was provided with necessary funding (it was also given authorization to requisition grain at home). In 1916 the total grain purchase from Canada, Australia, Argentina and other countries reached 2.4 million tons (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 189).

Meantime the decline in domestic production and high freight rates on imported foods caused an increase in food prices. By fall 1916, after two years in the war, many food prices had doubled or even tripled (potatoes, meat, chicken, eggs, cheese, butter, and wine). After long period of price stagnation before the war, that was an unexpected situation. “To many Frenchmen, the rise in prices was probably more surprising than the war itself. War seemed in some ways part of human nature, the rise in prices was not” (Becker 1986: 120).

Likewise, it was not a part of the normal order of things that the government should regulate food prices. French legislation before the war did not empower administrative authorities to fix the prices of commodities. Only in October 1915 and April 1916 did the parliament authorize government to control prices, first for grain, and later for a number of other foods (sugar, coffee, butter, margarine, cheese, chocolate, eggs, meat, potatoes and other products) (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 249-279).

Despite all “abnormality” of price fixing and other measures of state intervention, these practices did not seem extraordinary or overly stringent when compared to extensive food controls in other belligerent countries. Nonetheless until fall 1917 these fairly limited measures were sufficient to provide the nation with enough food.

With intensification of the unrestricted German submarine warfare and the poor harvests of 1916 and 1917 the situation with supply of the staple foods worsened. In early 1917 the government had a deficit of 4.5 million tons of grain (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 178).

Multiplication of bureaucratic bodies, dealing with food provisioning, added chaos and disorganization in food supply (see Renouvin 1927: 65-66).

In autumn 1917 the French government undertook decisive measures in centralizing food supply. According to the decree of November 30, 1917, a state monopoly on all home-grown grains was introduced. Beginning January 1, 1918 all cereals were to be requisitioned by the state. Only a few exceptions were left for producers, including grain required for seed, grain required for food of families employed in agriculture and grain other than wheat required as feed for livestock.

According to the November decree, the requisitioned cereals in each commune might be delivered by the producer to the designated commissions, millers, dealers and brokers. These agents would be acting on behalf of the state and should notify about the stocks purchased to special government offices, the Permanent Bureaus. The Permanent Bureaus, created in each department by the decree of July 31, 1917, were special bodies composed of the commissariat officer responsible for supply in the department, of the controller of flour mills, and of four members selected by the prefect. The basis of the distribution was a ration calculated on the number of inhabitants in the department (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 181-182).

The government tried to ensure that no grain should escape the requisition. For this purpose all grain transported by road, railroad or water had to be accompanied by a permit issued by the state official. A special service of supervision of stocks was organized in the central administration and in the departments. If the stocks of grain were below the amount of apportioned to the department, further quantities were dispatched to it by the central authority either from other departments or from foreign supplies. All mills were placed under the close

supervision of the government. Each flour mill was allowed to grind only the grain assigned to it (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 181-182).

Rationing of bread was introduced early in February 1918 in Paris and made obligatory throughout France on the June 1, 1918. Each consumer received a card showing the name, address, and profession of the owner, the category to which he belonged and the rate of the ration depending upon this category. The six categories included: children below age 3, children from 3 to 12, children 13 and above, adults involved in active work, other adults, and persons older than 60 . There was a sheet of coupons attached to the card. Each coupon was available for one month; the coupons for each month were numbered 1 to 6 and related to different commodities (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 171-172).

Thus, introduction of governmental control in allocation of food in France resembled patterns of state intervention in Britain. For about three years the authorities limited themselves to very few measures of food regulation, mostly price control of some foods. Such hands-off approach was possible because of the availability of large quantities of imported foods from overseas. Only in the late 1917 and early 1918 did the government introduce grain monopoly and rationing of bread. Like in Britain these measures existed a few months and were discontinued soon after the end of hostilities.

(5)

To what extent had French economy in general shifted from market regulation to an administered system? As elsewhere in Europe, the cumulative transformation by the war's end was impressive. State-run national industries came to operate. In other industries the government instituted extensive measures of indicative planning and macro-economic regulation. The regulated technocratic order after the war had little resemblance to the pre-war French economy.

These important institutional metamorphoses prompted some observers to conclude that by the end of the war private enterprise and freedom of commerce in France disappeared under encroachments of state control (see Renouvin 1927: 54). These bold assertions need to be placed into comparative perspective. All these changes had not undermined the overall capitalist design of the French economic system. Although French industry attained a much higher level of structural self-organization and rationalization, economic mobilization did not obliterate the private status of existing industries. The French corporate structures, the instruments of emergency resource centralization, emerged late in the war under pressures from the allies and did not survive the war. The institutional merger of the corporate structures (consortia) and the government agencies did not fully materialize in France. Despite some use of compulsory measures the system of labor relations continued to function within the contractual framework of a capitalist economy. The civilian mobilization, similar to industrial conscription in Germany and Austria-Hungary, was not carried out in France. The emergency measures of centralization and rationing of food were introduced only in the very last period of the war.

### Russia

The beginning of the war did not bring major change in economic and social life of the Russian Empire. After the first days of chaos and confusion, caused by mobilization of five million recruits to the army, the life of the country returned to its normal course. Although the Tsarist government extended its statutory powers and the official press stirred waves of chauvinist propaganda, most of the country, particularly its vast peasant population, seemed indifferent to the war emergency and continued with its usual chores. The lack of the sense of emergency can be attributed to two factors. First, initially the war was waged on the

northwestern frontiers of the empire (East Prussia, East Galicia, Poland), hundreds miles away from the central and eastern regions of Russia. The disruptions of the war did not affect major industrial centers and agricultural areas of the Russia's heartland. Second, the Empire was endowed with enormous amounts of human resources and able to mobilize a much larger army than any other nation in the war. The population of Russia was nearly three times that of Germany. The sheer size of the Russian army, according to the official view, was enough to defeat any enemy. There was a popular expectation, both in the country and abroad, that with the outbreak of the war the massive "Russian steamroller" would crash the Central Powers in a matter of weeks. Like elsewhere, authorities and people anticipated a short and victorious war.

(1)

At the outbreak of the war Russia represented a large agrarian empire in which urban inhabitants made up only seven percent of the total population. Although in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century state-directed industrialization made significant inroads in the national economy, the country still lagged far behind such industrially developed European nations like Great Britain and Germany. Russia produced from a third to a half as much coal, iron ore, pig iron, and steel as each of these countries. Among the great powers, Russia's industrial potential was roughly equal to that of France and superior only to Austria-Hungary.

The interesting feature of Russian industrial economy was a high degree of concentration of heavy industrial production, greater than one in Germany and other European countries (Malle 1985: 40). Giant monopolies and large firms dominated the market, small firms were forced to amalgamate with larger ones (Stone 1975: 200). The Russian iron-working industry was combined into a syndicate *Prodamet* which produced from 80 to 100 percent of the total output. The copper syndicate *Med* controlled about 90 percent of the total output of copper. The coal



syndicate *Produgol* was a combine of 711 firms, or 60 percent of all the coal enterprises of the Donetz Basin. Similar cartels existed in textile, tobacco, distillery, sugar and other industries. The formation of syndicates and cartels, as in Germany, was sponsored by large investment banks. Before the war there was a great inflow of foreign investments (mostly French, Belgian, and German) into Russia's heavy industries, railroads, and the banking sector (Zagorsky 1928: 11).

Dynamic industrial development taking place within the archaic political framework created serious tensions between economic and socio-political institutions. At the time when economic growth and international entanglements brought about major social dislocations and political eruptions (such as the First Russian Revolution of 1905) the primary if not sole concern of the autocratic state was maintenance of order and internal security. The emergence of independent economic institutions and elements of civil society was viewed with a suspicion and ill-covered irritation. The political and administrative constraints hampered development of Russia's society and generated a deep social split between authorities and the people, including the middle class, workers and peasants. Peace or war, most measures and initiatives of official authorities confronted opposition of the society.

Despite the ambitious program of rearmaments of the pre-war years Russia was still ill-prepared for a protracted industrial war. On the surface the situation did not seem alarming. Before the war Russian Empire was spending more than Germany on her armed forces. The large armaments sector, as elsewhere in Europe, consisted of public and private enterprises. Historically the public arms sector was predominant in Russia. In 1913-14 the state armories in St. Peterburg, Izhevsk, Tula, Bryansk, Samara and other cities employed almost 50 thousand

workers (Gatrell 1994: 199, 207). These workshops were funded directly by the Main Artillery Administration of the Ministry of War.

In a few years before the war several private manufacturers entered arms and munitions production. Most large manufacturers were controlled by joint-stock investment banks. By 1914 three major financial-industrial groups operating in the arms production stood out: the group under the umbrella of the Russo-Asiatic Bank (Putilov Works, Baranovski, Parviainen), the group around the International Bank (St. Petersburg Metal, Tula Cartridge Company, Sormovo, Kolomna Engineering, Nikopol-Mariupol) and the Private Commercial Bank (the Becker Shipyards and the Franco-Russian Company) (Gatrell 1994: 222).

Russian arms industry did not have giant firms that dominated the industry in the manner of Krupp or Vickers. Alexei Putilov, a St. Petersburg industrialist employing 13,500 workers, was the largest private arms manufacturer in Russia. Putilov, like most other firms, did not specialize primarily in arms production; the company manufactured a variety of items and goods. However in the years before the war its military production significantly expanded. In 1908 armaments accounted for around 30 percent of production, in 1910 for about 40 percent, and in 1912 for about 46 percent. Putilov produced battleships for the navy and artillery and munitions for the army. In 1913 artillery accounted for two-fifth of his armaments output (Gatrell 1994: 215).

Although the Russian arms industry was in many ways comparable to the military-industrial complexes of other European great powers there were several features that made its wartime mobilization more difficult. First, most of the industry's workforce possessed low or no skills, turnover was high, and production costs were high. Second, the government preferred purchasing arms from public workshops and treated private manufacturers with suspicion. The

authorities were concerned that private manufacturers would form monopolies and drive prices up, depleting treasury of money. Third, the most significant growth of private production took place in shipbuilding. Russia's productive capacities, like ones in Britain, were more developed in relation to the fleet than the army. When the war broke out the navy proved essentially redundant because it was unable to control the Baltic Sea and operate outside the Black Sea (Strachan 2002: 1090-1091).

Like other belligerent countries Russia exhausted its pre-war reserves and confronted problems of munitions in the first weeks of the war. Already in September 1914, army commanders and staff officers dispatched alarming reports to the War Ministry asking for more rifles, guns, and particularly shells. On September 9, 1914, under pressure from the Supreme Commander the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, the War Minister Sukhomlinov convened a conference of representatives of the Russian arms industry. At this conference the government distributed orders for 6.7 million shells to sixteen enterprises (Siegelbaum 1983: 30).

In a contrast to the similar meeting of the French Minister Millerand with French producers on September 20, in which war contracts were assigned to about 100 private forms divided into 12 regional groups, the Russian War Ministry made no attempt to widen the small circle of domestic producers. According to Stone (1975: 150) the government officials did not consider extending shell production inside country because they could not imagine Russian businessmen capable of producing shells. By opting to rely on a small group of large manufacturers the Russian government foreclosed opportunities of state-directed industrial mobilization of a broader non-military sector of the economy.

At the same time huge orders were placed with foreign, mostly British and American firms. By beginning of 1915 fourteen million shells were ordered from manufacturers of these

two countries. These firms however were already overburdened with large munitions contracts with their own governments. As a result only a small portion of expected deliveries was supplied. Instead of the 1 million shells from Britain scheduled for delivery by September 1915, Russia received only 5 thousand. By June 1916 American and Canadian firms delivered only 875 thousand of expected 9 million shells. Because of the inadequate railroad transportation in Russia, thousands of tons of supplies including much-needed shells remained for months on the docks of Vladivostok and Archangel (see Siegelbaum 1983: 32, Stone 1975: 157).

In late spring 1915 the shortage of munitions reached critical proportions. The defeat in Galicia signaled the beginning of Russia's grand retreat of 1915. In May a large German offensive in Poland threatened to turn the war into a full-scale disaster for Russians. Russian troops were either captured wholesale or driven back in panic. The munitions crisis could not have been more clearly documented than by the Russian abandonment of Poland that summer (Stone 1975: 145).

As in Britain, the shell crisis and military setback caused a political crisis in Russia. After making a trip to the Galician front, The Chairman of the State Duma M.V. Rodzianko returned to St. Petersburg with shattering news that Russian troops were catastrophically lacking in munitions. After unsuccessful attempts to force the War Ministry into action Rodzianko appealed directly to the Tsar. He suggested establishing a central authority consisting of trusted government officials, legislators and industrialists for expediting Russia's economic mobilization.

On June 7, 1915 this central authority called the "Special Council for the Coordination of Measures to Guarantee the Supply of Munitions and Other Material to the Army" (henceforward the Special Council) was officially established. The Special Council, presided over by War

Minister Sukhomlinov, included representatives of the government, State Duma, and delegates from commerce and industry. This authority, responsible only to the monarch, was given broad prerogatives in the area of economic mobilization. It had a right to require private companies to accept and execute any order and in event of refusal was authorized to sequester the business.

Although the Special Council was supposed to symbolize a union of the government and the industries, the later was represented exclusively by the large Petrograd industrialists: Putilov, Vyshnegradski, Mescherski, Plotnikov, and Davydov. The first large orders for shells (113 million rubles worth) were given to Putilov despite the fact that other manufacturers offered manufacturing shells at much lower cost. Putilov used cash advances to subsidize the loss-making parts of its business, went bankrupt and had to be sequestered by the state in 1916 (Figes 1996: 273; Siegelbaum 1983: 38; Stone 1975: 199; Zagorsky 1928: 85). In August 1915, the Special Council underwent major reorganization. On initiative of the State Duma, instead of a single Special Council four separate bodies was formed – Special Councils for Defense, Fuel, Transport and Food. The Special Council for Defense, chaired by a new War Minister Polivanov, took over the war supply business from the old Special Council.

At the time when the government was busy with creating a central agency responsible for economic mobilization and funneling public money to its Petrograd client firms, the major impetus for such mobilization unexpectedly came “from below,” from the medium-sized and small industrial producers concentrated in Moscow and organized in the Association of Trade and Industry. In late May 1915, at the ninth congress of the Association, its members, inspired by patriotic feelings and concerned with poor supply of the troops, expressed firm determination to mobilize all resources of Russian industry for supplying the army. In July 1915 for coordination

of this work, the congress created a Central War-Industries Committee (*Tsentralnyi Voенno-Promyshlennyi Komitet*, hereafter TsVPK) and a broad network of regional committees.

In few weeks TsVPK, chaired by Avdakov (later replaced by Guchkov), turned into a nationwide public organization. By the end of 1915 twenty-eight provincial war industry committees were formed in different provinces of Russia (Zagorsky 1928: 89). A number of leading managers, engineers and technicians joined the organization. Together with the center and center-left parties in the State Duma, united in the Progressive Block, and public organizations of local self-governance bodies (such as Zemgor), the TsVPK pushed the government towards more decisive measures of economic mobilization.

An assertive position of the opposition, including the war-industrial committees, confronted a strong resistance of the government bureaucracy. In August 1915, General Lukomskii, the Assistant Minister of War reported to his superior: “The activities of the Central War-Industries Committee... have already demonstrated that it has an extremely liberal understanding of its rights and obligations. The committee addresses its requests and inquiries not only to the Special Council, but to separate departments of the Ministry of War” (cited in Siegelbaum 1983: 78-79). Some state officials came to see the committees as a “second government” and even “revolutionary organ.” In autumn 1915, the State Council for Defense took measures of removing the industry representatives from the board and reconstituting itself as a purely state institution. In March 1916 the War Minister Polivanov himself, who had gone too far in cooperating with the liberal opposition, was dismissed from the office.

In retrospect, the TsVPK failed to secure a self-assigned role of Russia’s ministry of munitions. It failed to centralize distribution of state orders among private companies. Since commencement of its operations the TsVPK obtained only 6.2 percent of all wartime orders

distributed by May 1, 1916. The bulk of the orders were directed to large arms manufacturers and foreign suppliers. The orders assigned through the committees had a very low rate of fulfillment (Siegelbaum 1983).

The uneasy coexistence of the Special Council for Defense and the war-industrial committees created a situation of institutional stupor. On the one hand, the government sought to mobilize industry “from above.” But such an endeavor would be only successful if government was able to exercise actual control of economy, including close monitoring over contracts, prices, production policies, raw materials and workforce. That in turn required an extensive administrative apparatus of managers, planners, accountants, engineers and other specialists with a great deal of professional and technical expertise in economic and technological issues. In other words, the country needed a normal professional bureaucracy of a German kind. That was something that the Tsarist officialdom clearly failed to develop. The internal workings of the industry remained entirely outside the scope of its administrative control (Zagorsky 1928: 85).

Industrialists, on the other hand, tried to mobilize industry “from below.”<sup>23</sup> These efforts would have been successful if industrial associations enjoyed confidence and support on the part of the government bureaucracy and were able to develop and enforce consistent production policies for the whole business community. That did not happen because the capitalist class itself was alienated from the government and divided into a dozen of privileged arms manufacturers and multitude of small- and medium-sized producers organized in the war-industrial committees. The TsVPK proved unable to centralize government orders and to enforce a consistent economic policy in munitions production.

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<sup>23</sup> Mau (1993: 16) advances similar conception of creating Russia’s wartime centralized economy “from below” and “from above.”

Thus, the main problem of Russia's industrial mobilization turned out to be a problem of an agency. Russian authorities failed to establish a single-willed executive institution, similar to the ministries of munitions of Lloyd George and Albert Thomas. The optimal industrial performance during the war necessitated establishing an economic dictatorship but the government proved unable to institute anything close to that (Fuller 2000: 43-44). The Special Council for Defense turned to be just another ill-functioning quasi-parliamentary arena for debates and mutual incriminations among government representatives, legislators and industrialists. As a result, an economic mobilization in Russia proceeded in an ad hoc, impromptu, haphazard manner without a plan or a timetable. Siegelbaum (1983: 122) summed up the situation: "The market had ceased to be an indicator, if in the Russian context it ever was, of what should be produced and how much it should cost. The war strengthened tendencies towards a command economy but had not produced a commander."

(2)

The war brought about immense dislocations in the market for raw materials. Before the war, because Russian extractive industries did not keep pace with rapidly expanding manufacturing sector, industries had to import a large quantity of resources. These materials included coal, petroleum, chemical products, cotton, and wool. In the last five pre-war years the amount of imports increased by 45 percent. Russia imported about two fifths of its cotton, one third of its wool, two thirds of zinc, almost all lead, all aluminum, nickel and tin (Gatrell 1994: 309).

The war closed Russian frontiers on three major routes: western overland, Baltic ports, and Black Sea ports. These routes accounted together for more than 85 percent of all imports. The only two directions left open for trade with outside world were Vladivostok in the Far East



and Finland in the northwest. Neither of these routes was good for trade on a large scale, - the first, because of the great distance from the industrial and commercial centers of the Central Russia and low capacity of the single-track Trans-Siberian railroad, the second, because of the refusal of Sweden to allow transit of cargoes directed to Russia in retaliation to British restrictions imposed on Sweden.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of the isolation, foreign trade declined precipitously. Russia's imports dropped from 10.4 million tons in 1914 to 3.8 million tons in 1915. In the last three years of the war Russia's imports were equal to about 40 percent of her imports in three years before the war. The decrease of imports was particularly adverse in coal, coke, non-ferrous metals fertilizers, jute, cotton yarn, dyes and machinery (Zagorsky 1928: 33, 36).<sup>25</sup>

At a time when imports decreased, the demand of industries for raw materials increased. The shortage of raw materials seriously constrained Russia's industrial mobilization. In response to multiplying shortages the government and the industry tried to work out new organizational schemes of resource allocation inside the country. Supply and distribution of coal provides a good example of a transition from the market to command in Russia's industry.

After the outbreak of the war traditional channels of coal supply became unavailable. Before the war Petrograd received coal from Britain via the Baltic. The closure of this route by the German navy forced the city to turn to the domestic sources of fuel, primarily from the Donetz Basin. However domestic sources could not compensate the losses; the existing

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<sup>24</sup> The Russian port of Archangel on the White Sea was icebound for half of the year. The only open northern port of Murmansk did not have railroad connection with the rest of Russia until 1916 (Zagorsky 1928: 32-33).

<sup>25</sup> In 1915 Poland was occupied by German troops. That caused further decline in available resources because before the war Poland produced one-fifth of Russia's coal, one-tenth of its iron ore, and two-thirds of all chemicals (Strachan 2002: 1093).

monopoly “Produgol”, operating in Donetz region, could not cope with the exponential rise in demand. Although coal output in the Basin was greater than before the war, the huge demand and the limited capacity of the railroads to transport fuel resulted in severe shortages. Petrograd and Moscow received less than half of coal assigned to these cities. Many war industries were forced to stop production (Siegelbaum 1983: 136, Strachan 2002: 1092).

After a series of unsuccessful experiments in administrative regulation (including requisition of coal) in September 1916 a new system of coal allocation was established. The sale of coal was to be concentrated in the “Central Committee for the Sale of Hard Fuel of the Donetz Basin” (“Tsentrougol”), a statutory syndicate of mixed composition, which included mine-owners and government officials. All the Donetz coal was to be placed at the disposal of the “Tsentrougol”, all previous contracts were to be cancelled. The mine-owners were obliged to give the monopoly all information about the quantity and quality of fuel extracted and follow its instructions with respect where to the coal should be delivered. Likewise, all the conditions of sale, delivery, and of payment were agreed on between the syndicate and the purchasers (Zagorsky 1928: 125-126).<sup>26</sup>

The monopoly of trade could help regularizing distribution of coal but it could not increase the volume of production which continued to decline throughout 1916. The main problems with coal supply were decline of the output due to the changed workforce composition and spread of railroad bottlenecks. Due to these problems “Tsentrougol” did not and could not

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<sup>26</sup> In 1915-1916 in a similar fashion a number of other committees for distributing scarce raw materials were formed: for cotton, wool, leather, flax and paper. These committees were semi-official bodies that consisted of government officials and representatives of industries and trades many of which were organized as monopolies before the war. These committees determined maximum prices for raw materials, productive capacities of the factories, amount of supply each factory was capable of producing, order or priority in which the orders were to be executed, prices of goods, etc. (Zagorsky 1928: 128-130).

eliminate shortages of fuel. In winter 1916-17 it became one of the popular targets of public outcry and indignation against capitalist profiteering. The most radical critics of the old regime in the new government required nothing less than nationalization of fuel industry.

In July 1917 the Provisional Government introduced the state monopoly on the Donetz coal. The sale of coal was declared to be the exclusive monopoly of the government, and all private sales or contracts were prohibited. All coal came into the hands of the state, and was at the disposal of the government's representative – the Chief Commissioner of the Special Council in Kharkov. All the coal with the exception of that needed for the working of mines was to be distributed by this official. The state was to be paid by the consumers at the prices fixed by the government. The coal was to be sold only to the persons having permits from the state commissioners. Fuel might be sold to consumers only within the amount and of the quality specified in the permit (Zagorsky 1928: 215-216).

What's important, with introduction of monopoly the state began acting not only as a supervisor, but a de facto proprietor of all the coal extracted in the Donetz district. As the sole agent responsible for the supply of all the Donetz coal to the consumers, the state was now interested not only in its distribution, but also in increasing the output. Although the monopoly was limited to the sale of extracted coal and the mine-owners retained their right of property in the mines, the state was inevitably driven to institute a control over production of the firms. The state inspectors were charged with supervision of extraction and loading the railroad trucks. They were authorized to access to any part of the enterprise, to be present at all meeting of shareholders, to supervise business correspondence and to veto any decision adopted by proprietors or managers. In August inspectors were further empowered to control all financial transactions with full access to all accounts and books (Zagorsky 1928: 218-221).

The example of wartime distribution of coal in Russia shows transformation of a predominantly market mechanism of allocation of a resource into management by the state. The beginning of the war and increase in demand undermined the existing monopoly and deregulated the market. However the rising prices and mounting shortages of coal forced the government to forbid private dealings and established a monopoly (“Tsentrougol”) for centralized allocation of coal. Finally, after collapse of the monarchy in February 1917 the new government completed the change by instituting state monopoly on coal. The institutional change in Russia’s coal industry provides a good example of state-directed corporatization and etatization of one of the primary industries during the war. Through this process, the private property rights of mine owners turned eventually into a pure formality. The whole economic infrastructure of coal mining became completely administered by the state.

It is interesting to compare state control of coal with similar measures with respect to other materials, e.g. iron and steel. The evolution of the mechanism for allocating iron and steel resulted eventually in a similar outcome but the trajectory of the organizational metamorphosis was somewhat different: it was not much “caging” of a private industry “from above” but subordinating public authority to the existing monopolies “from within.” This change can be described as a state-mediated “socialization of capital.”

Before and during the war Russia relied on two major metallurgical centers: the Urals region and the Donetz region. These two areas produced the bulk of Russia’s iron and steel. The former region was dominated by the large syndicate “Krovlia” specializing in sale of roofing iron and the latter region was dominated by “Prodamet,” an association of twenty largest metallurgic enterprises in South Russia. During the war industrialists came to agreement that coordination of metal distribution had become necessary. Initially they made efforts to coordinate their policies

under the umbrella of the TsVPK. Cooperation with TsVPK was short-lived, however: orientations of the metal monopolies and the war-industrial committees proved to be different (Siegelbaum 1983: 123-124).

In the fall of 1915 the Special Council for Defense decided to take over the allocation of ferrous metals and organize the Metallurgical Committee, an institution reporting directly to the War Minister. The new body was expected to be a mixed, public-private institution with broadly defined prerogatives, the organization, which could apply, if necessary, compulsory measures in supplying war industry with metals.

On January 1, 1916 the Committee began its work. The monopolies, “Krovliia” and particularly “Prodameta,” were broadly represented in the new bureau. Soon, in the absence of a strong and well-articulated position from the government, they started to dominate the work of the committee. The syndicates used the committee to regulate their relations and legitimate their price policies (Siegelbaum 1983: 126). In the end these relations ended up with the de facto institutional merger of Prodamera and the Metallurgical Committee. Stone (1975: 208) says: “By the end of 1916, an uneasy marriage of State and monopoly had arrived. The State, unable to control its own priorities, handed much responsibility to Prodamera, the statistical section of which was simply taken over by the Special Council’s metals-committee. It is difficult, and perhaps not very profitable, to determine which partner dominated the marriage, for the state ultimately joined the monopolists in enforcing a certain kind of industrial growth on the country.”

After the February Revolution of 1917 the state established direct control over the whole industry. The Chief Commissioner for Metallurgy centralized all supply of metal in the country. He worked out a regular monthly schedule of production, fixing the output of various grades of

steel and iron. This schedule was sent to the government departments and public organizations requiring supplies of metal goods. All the orders to be given by these departments were to be forwarded back to the Chief Commissioner, with a statement of the date on which delivery was required. The Chief Commissioner was to communicate these data to his local deputies for each of the three areas in which country was divided (South, Center, and Urals). These latter worked out a plan of production for the execution of the orders. Only four percent of the output was left for the use of the factories and six percent of the production was retained as a reserve (Zagorsky 1928: 194-195).

With the establishment of direct control over distribution of coal, iron, steel and other materials, the system of administrative resource distribution, which abandoned any attribute of the market economy, was completed. As examples of coal and metal industries demonstrate, the process of institutional merger of monopolies and the state passed through three stages: monopoly control, state-monopoly control and state control. In the end, allocation of most important strategic resources came entirely under jurisdiction of a state official. Thus, in most important sectors Russian industry was transformed into a state-controlled economy even before beginning of the Bolsheviks' experiment.

(3)

In contrast to most European nations, Russia did not experience serious shortages of labor force during the war. It seemed that Russia's reserves of the labor power could not be depleted. In a time when available industrial workforce in most European belligerent nations rapidly contracted, in Russia it continued to grow. Between 1913 and 1917 employment in metal industry increased by 61 percent and in coal industry by 66 percent (Zagorsky 1928: 54). The greatest boom was registered in war production. The share of workers employed in arms

industries had grown from 24 percent of all industrial workers in 1914 to 74 percent in 1917.

State factories that counted 120,000 workers in 1914 employed 400,000 in January 1917.

Interesting detail: the workforce increased not only in war-oriented heavy industries but also in non-military trades such as construction. During the war the workforce in the building industry increased by one third. The war gave a great new impact to Russia's industrialization (Stone 1975: 284-285).

The category that did experience shortage of laborers was the group of most skilled, qualified and experienced industrial workers. No steps were taken to exempt the skilled workers from military service. Many qualified laborers were drafted in the army. The dilution of industrial workforce by inexperienced newcomers, mostly from countryside, resulted in serious decline in productivity during the war. Skills, work ethic and discipline plummeted. The annual output per worker in Donetz mining industry dropped from 1913 to 1917 by almost 40 percent, in iron mining by 28 percent, in iron smelting by 35 percent (calculated from Zagorsky 1928: 56).

Several measures were proposed to address the problem. One of most radical suggestions was militarization of the workforce (Gatrell 2005: 114). Despite some support of such initiative in industrial circles (e.g., the Petrograd Society of Factory and Mill Owners) Russia never came close to practical implementation of militarization of labor force: "Although strict labour discipline appealed to many industrialists, the state's intervention in hiring and firing, wage rates, and the requisitioning of men and materials from enterprises – all of which militarization entailed – did not. Finally, the government, the Duma and industrialists could not overlook the possibility that militarization would touch off rebellion in the factories. In more general terms, neither workers nor industrialists were sufficiently integrated into the state's administrative apparatus to

permit the kind of politicking between representatives of the bureaucracy, industry and labour that appears to have been a precondition for the implementation of militarization in other countries” (Siegelbaum 1983: 156).

In 1917 the Provisional Government considered an idea of obligatory industrial conscription. According to some draft documents, the government was to take on itself the regulation of labor supply over the whole country, for each district and every branch of industry. Wages were to be fixed by the state. All labor disputes were to be resolved by compulsory arbitration (Zagorsky 1928: 177). However, similar to the idea of labor militarization, the project of industrial draft provoked severe criticism and objections from manufacturers and trade unions. Eventually these projects were dropped. Evidently the Russian state did not have enough power and organizational capacity to introduce compulsory schemes of workforce regulation.

To sum up, Russia’s economic mobilization during the war did not involve any serious administrative regulation of the labor force, similar to the institutions of labor control in other belligerent countries. The free contractual relationship between an employer and an employee remained largely unchanged. Due to the weakness of the state and broad opposition of the society such compulsory measures as militarization of workforce, or universal industrial conscription, were completely out of question in Russia.

(4)

Because Russia was the largest European agricultural producer and exporter of grain, there was a universal perception that whatever other difficulties she faced, Russia would not be imperiled by a shortage of food. In fact it was even calculated that Russia would benefit from disruption of grain trade because eliminating exports would reserve between 10 to 15 percent of cereal harvest for domestic consumption (Gatrell: 1994: 317). Except for the routine measures of



provisioning the army, the government did not prepare any special program of wartime food supply.

Initially it seemed that the existing mechanisms of food supply worked well. In summer and autumn 1914 the mechanism of civilian purchasing functioned as usual, without major disruptions. There was no shortage of food in the cities in first year in the war (Antsiferov et al 1930: 190). In February 1915, however, in order to deal with a spread of profiteering, the government issued regulations for guaranteeing army purchases. These regulations extended powers already held by military authorities at the front to commanders of the military districts in the rear. These powers included the right to set prices for government purchases and enforce these prices by means of requisitions and embargoes that prevented shipment out of the local area (Lih 1990: 11, Mau 1993: 20-21).

These regulations created a situation of price dualism of regulated prices and unregulated market prices for grain purchases. In addition there existed disparity between regulated prices for army purchases and regulated prices for civilian purchases. To secure the army and local supply, authorities, particularly in frontline and producing provinces, established embargoes on sale of grain and other foods to outside purchasers. These embargoes however disrupted established links between regions and deprived the deficit regions of their normal food supplies (Lih 1990: 12). As a result, the situation began resembling German system in autumn 1914 where local authorities tried establishing lower regulated prices but suppliers preferred shipping food in localities which offered the higher prices.

Like in Germany the situation could be regularized only by intervention of a central authority. In Russia such central authority was the Special Council for Food Supply (one of four Special Councils created in August 1915). In November 1915, as a first step of centralized

regulation, the Council imposed uniform fixed prices for all government purchases for the army and civilian purposes. In February 1916 it was established that all purchases by local authorities were to be expedited by the national prices. These seemingly rational measures created disincentives for producers to sell grain. Local authorities found increasingly difficult to purchase grain by fixed prices. More and more frequently they turned to the central authorities for assistance in grain supplies.

In September 1916 the government extended fixed prices for grain to all business transactions. In effect this regulation gave the consumers a legitimate right to demand supplies at fixed retail prices while producers grew even more reluctant to sell grain on the market. By that time the army supplies significantly decreased. Army commanders sent telegrams asking for immediate deliveries of large stocks of grain. A new Minister of Agriculture and ex officio a Chairman of the Special Committee on Food Supply Rittikh, appointed in November 1916, confronted a rapidly deteriorating situation (Lih 1990: 49).

In the conditions when neither material incentives nor threat of force worked anymore Rittikh resorted to the extraordinary method of grain mobilization, a grain levy (*razverstka*). The levy meant determining the total amount needed and allotting shares of supply among the localities. Out of the total demand of 1,106 million poods of grain, Rittikh took out 772 million to be subject to a levy. This amount was divided among provinces, after which the provincial zemstvos were to hand out fulfillment quotas to the county zemstvos, which in turn would do the same to the peasant organizations on the district level, and so on down to the peasant household (Lih 1990: 50).

In the retrospect, this organizational task was far beyond administrative capacities of Russian bureaucracy. Because of numerous organizational problems the deadline for allotting

quotas by January 6, 1917 was extended until March 1. These deadlines were for the allocation of quotas only, while actual deliveries were obligatory within six months. Rittikh's levy was not supported by use of force; it relied essentially on the sense of patriotic obligation and cooperation of agricultural producers and local authorities. Meantime, their willingness to cooperate was seriously compromised. The provincial authorities referred to all possible pretexts to reduce their quotas (Yaney 1982: 432). Because of their protests, the quota was lowered to 89 percent of the original plan at the provincial level, 63 percent at the district level, and 52 percent at the village level. Finally, the purpose of the levy was to provision the army and the war industry. The task of feeding the general population remained in the hands of self-government (Hasegawa 1981: 198). In short, the levy has failed to produce desired results. The actual deliveries of grain were utterly insufficient.<sup>27</sup>

The collapse of food supply in early 1917 caused a widespread urban unrest in major Russian cities, particularly Petrograd. In winter 1916-17 Petrograd and Moscow received less than one-tenth of their orders (Lih 1990: 51-52). The authorities could no longer suppress strikes, demonstrations and violent protests in the capital. Municipal authorities in Petrograd demanded immediate introduction of rationing of foodstuffs but their petitions were turned down (Pipes 1990: 245). When authorities finally consented to rationing of bread in the capital it was already too late. Rumors about restricting bread consumption caused a panic (Hasegawa 1981: 200). Strikes and demonstrations of starving people came out of control and turned into a mass

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<sup>27</sup> While there exist a number of reasonable explanations of failure of Rittikh's levy (failure to enlist public support, transportation problems, miscalculation of prices and provincial quotas), the root cause of collapse of food supply system was weakness of the state authority in Russia, its inability to enforce urgent measures of food supply. In his speech in Duma on February 28, 1917 Rittikh admitted: "I'm only human, only mortal, and Russia needs now to push forward everywhere – in the active public and everywhere – [people] of titanic strength" (cit. in Lih 1990: 55).

revolt. In February 1917 the Russian autocracy collapsed and the Provisional Government took power. The problem of food supply, however, still plagued central and local authorities.

On March 25, 1917 the Provisional Government issued a decree “The Directive on Placing Grain at the Disposal of the State” which declared a state monopoly of grain, using the German system as a model (Holquist 2002: 96). It stated that all grain in the country, except for a small quota for peasant consumption and sowing, now belonged to the state; the actual producer was not more than a temporary holder of the grain. The producer was allowed to retain a stated amount of grain, everything above this norm would be delivered to the state at a fixed price. The administrative apparatus for enforcing monopoly consisted of locally elected food-supply committees. These organs were empowered to register all grain in a given locality and ensure that all surplus is turned over to the state. The government took on the obligation to put equitable prices on some industrial goods and deliver them to the countryside (Lih 1990: 59).

However the new authority was never able to establish effective control over deliveries of grain. The local committees had neither reliable data to make decisions nor effective means of enforcement grain mobilization. For implementing such work a new, much more effective and extensive administrative apparatus would be necessary. One of the experts, I. Sigov, observed: “How much work must there be simply in conducting registration of each muzhik in each hamlet, in each village, in each settlement – how much will it cost – how much time will it take – what the army of clerks and census takers will be required, and where will that army come from? Finally, even in normal times how many misunderstandings, mistakes, and therefore protests, revisions, disputes, offense, and indignation will there be? And when will the [actual] procurement of grain take place?” (Cited in Lih 1990: 65). According to calculations of

Alexander Chaianov, an apparatus of seventy thousand officials only at the lower level was necessary (Lih 1990: 61).

In summer and autumn 1917 the situation with grain procurement did not improve. According to Lih (1990: 71), peasants lost any interest in provisioning cities: “After the February revolution the village was inundated with appeals saying that the government now represented the sovereignty of the people – but all peasants saw was the same old gospoda. There was, however, an important change: evidently the gentlemen no longer had force at their disposal, so they had to rely on trickery to get the muzhik to feed them. Appeals to support the grain monopoly because of national need fell into this category, and the more passionate these arguments became, the more convinced were the peasants of their interpretation” (Lih 1990: 71). The state reserves rapidly depleted. In September the daily ration was reduced from three-fourths of a funt of bread to one-fourth of a funt (Lih 1990: 65). The Provisional Government issued directives to local committees to use coercive measures, including armed force, for mobilization of grain and prepared practical measures for sending armed detachments to the countryside. Thus, the Bolsheviks invented nothing new in this respect; they just extended the policies of the Provisional Government to their logical conclusion (Holquist 2002: 103-105).

To recapitulate, in the initial period of the war, food supply did not seem to be a major problem in Russia, the largest producer and exporter of grain in Europe. Correspondingly, the extraordinary measures of administrative control, similar to ones in Germany and Austria-Hungary, did not seem necessary. Nevertheless economic dislocations caused by the war forced Russian government, like authorities elsewhere, to introduce measures of price control, first at the local level and later at the national level. The disparities and irregularities in price control, decrease in production of industrially manufactured consumer goods because of conversion of

industry to military production, and increasing consumption of grain in the countryside together caused a dramatic decline in the quantity of grain delivered to the army and urban population. To secure necessary amount of grain, the Tsarist government declared a grain levy in late 1916. The Provisional Government instituted a state monopoly of grain and rationing of bread in early 1917. Both measures failed because authorities were not able to enforce these policies. Despite earnest efforts of the old regime of instituting a state-controlled economy in food supply, these efforts came too late, were poorly implemented and in the end proved completely ineffective. Like in the sphere of industrial mobilization, the war replaced market forces by a command economy but had not produced a commander. Nove (1989: 22) commented: "It is interesting to note that the elimination of the private trader from grain trade, which many people imagine was the work of Lenin, was in fact attempted, though with little success, by the Provisional government while Lenin was still on his way to Russia."

(5)

The war changed the outlook of Russia's economy. It gave a major impetus to industrialization, urbanization and modernization of Russian society. The war dragged the state into the central stage of economic relations and transformed some important sectors of Russian economy into state-controlled industries before the Bolsheviks. The main problem of Russia's industrial mobilization turned out to be a problem of an agency. The old Russian government failed to develop effective governing institutions, responsible for economic mobilization. By and large, it remained a helpless hostage of a corrupt clique manipulated by the Tsarina and Rasputin. The nation, which possessed the largest resource base among all European nations, failed to create any resemblance of an effective governing mechanism. The war produced a command economy without a commander.

### A Birth of a Command Economy: Cross-National Variation

My first objective in this comparative study was to assess the overall shift from market to administrative regulation among five European nations (Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany and Russia). In general, the study shows that in all these countries economic systems obtained a statist and collectivist design. The total war established a modern nation state in the central stage of economic, social, ideological and other relations. The notions of the state, economy and society as separate and independent institutions became obsolete. During the war the regulatory state came to encompass everything or almost everything in social life in most European nations. If there was a variation in state-economy-society integration across nations then it was a variation at the high end of the scale.

Britain demonstrates an example of a state-directed industrial mobilization. There, state control transformed the economic order from a liberal, free-trade economy into a regulated welfare state. But massive state intervention was not able, nor was it intended, to undermine a predominantly market-based governance structure. The bureaucrats of the Ministry of Munitions would generate mountains of regulations but they did not control daily operations of the private firms. The primary forms of state involvement were cooptation and coordination, not command and compulsion. By bringing in new manufacturers to war production, building new public factories, and buying munitions abroad, the government inadvertently promoted decentralization of the industry and sponsored competition among manufacturers. The market-based infrastructure of transactions with raw materials was not eliminated; the governmental control in this sphere was accepted as a forced and a temporary measure. Whenever possible the government tried to avoid outright compulsion in employment relations. It did not introduce

anything similar to the Austrian or German system of compulsory state service. The measures of provision control in Great Britain were less extensive than in other countries. During two first years in the war the government essentially refrained from intervening in food matters. Unlike all major continental countries, Britain never established a full monopoly on grain. The rationing of some other foods was introduced only five months before the end of war. British industry operated as a capitalist market economy, not an administered economy. As easy as a “visible hand” of the state was placed on the economy as easy it could be taken of.

Many of these residual capitalist features fully apply to the wartime French economy. More than any other economic system, the French economy demonstrated an example of a self-mobilization and self-organization of the capitalist class. Although industrial mobilization was sponsored by the government, industrialists themselves came to play a primary role in organizing mass production of arms and munitions. French resource-allocation institutions, the consortia, represented a weak and temporary version of corporate organization. Being instigated by the foreign agencies (British and American exporters) the consortia existed only for a very short period of time. The French labor market retained “freedom of contract,” (except for the recalled workers and the POWs). The workers could leave enterprise as they wanted. They also could demand higher remuneration and better conditions of work (albeit individually but not collectively). For about three years in the war French authorities limited themselves to very few measures of food regulation, mostly price control of some foods. Because of large imports of food from overseas more dramatic measures of food control did not seem necessary. Only in the late 1917 did the government introduce a grain monopoly and the rationing of bread.

If France and Britain, given the dominant position of their capitalist class in the system of production, can be viewed as classic capitalist states, the policies of the absolutist military-



bureaucratic states, such as Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, reflected a more complex class composition of these societies where the capitalist class played a major but not a dominant role. In fact, the role of the capitalist class vis-à-vis the state varied across these countries.

In Germany the state and industrialists seemed to be equally strong and interdependent. The military-bureaucratic state relied on economic strength of large industrial monopolies. The industrial monopolies supported domestic and foreign policies of the German state. During the war this symbiotic relationship culminated in a de facto institutional integration of the state and industrial monopolies. By establishing the War Raw Material Department (KRA) the German officials and technocrats created a massive bureaucratic mechanism for planning and administrative allocation of all strategic resources. Germany instituted a thorough system of compulsory workforce mobilization for adult male population, known as industrial conscription or civilian draft. With adoption of the Auxiliary Service Law of 1916, a free labor market in Germany was essentially replaced by administrative labor allocation. In production and distribution of food Germany was transformed into a compulsory economy (*Zwangsbewirtschaft*), in which market forces completely yielded to the rule of the manager. The state established a monopoly for all staple foods. For each kind of food there existed a state corporation which centralized and allocated food for the consumers according to strict rations. The legal free market of food disappeared. Overall, in 1916-18, German industrial economy operated more as a command system than a market economy.

In Austria-Hungary the military-bureaucratic state was stronger than a national capitalist class. Because national industry was underdeveloped and the capitalist class lacked a strong and independent economic base, the Habsburg state was able to institute direct military control of heavy industry. All major munitions workshops and mining establishments were supervised by

military directors. These directors in turn were supervised by the inspectors of the War Ministry. Prompted by the German authorities, the Austria-Hungarian government developed a similar bureaucratic system of raw materials' allocation although in contrast to the German raw materials corporations, the Austrian Centrals did not have legal and financial guarantees from the state. The Austria-Hungarian government instituted industrial draft of all male population (albeit with numerous exemptions) in the first days of the war. Compared to the later German analogue, the Austrian action was a much earlier and, according to Wegs (1970), a more effective arrangement. The market mechanism in allocation of food was also to a large extent replaced by the administrative system. The government introduced the monopoly on grain and established rationing of bread and other staple foodstuffs. In the last two years in the war the army itself began requisitioning food from the countryside. Militarization of industrial management and workforce regulation was finally supplemented by militarization of food supply and procurement.

In Russia the process of institutional merger of monopolies and the state reached its ultimate phase: in some sectors not only the state took over the allocation of material but by being a sole buyer of the produce (e.g., coal) the state started to manage the whole process of production. On the other hand, Russian system of state-corporate regulation was much less developed organizationally and less comprehensive than the German model. As managers of the industrial mobilization, Russian military-bureaucratic state and the national capitalist class turned out to be both weak and ineffective. Due to the weakness of the state and broad opposition of the society militarization of workforce was completely out of question. Despite all earnest efforts of instituting a state-controlled economy in food supply these efforts, as compared to analogous measures introduced in Germany and Austria-Hungary, came too late, were poorly

implemented and in the end proved completely ineffective. In the end these regulatory efforts resulted in an institutional stupor. The war strengthened existing tendencies towards a command economy but had not produced a commander (Siegelbaum 1983: 122). In the end, Russian system did work as a command economy but ill-functioning and disintegrating economy.

Thus, if one is to rank five European states in order of progression from market regulation to state regulation one would end up with the following order: Britain, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. Of course, one should emphasize that in all these states the degree of wartime administrative regulation of economic relations was high.

Findings of a comparative study of economic regulation are summed up in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Measures of Economic Regulation among five European Nations, 1914-1918

	Britain	France	Russia	Austria-Hungary	Germany
Cost-plus-profit arrangement	No	No	No	No	Yes, September 1915
Corporate allocation of materiel	No	Yes, October 1917	Yes, July 1915	Yes, October 1914	Yes, August 1914
Compulsory allocation of workforce	No	No	No	Yes, July 1914	Yes, December 1916
State monopoly of grain	No	Yes, November 1917	Yes, March 1917	Yes, February 1915	Yes, January 1915

### A Command Economy: Explanations

The findings of this study show that a single, fit-for-all pattern of state-directed economic mobilization did not exist. Instead, European nations displayed different trajectories of economic mobilization including various patterns of amalgamation of capital and the state, depending on the nature of the problems they confronted. In some cases it was not precisely a state-initiated or state-directed mobilization but a comprehensive social and economic mobilization.

Consistently with a conventional argument (Scott 1998), the German war economy shows the best fit with a model of a command economy. Austria-Hungary closely follows the German model; in few respects (e.g., militarization of management and workforce in heavy industry) Austrians even overdid Germans. Russian command economy, until it finally disintegrated under strain of war and revolution, can be placed somewhere in the middle of the range. In a greater degree than other nations, Britain and France were able to retain capitalist, market-based institutions.

Why was the German economy, and to less extent Austrian and Russian economies, driven to obtain a more statist and collectivist design than British and French economies? How would three alternative arguments, developed in this study, explain the variation in wartime economic systems?

According to a state capacity explanation, more centralized and bureaucratized states with a developed administrative infrastructure and high degree of state penetration are able to implement more extensive, more interventionist programs of economic regulation than less centralized and rationalized states with lower administrative capacity. Thus, Britain, France and Germany, the strong and most administratively developed states in the prewar Europe (Mann

1993), should be expected to implement most interventionist programs of economic regulation. The historical evidence does not support a thesis of the “strong” state as most interventionist. Neither Britain nor France had implemented such measures as introduction of a comprehensive state-directed system of resource allocation, compulsory state service, and complete centralization and rationing of food supply. On the other hand, such less centralized and less efficient states as Austria-Hungary did introduce these measures in the very beginning of war. Although Russian state failed to implement these policies, overall its wartime economy still was more administered economy than British and French economic systems. It seems that the most far-reaching measures of state intervention did not vindicate in Britain and France.

According to an institutional explanation, corporatist economies featured by high degree of concentration and monopolization of capital as well as vertical and horizontal integration of industrial economy are more compatible with institutions of national planning and management than liberal, decentralized economic systems. The former are “better” objects for hierarchical control and monitoring than the latter. The pre-war industrial systems of Germany, and to some extent Austria-Hungary and Russia, may be placed in the former category whereas industrial systems of Great Britain and France belong to the latter category. Given the findings of this study it seems that this explanation works well: one may see a correlation between the degree of concentration and monopolization of economy and extensive measures of state intervention in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. At closer examination, an institutional explanation becomes more problematic. First, some extensive measures of state control were implemented in countries and industries that had not attained a high degree of monopolization and self-organization before the war. The work of the Ministry of Munitions under Lloyd George in Great Britain could be the best example. It shows that strong measures of state intervention can be

introduced precisely to overcome lack of proper organization and coordination by the state that can administer well. Second, most dramatic measures of state monopoly and control across all countries were introduced in provisioning of food, - the least monopolized and centralized industry. Again, extensive state controls did not have anything to do with (lack of) monopolization and concentration in this sector before the war. Finally, in the cases where corporatization did precede state intervention, direct state control was usually introduced at the point when corporate forms of regulation proved ineffective. The evolution of governance structure in a wartime Russia's coal industry provides an appropriate illustration. This and other examples show that centralized, corporate organization of some key industries may be a necessary precondition of state managerialism, but still not its immediate cause.

According to a resource dependence explanation, the greater amount of resources that state has access to, the lower the incentives of introducing administrative mechanisms of control over economy. Inversely, the lower amount of resources the state has access to, the greater the incentives of introducing administrative control. The shortage of resources is not an absolute but a relative measure that makes little sense outside comparison of a resource potential of a given state with a resource potential of other states. Also the shortage of resources can be created deliberately, by placing an enemy state under regime of economic sanctions, blockade and isolation. The evidence of this study shows a remarkable consistency with a resource dependence perspective. First, this theoretical argument explains expansion of state control as long as war progressed and shortages of resources emerged and multiplied among all belligerent nations. It points to the fact that "war socialism" was not much an artifact of a certain institutional design of national economy but resulted from wartime depletion of resources, no matter what constitution of economy existed before or during the war. Even Britain and France were forced to introduce

rationing of food in summer 1918. Second, this account explains more extensive measures of administrative regulation among nations which were subject of blockade (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia) than among nations that were able to retain access to international markets (Britain and France). The Central Powers and Russia were cut off from external sources of raw materials and provision and had to rely on their domestic resources. In this way they introduced more extensive mechanisms of economic control than Britain and France. Third, all paradigmatic cases of emergency state intervention (e.g., munitions in Britain, workforce in France, coal in Germany, food in all countries, etc.) were precipitated by a shortage crisis. Of course, in each separate episode a shortage crisis was a socially and politically constructed event which involved interaction of many economic and political actors and depended on many social and political configurations specific for each country in war.

### Conclusion

As it follows from the analysis, it was not a particular “strength” of the state that brought into being state-controlled economies during the war. One of the counterintuitive findings of this study is that some weak states turned out to be more economically interventionist than traditionally strong states. Also, it was not a monopolistic structure of a pre-war economy that opened the door to “war socialism,” although it definitely played a major role in preparing an institutional framework for a command economy. It was a catastrophic shortage of war-related resources that invariably forced all belligerent states to establish bureaucratic institutions for administrative regulation and control.

None of the modern economies is self-sufficient. All modern nations have to import large quantities of all possible goods including manufactured products, raw materials, and products of agriculture. The outbreak of large-scale war causes major disorganization of international trade

and disruption of the established economic ties between states. In few weeks national economies find themselves deprived of imports from the former economic partners turned into enemy states. Sometimes even neutral states join regimes of embargo and blockade. Some of the imports that are not longer available are nonetheless indispensable elements of industrial production, including manufacturing arms and munitions. Absence of imports of food, forage and fertilizers causes major problems in feeding army and civilian population.

All these circumstances showed up in World War One. The Great War turned out to be a war of economies, a war of factories. Success in such war hinged upon the continuous supply of war-related resources. The states fought not only on the battlefield but also on the home fronts. The states involved in the war were determined to cut off each other supplies of resources as much as possible. The Allies imposed the blockade of the Central powers while Germany resorted to the unrestricted submarine warfare; both sides established restrictions of transit and exports. The Great War “was as much a war of competing blockades, the surface and the submarine, as of competing armies. Behind these two blockades the economic systems of two opposing groups of countries were engaged in a daily struggle for existence, and at several periods of the war the pressure of starvation seemed likely to achieve an issue beyond the settlement of either the entrenched armies or the immobilized navies” (Salter 1921: 1).

Why did Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia implement more extensive measures of “war socialism” than Great Britain and France? Overall, the Central Powers and Russia found themselves in worse strategic situation than Britain and France. The fragmentation of the European economy and the naval blockage deprived these nations of necessary imports and severely constrained opportunities for expanding domestic production to match the increased output of the Allies. To compensate the increasing gap, the blockaded nations had to develop



new institutions of resource mobilization. In this situation of emergency and urgent need of arms and munitions the states could not longer rely on regular mechanisms of free trade and competition. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia came to establishing administrative institutions that monopolized all strategic resources and eliminated elements of market regulation from economic life. Public managers and planners, not entrepreneurs, came to occupy the command positions for administering war-related resources and means of subsistence for the army and the population.

According to Redlich (1929: 119), “Actually, the war economic régime of the Central Powers was neither more or less than the application of the principles and methods historically employed in beleaguered cities, on a scale so immensely extended as to constitute a phenomenon qualitatively as well as quantitatively new. Theoretically, the problem was to substitute for free trade at home and abroad and the working of the laws of supply and demand, a system of State economy, which with ever growing rapidity subordinated all individual economic interests, to the supreme common interests of the efficiency of the armies, the end being the maintenance of the unity of the realm throughout a protracted war. Thus, the idea of the “closed State” involved a progressive nationalization of the whole of its economic life.”

Interestingly enough, the institutions of German command economy have not received due attention among social scientists, as one might expect. The fact that Imperial Germany was defeated in the First World War proved an implicit assumption that liberal democracies and market economies work better than military-bureaucratic dictatorships and compulsory economic institutions, any time and any place. Historians have argued that German economic mobilization failed (see Feldman 1966, 1976). This was not obvious during the war, however. The fact that the Central Powers were not able to defeat the Allies became apparent only in August 1918.

Germany was able to take strategic initiative for four years and by the time of the armistice German troops still occupied the territory of northern France and Belgium, not to speak about vast territories of defeated Russia. Thus, German wartime mobilization and efforts of her allies were effective enough to keep up for more than four years in the all-out war against a more economically powerful coalition. As I will show below, Germany and Austria-Hungary were defeated not because a design of their command economies was intrinsically flawed but because the Central Powers came to exhaustion of their resources.

### **Part III. Total War and State Breakdown (1917-1918)**

#### State Breakdown

As war became total, all major European powers, one after the other, introduced far-reaching measures of governmental centralization and economic regulation. However, these regulatory measures did not prove to be sufficient or effective everywhere. Some of the European great powers came out as winners in war while other nations experienced state breakdown. Why were Great Britain and France able to win war? Why did some of these great powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia) eventually break up?

To clarify what I mean by the state breakdown let's recall what a state is. According to Weber (1968: 54), a state is a compulsory political organization, which successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order. A state breakdown thus refers to a situation in which administrative staff of the state does not uphold the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order. Simply put, state breakdown is a situation when the state is not able to enforce its laws and orders on the territory under its jurisdiction.

According to Goldstone (1991), state crisis usually paves the way to state breakdown. I define state crisis as a situation in which majority of the population views policies of central state authorities as ineffective and openly expresses this view. Typically, state crisis is associated with two conditions: mass social protests and a split in a ruling elite. Of course, not every state crisis results in breakdown of the state. Authorities may take effective measures in order to eliminate causes of discontent and preclude aggravation of the situation. But if these measures are not taken and the situation gets worse, state crisis may result in state collapse. This happens when

one more condition is present – a breakdown of a core state-coercive organization – the army. Because army is a hierarchically integrated organization, its breakdown refers to a break in the chain of command, when subordinate units refuse to obey the orders of their superiors. Thus, state breakdown usually culminates in widespread social protests, a split in a ruling political elite, and a collapse of the army.

Patterns of breakdown of individual states may vary. I identify three ideal-typical patterns. In a first model, a partial state breakdown, political institutions may collapse but the core coercion-wielding organization (i.e. the army) remains largely intact and is able to reintegrate and recentralize the crumbling state. In a second model, a total state breakdown, both civilian and military institutions collapse but in a process of violent contestation (a civil war) one fraction of the army is able to prevail over the other and reintegrate the state. A third model, state disintegration, refers to a complete and irreversible breakup of a state into independent political units.

Although my emphasis on external structural determinants of internal political change resembles the argument of a state-centered theory of revolutions (see Goldstone 2001, 2003; Goodwin 2001; Skocpol 1979, 1994), it originates in a different school of thought (see Collins 1978, 1986, 1999; Halliday 1999; Kennedy 1985; McNeill 1982; Porter 1994; Tilly 1975, 1985, 1990, 1993, 2003, 2004). According to a state-centered theory of revolutions, a military-fiscal breakdown of the state, which is often caused by war and other exogenous factors, represents a necessary precondition and an important element of a revolution. For state-centered scholars a revolution is thus a master narrative and a state breakdown is a sub-plot, an overture to the revolution.

I suggest reversing the relationship between these concepts and viewing state breakdown, rather than a revolution, as a focal point of analysis. State breakdown refers to a situation in which the central state authority does not uphold the claim to the monopoly of legitimate use of violence on the territory of its jurisdiction. In such situation, state authorities and other agents of power (contenders) compete in their claims to a right to exercise violence. Because a political authority is challenged by contender(s), uncertainty about who and how will rule in future is a distinct feature of state breakdown, as contrasted to a “normal” political development.<sup>28</sup> A concept of state breakdown which thus refers to periods of critical malfunctioning of state institutions can be applied to a larger class of phenomena than a notion of a revolution (e.g., chronically failed states, civil wars, guerilla warfare, etc).

Not every episode of a state breakdown results in a revolution. I identify four potential outcomes of state breakdown: a restoration (an old regime is restored with some insignificant modifications), a reform (an existing state authority initiates a major institutional change), a replacement (a new authority comes to power but does not transform institutions), and, finally, a revolution (a new authority initiates a major institutional change).<sup>29</sup> A revolution in such interpretation, which is consistent with a classical Huntington’s (1968) definition,<sup>30</sup> is only one among four outcomes of state breakdown. Therefore, one may identify four types of regime change (see Table 1).

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<sup>28</sup> In his review of revolutions Stinchcombe (1999) defines them as “periods in which the rate of change of power positions of factions, social groups, or armed bodies changes rapidly and unpredictably.” I incorporate his idea of uncertainty into my conception of state breakdown.

<sup>29</sup> I do not discuss here an irreversible disintegration of a state.

<sup>30</sup> Huntington (1968: 264) defined a revolution as “a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policy.”

Table 2. Four Types of Regime Change

	Old state authority	New state authority
No institutional change	Restoration	Replacement
Institutional change	Reform	Revolution

Such reconceptualization, I believe, is helpful because it resolves a host of conceptual problems associated with the notions of a “failed revolution,” “a revolution from above,” and a “revolutionary situation.” Is a “failed revolution” a revolution or not? Is a “revolution from above” really a revolution? Can we speak of a “revolutionary situation” if it did not eventuate in a revolutionary outcome? Such problems can be easily resolved if one assumes that a state in question experienced breakdown but not necessarily a revolution as a systemic institutional change.

#### Geopolitics of Economic War

In the previous chapter I suggested that World War One turned out to be an economic war as much as the military conflicts and analyzed the various patterns of economic mobilization

among the European nations. Now let us make a next step. If this conflict turned out to be an economic war there should be a strong connection between a success or a failure of economic mobilization and war outcome.

One needs to keep in mind, however, that in war of large coalition alliances an economic potential of an individual nation ceases to be a reliable predictor of a war outcome. In a complete reversal to the French disaster in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, it was a smaller and less economically developed France, which turned out to be a “winner” in the First World War while a larger and a more economically advanced Germany was defeated. France survived World War One because she was supplied and supported, both economically and militarily, by her powerful allies, Britain and the United States. Therefore, it is not a national economic potential, but a combined economic and military power of coalition alliances that becomes critical in a total war (Broadberry and Harrison 2005, Stubbs 2002).

Open access to foreign trade and outside resources has serious implications not only for effectiveness of troops but also for the situation inside the country. If a nation has access to external resources, including raw materials and provision, it may substantially increase her economic robustness as well as social stability. Imports reduce the amount of resources necessary to mobilize inside the country and social pressures associated with that. The states that maintain access to resources from overseas are therefore likely to last longer in the war of attrition than nations that do not have access to external resources.

It is not surprising that from the very beginning of World War One the belligerent nations became determined to cut off each other supplies as much as possible. In August 1914 the British Navy began its blockade of the German coast. In the first stage of war the embargo was restricted to search and confiscations of arms and munitions. In March 1915, however, the Allies decided

to stop all shipments to and from the ports of the Central Powers including food, forage, fuel, fertilizers, and raw materials. The broad range of measures was introduced to minimize German supply through the neutral countries. The blockade that the Allies launched against Germany equally affected her main ally Austria-Hungary because the bulk of Austrian exports were transported through Germany. In 1917, after the United States joined the war and the Allied blockade, the Central Powers became effectively isolated from the overseas markets.

In February 1915 Germany officially began submarine warfare against enemy merchant ships. Given that British economy and consumer market were dependent on massive imports of raw materials and foodstuffs, German officials expected that losses of Allied cargoes would undermine industrial mobilization and social stability in Britain. Beginning February 1917 the German U-boat attacks turned into unrestricted and methodical submarine warfare against the Allies.

Although Russia fought on the side of the Entente, she found herself in a situation of blockade, similar to one in Germany and Austria-Hungary (Chamberlain 1935, Nolde 1928). The war closed the Russian frontier on three major routes: western overland, Baltic ports, and Black Sea ports. The only directions left open for trade with outside world were Vladivostok in the Far East, Murmansk and Archangel in the north, and Finland in the northwest. Neither of these routes was good for trade on a large scale (Zagorsky 1928: 32). The most serious strategic setback was a Turkish blockade of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, launched in the very beginning of the war. Britain tried to reopen the Turkish Straits by sending the Dardanelles expedition in 1915. After failure of the expedition Russia became effectively isolated from its allies in the West and turned into a “sort of barred house, which could be entered only through the chimney” (Golovine 1931: 37).



### Consequences of Blockade

For how long can a nation excluded from the world-economy survive in the economic war? Her endurance depends primarily (but not exclusively) on two factors: a domestic resource base and a resource-extractive capacity of the state. Other things being equal, a state with a larger resource base and more effective bureaucracy will endure in war longer than a smaller and less administratively effective state. If a state has a small resource base or ineffective bureaucracy, sooner or later shortages of resources would negatively affect economic mobilization, military effectiveness, and social stability.

All war-related resources, including manpower and industrial resources (raw materials and manufactured goods) are limited. Lack of soldiers and shortage of munitions negatively affects military effectiveness. However, it has been shown that not lack of manpower or munitions, but shortage of agricultural resources decided the outcome of an economic war (Offer 1989, 2000).

Compared to industrial production, agricultural output is inelastic. Because agriculture depends on natural cycle of reproduction of plants and animals, it is not easy to increase domestic production of food rapidly, in few months or even few years. Given that a large part of rural population is drafted to the army, rapid expansion of agricultural production becomes even more difficult. Also, even if farmers produce a sufficient amount of foodstuffs, a government needs to provide strong incentives to deliver their produce to the market in order to cover the increased demand of the army and the cities. Due to massive dislocations caused by the war, food markets experience serious disorganization. To secure uninterrupted supply of food, the government begins to control prices. Price control creates disincentives to deliver food on the

market. If market incentives do not work, the government may resort to compulsion. In order to enforce mass requisitioning of food, however, the state must have a very effective coercive apparatus. Obviously, this is not always the case. Thus, given the inelastic character of agricultural production in general, an increased ratio of food consumers to food producers and potential problems in delivering food to consumers during the war, shortage of food may become a very serious problem in a long war.

Which segment of population would suffer of food shortage most of all? Consider three large groups of consumers: the army at the front, the urban centers, and the agrarian sector. Under normal circumstances it is unlikely that agricultural producers experience shortage of food, unless they are subject of extensive forced requisitions. It is also unlikely that the army would be left without provision because soldiers without food cease fighting and military defeat is thus inevitable. Therefore, if food supply declines, large urban centers would be the most likely locations to experience shortage of food.

Theoretically, shortages of food may affect all groups of urban population equally. It is reasonable to suggest, however, that in most countries this is not the case. The purchasing power of various social groups is different. The wartime deprivations of the working and low-middle classes cannot be cushioned by accumulated wealth, greater income, and social privileges of the nobility, bourgeoisie and bureaucracy. Therefore, low-income groups of urban population, i.e. working class and low-middle class families, are more likely to suffer from shortages of food than well-to-do families.

### State Collapse

The principle of equality of sacrifice is a key condition of preserving social peace in the war of attrition (Davis 2000). To ensure equitable distribution of food in the cities, authorities

may choose to introduce state monopoly on staple foodstuffs and rationing of food.

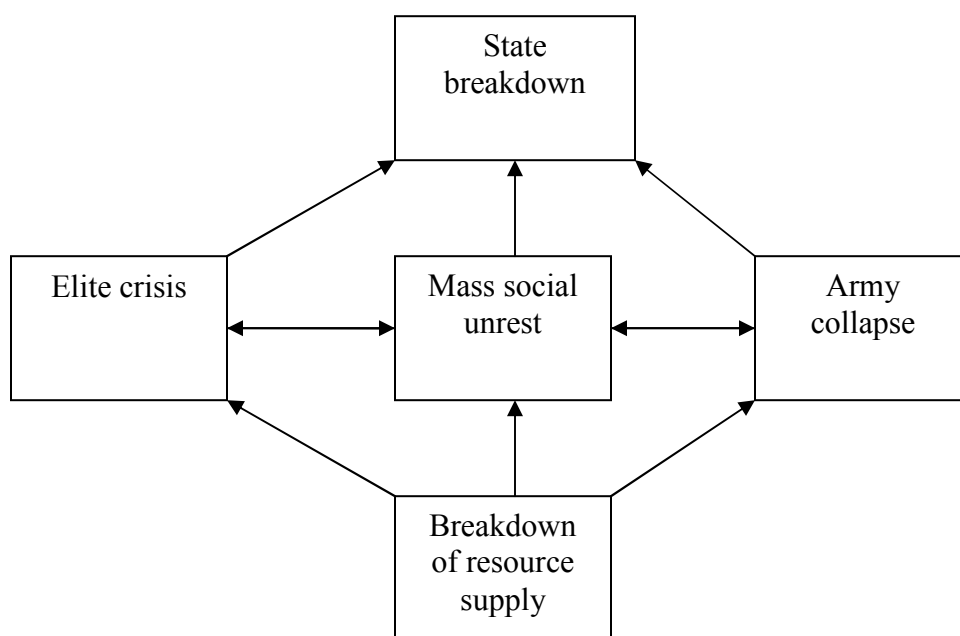
Rationing, a term of military origin, means “allotting to each member of a fighting force or a beleaguered population his appropriate share of food and other necessities, as determined by calculation of what he needs, or what supplies are available, and of the time for which they must be made to last” (Beveridge 1928: 182). If authorities introduce and effectively enforce food rationing, that ensures equality of sacrifice and decreases possibility of social protest, even if rations are meager. If authorities are not able or willing to introduce rationing and food distribution tends to be inequitable, this would increase probability of social unrest. Even rationing, however, cannot alleviate absolute shortage of food. Widespread and persistent social protests of lower urban classes, if they occur, would be a first indicator of a crisis of the state.

The critical social conditions also affect elites. Ruling elites are never homogenous. Even in the most autocratic states elites include potential contenders that, once they are given an opportunity, may challenge the rulers. A deteriorating and potentially explosive social situation opens a structural opportunity for change and prompts factions of the ruling elite, whose support of war was conditional, to turn against government policies. These factions initiate a political campaign against policies of the government. To increase their political leverage vis-à-vis the government they may form a political alliance with the oppositional parties of the working class. The split within the ruling elite, if it happens, would be a second indicator of state crisis.

Finally, a deteriorating social situation and the rise of a broad-based political opposition may affect morale of troops. As long as most units are concentrated at the front and are engaged in military action, they are protected from “subversive” influences from the rear. But this is not always and not everywhere the case. Some units of the army and the navy may be garrisoned in urban centers or in close proximity to these centers. Like workers in factories, they often become

objects of anti-war propaganda of the radical political parties. Mobilization of new cohorts of the civilian population and rotation of troops may result in spread of anti-war sentiments to the acting army at the front. Eventually, social unrest and political contention, particularly if coupled with military setbacks, may result in mutinies of the troops. If commanders are not able to restore military discipline, army disintegrates. Disintegration of the army, if it happens in conjunction with mass social unrest and a deep crisis within the ruling elite, may initiate processes of state breakdown.

Diagram 1. A Model of State Breakdown



None of these developments by itself, or even a combination of these events, results in a breakdown of the state. Three additional variables need to be taken into consideration. A first variable is a scope of economic and socio-political disorganization caused by the war, as reflected in all three indicators. Apparently, it must be a large-scale, catastrophic disorganization

in order to state breakdown to occur. A second variable (which in part derives from the first) is a spacio-temporal convergence of these factors. The collapse of authority occurs only if social unrest, elite crisis, and disintegration of the army take place in one locale and at one moment in time. A sequence, a scenario, and a pattern of interaction may vary but there must be a peculiar fusion of all three dynamic processes that triggers a collapse of authority. A third variable is an impact of collapse of authority in one state on other nations. A collapse of central authorities in one state may affect political actors in other nations, particularly if a social and political crisis follows a similar scenario. Such development abroad may demoralize or, inversely, remobilize ruling elites. Also, it may inspire challengers and provide a blueprint for political action.

As indicated above, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia found themselves in different positions with respect to their economic access to the outside world. Benefited from an advantageous geopolitical location providing them free access to the Atlantic maritime routes, Britain and France were able to operate on international markets and import large quantities of goods from their allies and colonies (Hardach 1977, Stubbs 2002). In contrast to these countries, the interior states such as Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, were placed under conditions of economic blockade. Their access to foreign resources was significantly reduced.

To be clear, my argument does not imply that social unrest, elite crisis, or army collapse could not happen in the nations that maintained free access to outside world in an economic war (Britain and France). What I suggest is that in the nations that were excluded from the world-economy (Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia): (1) food supply in the main cities would be worse, (2) social tensions, protests and subsistence riots stronger, (3) political divisions and

conflicts within elites greater, (4) mutinies of troops more likely, and, as a result, (5) these nations would be more likely to collapse during the war.

In the following sections I examine the episodes of state breakdown in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. I also contrast these episodes with wartime experiences in France and Great Britain. Drawing from my findings I conclude that access to world economy was a primary factor explaining why some European states collapsed during the economic war and some other states did not.

### Russia

#### (1)

On the morning of February 23, 1917, the International Women's Day, thousands of women workers from the Vyborg district in Petrograd came out on strike in protest against shortage of bread. The protesters were enraged that after working ten to twelve hours they needed to wait in long lines in freezing cold to purchase a small quantity of food (Engel 1997: 697). Soon they were joined by workers from the neighboring metal works. Workers marched to the center of the city with shouts "Bread!" and "Down with the War!" Many bakeries and food stores along the way have been attacked and vandalized.

A worker from the Nobel factory later recalled how the riot began: "We could hear women's voices in the lane overlooked by the windows of our department: "Down with high prices!" "Down with hunger!" "Bread for the workers!" I and several comrades rushed at once to the windows... The gates of No.1 Bol'shaia Sampsonievskaja mill were flung open. Masses of women workers in militant frame of mind filed the lane. Those who caught sight of us began to wave their arms, shouting: "Come out!" "Stop work!" Snowballs flew through the windows. We decided to join the demonstration" (Cited in Smith 2004: 16-17).

On the next two days the number of demonstrators in Petrograd increased. All major factories ceased to operate and about 200,000 workers joined the demonstrations. Middle-class individuals, including students, civil servants, and teachers joined the workers demonstrations and brought in a political element to workers' economic demands. Cossacks, contrary to the usual practice, showed reluctance to disperse crowds. The situation changed, however, in the evening of February 25, when the Tsar telegraphed General Khabalov, Chief of the Petrograd Military District, to use troops to quell the disorders: "I command you no later than tomorrow to put an end to the disorders in the capital, which are impermissible at a time of war with Germany and Austria" (cit. in Wildman 1980: 136).

In technical terms it should not have been a major problem. In winter 1916-17, massive contingents of troops were stationed in Petrograd. There were from 160,000 to 270,000 armed men in the city that included guard units, infantry, cavalry, technical units, and cadets in military schools (Hasegawa 1981: 163-164). In addition to these units, there were about 200,000 troops in the nearby cities within thirty miles of the capital. Thus, during the war authorities held about 360,000 to 470,000 soldiers in Petrograd and its close vicinity. The elaborate contingency plans were drafted for the case of massive unrest. Under normal circumstances, this huge military force would be more than enough to suppress any civil disturbances.

On February 26, according to the Tsar's order, the capital was occupied by the troops. The troops have been instructed to open fire after three warnings. Like in previous days, large crowds of workers appeared on the streets but now regular troops instead of Cossacks and policemen confronted them. In several skirmishes in the center of the city army detachments fired in the crowds and shot dead more than 50 protesters.

On the next day, February 27, soldiers of one of the regiments refused to obey the orders of the officers. The mutiny rapidly spread to the other troops. In one regiment after another, soldiers openly defied commands of their superiors. By the afternoon disorders turned into a full-scale rebellion. Soldiers fraternized with workers. Revolutionaries attacked prisons and released prisoners. Insurgents captured the Arsenal and armed themselves. They also occupied the telephone exchange and several railway stations. By the evening 66,700 soldiers participated in insurrection. By next evening this number doubled (Hasegawa 1981: 292). Amidst the chaos, the government resigned leaving the country and the capital without a central authority.

By that time the Russia's ruling elite was in complete disarray. The conflict between the government and the parliament (the Duma) became the focus of political controversy. A liberal Progressive Block, formed in August 1915 of two thirds of the Duma's members, demanded a government of popular confidence responsible to the parliament majority. This demand received a broad support among the middle classes and even among the members of the cabinet. The Tsar and his entourage, however, did not want even to discuss such measures.

In autumn 1916 the political crisis entered a new phase. The impending food disaster, the new wave of strikes, and inaction of authorities prompted liberal opposition to intensify its onslaught on the government. On November 1, 1916, in his speech in the Duma the leader of the Progressive Block, Pavel Miliukov, subjected policies of the government to the devastating criticism. The Prime Minister Stürmer was implicated in secret negotiations with Germans and intentions to conclude a separate peace. Each point of criticism of the inept government policy Miliukov concluded with the same question: "What is it, stupidity or treason?"



During the winter 1916-17 the split between the government and the society reached a critical proportion. Nothing could change the Tsar's categorical refusal to implement any political reforms. Even the murder of Rasputin, who was viewed as a dark ominous figure responsible for all misfortunes, did not change the situation. All panicking petitions from top officials were repeatedly turned down. In the situation of the absolute political deadlock, several prominent opposition leaders began to discuss plans of staging a palace coup.

The February insurrection in Petrograd caught the liberal opposition by surprise. Even with the revolution on the streets, liberal politicians were reluctant to take political responsibility for resolving the crisis. Eventually, on February 27, leaders of the Progressive Block decided to form a consultative body under a long awkward name, a "Temporary Committee of Duma Members for the Restoration of Order in the Capital and the Establishment of Relations with Individuals and Institutions," a nucleus of the Provisional Government. The same day the revolutionary forces of Petrograd established their own authority, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldier' Deputies. An impromptu "dual authority" was established in Petrograd.

The last word, however, was left to the acting army. During these troubled days the army command confronted a dilemma. One possible way of action was to send troops to the capital, quell the rebellion, and restore the Tsar's authority. Such an operation, in the view of the command, involved an immense risk. The nation was amidst the war. A punitive operative against Petrograd would almost certainly result in a bloody internal conflict and open the door to Germans who would definitely take advantage of Russia's weakness. Another solution was to come to terms with moderates in the opposition and, by resolving the internal crisis through compromise, avoid the imminent civil war. After receiving assurances from Petrograd that a new government would be formed by responsible members of the State Duma, an acting Commander-

in-Chief Alexeev ordered to halt a punitive expedition against Petrograd. On March 2, when it became clear that the Tsar had lost support of the army, Nicholas II signed his abdication in favor of his younger brother Grand Duke Michael who, in turn, resigned the next day.

On all accounts, the February revolution was one of the most spontaneous, leaderless and anonymous revolutions in history (Chamberlain 1935). Many observers viewed the situation as critical but few if any could foresee such a surprising denouement of seemingly routine civil disorder. A few days before the fall of the monarchy the Empress Alexandra wrote: "This is a hooligan movement, young people run & shout that there is no bread, simply to create excitement, along with workers who prevent others from working. If the weather were very cold they would probably all stay home. But all this pass and become calm if only the Duma will behave itself" (cited in Pipes 1990: 276).

The forces on the opposite side of political spectrum reacted almost the same way. When told that a revolution was underway, the leading Bolshevik in Petrograd, Alexander Shliapnikov, sneered: "What revolution? Give the workers a pound of bread and the movement will peter out." (Pipes 1990: 276) Another Bolshevik activist V.N. Kaiurov recalled: "I was extremely indignant with the actions of the strikers. Not only did they blatantly ignore the decisions of the party district committee, but also just the night before I had appealed to the women workers to maintain restraint and discipline. And suddenly this strike. It appeared that there were no goals or purposes, if we discount the ever-increasing bread lines, which were essentially the reason for the strike." (Cited in Hasegawa 1981: 218)

It would be an oversimplification to reduce the determinants of this sudden social explosion to one elemental factor but it is impossible to overlook the obvious fact - the February revolution began as a massive food riot in Petrograd. In contrast to the regular industrial conflicts

that involved men and centered around the issues of production, this protest was initiated by women and centered around the issues of consumption. As new social elements joined the movement, the riots turned into the major uprising. After few days of unrest the army refused to suppress the protests and took the side of insurgents. Despite their own foreboding of the revolution and mushrooming conspiratorial schemes, the opposition leaders, moderate and radical, were caught by surprise and jumped on the revolutionary bandwagon when the government already collapsed.

(2)

A food rebellion which sparked the Revolution in Petrograd became a culmination of a massive subsistence crisis and social protests that struck Russia during the war. Beginning 1915 food riots spread all over the country, including large and small cities, towns and countryside (Engel 1997, Keep 1976, Kir'ianov 1993). The events in Petrograd only telescoped the common pattern of protests. It is noteworthy that women, particularly soldiers' wives (*soldatki*), often played a leading role in such disorders (see Baker 2001). After almost fifteen million men mobilized to the army, in the rear working women and soldiers' wives shifted from the margin to the center of social life (Engel 1997).

What was the primary factor of the wartime subsistence crisis in Petrograd and other Russian cities? Evidently, the fall of food production cannot be seen as the primary cause. Like elsewhere in Europe (except for Britain), agricultural production in Russia decreased during the war but not as dramatically as in Germany or Austria-Hungary (see Stubbs 2002: 112-144). It also needs to be taken into account that massive Russian exports of foodstuffs stopped and the surplus of food could be consumed inside the country (Kondrat'ev 1991: 133-134). The grain harvests of 1915 and 1916 were generally good. Experts concur that even in critical years of

1917 and 1918 there was enough food in Russia (Antsiferov et al 1930, Hardach 1977, Holquist 2002, Kondrat'ev 1991, Lih 1990). Incidentally, while market cereal production and grain supply declined, livestock breeding increased; if a total number of livestock in 1914 was 100 percent, in 1915 it was 98 percent, in 1916 - 136.7 percent, and in 1917 - 140.3 percent (Antsiferov et al 1930: 168-180). In contrast to the urban dwellers, Russian peasants ate well during the war; they fed their livestock, and, because the government announced prohibition on alcohol, turned grain into vodka (Figs 1996: 299). Why did not the stocks of food find their way to the cities? In the literature two factors are viewed as decisive:

First, measures of price control and disparity in prices for industrial and agricultural goods induced agricultural producers to hold back supplies. Market dislocations in the beginning of the war forced Russian government, like authorities elsewhere, to introduce food price control. In February 1915 the government issued administrative regulations aimed to guarantee army purchases. These regulations empowered the local authorities to set price limits for the first priority purchases for the army and enforce prices by means of requisitions and embargoes that prevented shipments out of the local area. These measures turned out to be disruptive. The embargoes cut the long-established links between regions and deprived the deficient regions, including major industrial cities, of their normal sources of grain supply (Holquist 2002: 22; Lih 1990: 11-12).

In summer 1916, in the time of new purchases to be made, the continuing disparity between regulated and unregulated prices created a standstill in the grain market (Lih 1990). The government was looking forward to purchasing grain at the existing fixed prices. The producers refrained from selling grain to official commissioners expecting increase in prices. There were rumors that grain prices would soon increase tenfold (Pipes 1990: 245).

Theoretically, the problem of grain supply could be resolved in two alternative ways: either by deregulating official purchases and letting the market work or by extending state control to all unregulated trade. The problem was resolved in September 1916 in favor of further regulation. The government extended fixed prices for grain to all business transactions. Needless to say, the new fixed prices were well below the peasants' expectations. In fall of 1916 army supplies and civilian purchases dropped.

In November 1916, when the army provisions were almost depleted, the government had to resort to the extraordinary method of grain mobilization, a grain levy (*razverstka*). The levy meant determining the total amount needed and allotting shares of supply among the localities. Out of the total demand of 1,106 million poods of grain, the government took out 772 million to be subject to a levy. This amount was divided among provinces, districts, down to the level of peasant household (Lih 1990: 50).

The levy failed to produce desired results. Because of numerous organizational problems the initial deadline for allotting quotas in January was extended until March 1. This deadline was for the allocation of quotas only, while actual deliveries were obligatory within six months. The levy was not supported by use of compulsion but relied on a presumption of a sense of "civic duty" and cooperation among agricultural producers and local authorities. Meantime, their willingness to cooperate was seriously compromised. Because there were few industrially produced consumer goods to purchase and prices for these goods became exorbitant (a so-called price "scissors" problem), peasants refused to sell grain to procurement agencies. Local authorities invented all possible pretexts to reduce their quotas and to keep as much stocks of grain as possible in their provinces.

Second, even if stocks of grain and other foodstuffs in the producing provinces were available authorities could not deliver grain to the cities due to the overtaxed railroad transportation (Antsiferov et al 1930, Kondrat'ev 1991). Even before the war the Russian railroads were underdeveloped as compared to other European countries. If Germany had 10.6 kilometers of railways for each 100 square kilometers, France 8.8, Austria-Hungary 6.4, Russia had only 1.1 (Pipes 1990: 206). Throughout the war Russian railroads experienced acute shortages of coal and rolling stock.

Disruption of normal trade relations was harmful for delivering fuel. For example, before the war Petrograd received a portion of its coal from Britain. With the outbreak of hostilities these supplies discontinued. Reorientation to domestic coal supply from the Donetz Basin in the south involved serious difficulties because the Russia railroad system was not adapted for supplying north of Russia with Donetz coal (Zagorsky 1928: 48). Since there was not enough coal for trains, there were not enough trains to bring grain to the cities.

Railways have been overburdened with transporting troops, munitions and other high priority cargoes. Civilian food supply initially was assigned a low priority ("an ordinary freight," category 3). Even when food shortages in the cities became apparent, supplying the army and the industry still remained the primary task. As a result, the volume of breadstuffs delivered by railroad declined from 17.45 million tons in 1914 to 3.01 million tons in 1917 (Zagorsky 1928: 49). In early 1917 about 60,000 railroad cars loaded with food, fodder and fuel could not move because of the cold and snow (Pipes 1990: 272). When cities quickly approached the food crisis the heaps of grain were laying at the railroad stations in the provinces (Antsiferov et al 1930: 213).

Thus, as the literature suggests, the Russian peasants were reluctant to sell grain, and even if they were willing to do so, the Russian railroads were not able to deliver enough grain to the cities on schedule. Yet, these two common explanations, I believe, don't tell the whole story.

The difficulty in extracting grain from the countryside was not a unique Russian problem. Germany and Austria-Hungary struggled through the very similar crises (see Haselsteiner 1985; Herwig 1997; Moeller 1981, 1986). Everywhere a large peasant sector turned to be a disadvantage during the war. Holquist (2002: 33) suggests: "Given the available models of wartime mobilization, some imbalance between the industrial and agricultural sectors – a scissor crisis – was probably unavoidable. The predominance of the agricultural sector in Russia made this problem more acute than in other countries, but all combatants faced it in one form or another. All states that relied upon domestic sources for food supply had difficulties in extracting grain." Broadberry and Harrison (2005: 18) write: "Peasant agriculture behaved very much like a neutral trading partner. Why should Netherlands trade with Germany given the latter's reduced ability to pay, except under threat of invasion and confiscation? Peasant farmers made the same calculation."

Nor was an overloaded railroad transportation a specifically Russian predicament (see Wegs (1977) for the Habsburgs and Feldman (1966) for Germany), although some features were peculiar indeed: "Much of European Russia's surplus marketable grain was produced in the south for foreign export. In peacetime these surpluses were generally transported away from Russia's industrial centers, along an established river and rail network, toward ports from whence they were shipped abroad. Thus, while vast amounts of grain existed in Russia, they often were situated at points that had not developed market and transport links to the internal market. In addition, those rail lines best suited to distribute grain internally now happened to be

precisely the ones required by the military to support its operations... Although all these factors contributed to the food-supply crisis, the transportation system became the convenient scapegoat... The transportation problems were not inevitable” (Holquist 2002: 31-32).

The indirect evidence against railroads as a main culprit comes from the fact that the subsistence crisis struck not only Petrograd, located in the distant northwestern corner of the Empire, but many cities and towns in the Central and even Southern Russia, located close to the main agricultural areas of the country (see Engel 1997, Kir’ianov 1993). Food riots in these rich agricultural regions cannot be explained by railroad disorganization.

The most remarkable fact was that despite numerous problems with extracting and transporting foodstuffs, in general Petrograd seemed to do somewhat better in terms of food consumption than Vienna or Berlin. The number of calories in daily food ration of the Petrograd worker in 1917 was in the range from 1,400 to 1,700 (Lincoln 1989: 58, Sorokin 1975: 269). Barely enough for keep people at work, it was still higher than official daily food ration of workers in Vienna (830-1,290) or Berlin (1,100-1,350) (Healy 2004: 31, Offer 1989: 29). In official average numbers the situation in Petrograd was not worse than in Vienna or Berlin. Why then did a wartime subsistence crisis strike first in Petrograd?

The difference, I suggest, should be sought in organization of food distribution. Differently from other belligerent nations, the Russian government failed to establish a rational uniform policy and a strong centralized agency for equitable food distribution among civilian population. A comparison of the Russian organizational efforts with the German and Austrian policies is instructive.

Germany instituted a comprehensive state-directed system of supply and distribution of food as early as in January 1915. The government declared a state monopoly on all grains in the



country and ordered all existing stores of cereals to be managed by the state. The free trade of grain and flour was prohibited. Only small amounts of grain (no more than 100 kg) could remain in private possession. All mills were required to grind the grain which the state corporation would send to them. The flour, which was a property of the state corporation, would be delivered to municipal authorities, army and navy administration. Bread rationing was introduced in Berlin in January 1915 and extended to the rest of the country in June (Feldman 1966: 102). Subsequently rationing schemes were introduced for most foods including potatoes, flour, meat, fats, milk, sugar, sugar, eggs, and fish. Every household registered at neighborhood shops where it would get the rationed foodstuffs. Some categories of industrial workers, such as the “hard-working laborers” (*Schwerarbeiter*) and the “hardest-working laborers” (*Schwerstarbeiter*), received greater rations than the rest of the urban population.

In Austria-Hungary the government pursued a similar policy. A state monopoly on grain was introduced in February 1915, a few weeks after Germany. The government prohibited all private dealings in grain and flour. The population was divided into two classes, the self-suppliers and the rationed. Ration cards were introduced for bread in Vienna and other cities in April 1915 (Herwig 1997: 274). In early 1916-17 ration cards were introduced for milk, sugar, coffee, fats and potatoes. To connect the authorities and consumers, a Food Council was set up, composed of persons familiar with economic situation, nominated by the Food Minister. This central body established a broad network of local food councils for control and supervision of food supply and distribution.

Schreiner (1918: 229-230) described the positive effect of introducing bread rationing: “Within a few days everybody managed to get the ration of bread allowed by the government. The bread-lines disappeared of a sudden. It made no difference now whether a woman called for

her bread at eight in the morning or at four in the afternoon. Her bread card called for a certain quantity of bread and the baker was responsible for that amount. It was his duty to see that the consumer did not get hungry. Much of the socio-economic machine was running again – not on its old track, but on a new one which the government had laid to it. And the thing was so simple that everybody wondered why it had not been done before.”

Neither in Germany nor in Austria-Hungary did these emergency arrangements function perfectly, which, of course was not surprising during the war. Surely, cards and coupons provided entitlements only for meager quantities of food. However these administrative measures introduced an element of rationality and predictability in distribution of food. They ensured a safety minimum for the urban dwellers. The urban population was timely and properly informed about changes in rations. Most importantly, rations helped to mute the class differences in consumption and create a uniform category of urban consumers (see Davis 1996, 2000).

In contrast to food control in the Central Powers, neither a state monopoly of grain nor a rationing of bread was introduced in Russia before the revolution. Anticipating a short war, the Tsar’s government was concerned primarily with provisioning the army, not civilian population. Local municipalities were entrusted with the task of feeding cities; their work was largely decentralized and uncoordinated (Kondrat’ev 1991, Lih 1990).

As a result of irregular supply, in winter 1916-17 Petrograd and Moscow received less than one-tenth of their orders (Lih 1990: 51-52). Of course, that could not satisfy the urban demand. Many foods as well as many essential items of first necessity disappeared. The city authorities could not longer suppress strikes, demonstrations and protests. The Petrograd Municipal Council (the city duma) petitioned for immediate introduction of rationing of foodstuffs. On February 14, 1917 the reserves of flour in Petrograd were barely enough to last

twenty days on the assumption that every person receives one funt (0.9 pound) of flour a day (Pipes 1990: 199, 245).

On February 19, 1917, Petrograd authorities finally decided to adopt a rationing system beginning March 1. This measure was intended to calm the consumers and win time before shipments with grain arrive. It brought about the opposite effect, however. The rumors of forthcoming restriction of bread consumption caused panic among the Petrograd population. People rushed to hoard bread and other foodstuffs. Many bakeries closed because of the lack of flour and fuel (Hasegawa 1981: 199-201). The urban dwellers, mostly women, formed large queues in front of the bakeries.

Meantime, the government's failure to ration food meant that the burden of the war was not shared equally. Although lower urban classes were starving, the fresh white bread and gourmet food were available in expensive restaurants (Hasagawa 1981). The problem thus was not in the lack of food but in a sharp contrast in consumption of the upper and the lower classes. In absence of rationing such contrast fueled resentment among the poor population directed against well-to-do classes. The urban poor were offended by "'the ladies [baryne]' [the well-to-do consumers] who are able to buy goods from the salesmen at once, even if the goods cost one hundred rubles, thus contributing to the disappearance of goods." The scarcity of meat on the Christmas Eve enraged the lower-class women against 'the well-to-do public who have the opportunity to buy substantial quantities of meat and do so before the very eyes of the poorest sectors of the population' (cit. in Engel 1997: 715).

The secret police (*okhrana*) agent reported: "Resentment is felt worse in large families, where children are starving in the most literal sense of the word, and where no other words are heard except, "Peace, immediate peace, peace at all costs." And these mothers, exhausted from

standing endlessly at the tail of queues, and having suffered so much closer to a revolution than Messrs. Miliukov, Rodichev and Co., and of course, they are much more dangerous, since they are the stockpiles of flammable material, needing only a spark to set them afire” (cited in Hasegawa 1981: 201). Meantime, the grumbling in food lines grew into the open discussions of who benefited from war (*komu nuzna voina*). The streets of Petrograd had turned into a revolutionary club (Moore 1978: 365). After several days of standing in lines for food women went out for the demonstration.

Once again, an urban subsistence crisis in Russia was caused by the wartime disorganization of markets and economic infrastructure. It was not a specifically Russian malaise because other continental nations, as I show below in detail, experienced the same plight but were able to postpone the breakdown by a more effective administrative regulation. Nor did it happen before the war. There were regular famines in the Russian countryside but not in the cities. Since urban subsistence crisis did not occur in the past and struck several belligerent countries at once I infer that this social disaster was a direct outcome of war, not a peculiarity of Russia’s economic and social (under)development.

The key difference was that a crisis struck in Russia sooner than in other countries. It came to Russian cities first because the government, in contrast to German and Austrian authorities, failed to institute a state monopoly and rationing of food. The manifestly unequal character of deprivation was a distinct Russian phenomenon which distinguished her from the other countries where due to a more equitable distribution of provision class differences became muted. The Russian authorities failed to ensure equality of sacrifice among the urban population. The unequal living standards of the upper and lower urban classes fueled resentment among the

poor and contributed to the rise of the radical social movements. The wartime crisis in food consumption turned into a class conflict and eventually into the civil war.

(3)

The sudden collapse of the formidable Tsar's autocracy initiated processes of momentous importance. The Russian autocracy represented an axial institution for the whole social and political construction. Once it was removed the authority system could not hold a society together. With the end of the monarchy Russia lost her hierarchically organized pivotal structure. Immediately after the Tsar's abdication the processes of state breakdown began to develop along four major dimensions: further economic collapse, territorial fragmentation, administrative disorganization, and military disintegration. Below I briefly outline these processes.

Economic collapse was a first dimension of the state crisis. During 1917 the industrial and agricultural production in Russia fell precipitously. Shortages multiplied. Labor productivity dropped. The situation with food worsened. Despite the fact that the Provisional Government declared a state monopoly of grain, the new authority, like the old regime, was never able to establish effective control over deliveries. According to Lih (1990: 71), peasants lost any interest in provisioning cities: "After the February revolution the village was inundated with appeals saying that the government now represented the sovereignty of the people – but all peasants saw was the same old gospoda. There was, however, an important change: evidently the gentlemen no longer had force at their disposal, so they had to rely on trickery to get the muzhik to feed them. Appeals to support the grain monopoly because of national need fell into this category, and the more passionate these arguments became, the more convinced were the peasants of their interpretation."

Territorial fragmentation was a second dimension of the processes of breakdown. The territorial unity of the Russian Empire rested on the legitimacy and continuity of the dynasty. As the Empire expanded, various peoples have been attached to Russia by peaceful or coercive means. Upon ascendance to the throne a Russian Tsar inherited a title of the supreme ruler of a conquered nation. As soon as dynasty collapsed, the national movements at the periphery of the Empire, from Finland and Poland to the Don Cossacks and Turkestan, seized an opportunity for pressing their claims for autonomy or independence.

Administrative disorganization at the local level was a third indicator of the deep political malaise. The officials of the old regime swore their loyalty to the Emperor. As the monarchy disappeared, the civil administration and self-governance bodies, particularly in the regions, found themselves operating in a political vacuum. As a result local towns and villages declared their 'independence' from the capital, proclaimed themselves 'autonomous republics' and asserted their autonomy through the election of various committees, which paid little attention to the orders of the Provisional Government (Figes 1996: 359-360).

Military disintegration, a fourth process, played the most decisive role in the Empire's breakdown. The processes of territorial and administrative disintegration were not irreversible until the army maintained its unity and a hierarchy of command. This was demonstrated during the first Russian Revolution of 1905 and the German revolution in 1918-19. Had not been the army dissolved in summer and autumn 1917 the Bolsheviks would have a little chance in October. What happened to the Russian Army?

The process of the army collapse began in early March when the Petrograd Soviet issued the Order No 1 which instituted soldiers committees in all military units, subordinated these committees to the Soviet, transferred arms at the disposal of the committees, granted soldiers

rights of citizenship, and abolished honorary address to the officers. With the Order No 1 the principle of a dual authority (in practice, a multiple authority) began to spread from the capital to the army at the front. In March 1917 the government abolished the death penalty, the threat of which in many situations served as the only effective means to get the orders obeyed. Together with abolition of the disciplinary power of the officers and instituting elective disciplinary courts this meant that officers lost power to keep soldiers in subordination. In spring the surge of spontaneous democratization flowed over the army. Soldiers at the front began to elect committees and to ignore the old chain of command. Troops affected by the Soviet's pacifist campaign refused to fight, defied the orders of the commanders and deserted on a mass scale (see Wildman 1980, 1987).

In early August, in the aftermath of the failed summer offensive, a newly appointed Commander-in-Chief Kornilov, appalled by the scope of disorganization, put forward a program in which he demanded imposition of the martial law throughout the country, the restoration of the death penalty not only for soldiers but also for civilians, the militarization of railroads and munitions industry, ban on strikes, and introduction of compulsory output quotas (Figs 1996: 445). If these measures of total mobilization would meet resistance of the Bolsheviks and other left parties (and they certainly would), Kornilov proposed to bring the army units to Petrograd and quell Bolsheviks once and for all. In the mid August, at the State Conference convened in Moscow with a purpose of discussing ways out of the crisis the Kornilov's appearance was greeted with a standing ovation. Overnight Kornilov overshadowed the Prime Minister Kerensky as a savior of Russia. The Allies greeted the Kornilov's plan hoping that the new commander would restore the Russia's fighting potential. Had this program been accepted the Russian Revolution perhaps would have had another outcome.

In the late August 1917 Kornilov in the army headquarters in Mogilev and Kerensky in Petrograd began negotiations on practical implementation of Kornilov's demands. During these negotiations, conducted in part through the self-appointed intermediary V.N. Lvov, Kornilov's suggestions were misinterpreted by Kerensky as an ultimatum to the Provisional Government and an intention to institute a military dictatorship. It is difficult to ascertain whether this misinterpretation was genuine or feigned. In any case, Kornilov was immediately accused by Kerensky in a counter-revolutionary conspiracy and dismissed from the position of the Commander-in-Chief. The troops sent by Kornilov to Petrograd for fighting the Bolsheviks were stopped and after meeting with Kerensky their commander, General Krymov, shot himself dead. Kornilov and a group of high commanders who supported him (a nucleus of the future White movement) were arrested and placed in the Bykhov Monastery, near the Mogilev headquarters.

The August crisis was the true turning point of the Russian Revolution. Under conditions of deep social and political crisis a civilian authority (the provisional government) and a military authority (the army command) failed to reach an agreement. The downfall of Kornilov precipitated the ultimate fall of the government. Kerensky's refusal to align with the army command left the Provisional Government defenseless. The government rejected the only institutional prop that could protect it against the onslaught from the radical left rapidly gaining power among workers and soldiers. The last coalition government formed by Kerensky in the late September consisted of obscure third-rank officials. Virtually nobody paid attention to the weak central authority which existed on paper alone. There emerged a vacuum of power in the very center of Russian state (Figs 1996: 455).



On the night of October 25-26 the Military-Revolutionary Committee formed ostensibly to defend the capital from the approaching Germans and dominated by the Bolsheviks seized the Winter Palace and arrested the Provisional Government. The same night at the Second Congress of the Soviets the Bolsheviks adopted the Manifesto "To All Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants" where they proclaimed the Soviet Power and formed a new Bolshevik government headed by Lenin. Other socialists denounced the Bolsheviks coup and left the Congress. Immediately after their victory the Bolsheviks dissolved the bourgeois parties and banned the opposition newspapers. The results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November where the Bolsheviks received only 24 percent of the popular vote were ignored and the long-awaited Constituent Assembly was dissolved amidst violence in Petrograd in the early January 1918.

With the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly the last hope to establish civil order and democratic governance in Russia disappeared. The Bolshevik revolution and the collapse of the Constituent Assembly signaled the beginning of the Russian civil war. As the army split into two fighting formations, the Red Army and the White Army, the country plunged into four years of violence, terror and destruction. The war waged on several fronts simultaneously, the fronts constantly moved and success often shifted from one side to another. In the bloody struggle all institutions of order evaporated. Only by 1921, after four years of the Civil War in which five million perished, the Bolsheviks were able to recentralize most of the country (except for Poland, Finland and the Baltic nations) and form in December 1922 a new federative state, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

(4)

Recent scholarship views the revolution in the context of a continuous Russia's crisis of 1914-1921 (Gatrell 2005, Holquist 2002, Figes 1996, Lih 1990, Pipes 1990, Sanborn 2003, Service 1999). If the crisis was brought about by the war and if political leaders realized this connection in 1917 (and there is ample evidence that many of them did) the question arises why they did not make all efforts to conclude peace, stabilize the situation, and thus prevent the extreme forces from coming to power? After the Revolution Lord Beaverbrook asked Kerensky over lunch in London whether the Provisional Government could have stopped the Bolsheviks by concluding the separate treaty with Germany. 'Of course,' Kerensky said, 'we should be in Moscow now.' Quite naturally Beaverbrook asked why they had not done this. 'We were too naïve,' Kerensky replied (cited in Figes 1996).

The Kerensky's answer reveals one part of the explanation – among the major belligerent nations Russia collapsed first and the rulers simply could not know what consequences continuing war may bring. However, this version cannot be accepted at face value. Among the leaders of the liberal opposition apocalyptic predictions of a forthcoming popular revolution were common figures of speech (Mandel 1983: 85). Although they were intended primarily to wring political concessions from of the Tsar's government, the first Russian revolution of 1905, which exploded in the wake of the country's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, made such predictions more than credible.

Still, a separate peace with Germany did not seem to be in the range of politically acceptable solutions. There were rumors that in 1916 the Tsar's entourage contemplated a possible separate settlement with Germans. But, even if such attempt was seriously made, it almost certainly would be an autocracy's political suicide. The Duma leaders attacked the old

regime using the alleged separate talks with the enemy as a main charge against the 'treacherous ruling camarilla.' In other words, the old regime was already too weak to make such a critical overturn. Most importantly, the Tsar, the only person who could sanction such negotiations, did not see the internal situation as dangerous at all.

The government's rejection of the idea of a separate peace stemmed from the Russia's close involvement in the system of international agreements which crystallized long before the war. Russia was tied by agreements concluded before and after the outbreak of the war, primarily with France and Britain, which made her unilateral withdrawal from the Entente impossible.

The key document among these agreements was a Treaty of London concluded on September 5, 1914. According to this treaty Britain, France and Russia agreed not to negotiate a separate peace with the Central Powers. The Allied supplies and loans to Russia were conditioned on the Russian full-scale contribution to the military effort. If a separate treaty with Germany or Austria-Hungary would be negotiated, not only Russia would forfeit future annexations negotiated with the Allies (the Turkish Straits, Constantinople, and Asia Minor) but also suffer a tremendous loss of prestige which the monarchy most likely would not survive. The betrayal of the Allied cause would be entirely inconsistent with the notion of a dynastic honor on which the old regime and the whole European system of international relations rested. In short, before the revolution neither the Tsar nor the opposition viewed the idea of the separate peace as realistic.

In 1917, after the fall of autocracy, as one may assume, the situation changed. Three years of suffering and privations changed the public opinion inside the country, particularly among the poor classes, for peace. In March 14, 1917, the Petrograd Soviet appealed to the peoples of the world with a proposal of the immediate conclusion of the armistice. Two months

later the Soviet issued a new appeal “To the Socialists of all Countries” where it proclaimed its famous formula of a “peace without annexations or indemnities on the basis of the self-determination of the peoples” (Mayer 1959: 194).

Yet, most of the middle classes including the liberal intelligentsia still adhered to the ‘patriotic’ position. A Foreign Minister Miliukov who represented this part of the political spectrum advocated continuing war until the total victory. Like many pro-Western liberals he thought that the Revolution finally opened the door for Russia to the community of democratic, civilized nations. To betray Russia’s international obligations meant suffering loss of a hard-won prestige and respect among the allied Western democracies. On April 18, 1917 he sent the Allies a note where he confirmed Russia’s commitment to the existing agreements and the common cause. This note, as soon as it was published, provoked massive anti-war and anti-government demonstrations in Petrograd. Under pressure from the colleagues in the cabinet Miliukov resigned.

The new coalition government formed in May repeatedly appealed to the Allies to review and revise the secret treaty arrangements without acknowledging them or making them public. The Allied governments repeatedly refused to renegotiate the agreements. Such position reflected their opinion that Russia ceased to be a major military factor and since the United States entered the conflict the war could be won with or without Russia. The failure of the summer offensive and the subsequent Kornilov’s debacle confirmed the Allied conviction that Russia should not be counted. The efforts of the moderate socialists in the Soviet to convene the International Socialist Conference in Stockholm also failed because the Allied governments refused to issue passports to the delegates. By refusing to discuss peace with the Provisional Government the Western governments unwittingly assisted the Bolsheviks.

According to Wade (1969: 148) the failure of the Provisional Government and the Soviet moderate socialists to convince the Allies in necessity of peace was unfortunate but predictable. The major powers had not yet reached the stage of exhaustion that would make a general peace possible. Ironically as it seems, a little more than two weeks before the Bolshevik's uprising, the British, French, and Italian ambassadors in Petrograd presented a joint note to the Provisional Government demanding an immediate military offensive (Mayer 1959: 257).

Until the Bolshevik revolution, the Allies were interested in keeping Russia, no matter how weakened and exhausted, in the anti-German coalition alliance. The Russian middle classes and liberal politicians thought that the obligations before the Allies could not be violated. For the Russian lower classes, meantime, the burden of the total war became unbearable. Because none of the established political parties, right, center, and left, was willing to conclude a separate peace and begin resolving the domestic problems, a large segment of the lower classes turned to the only political force which was willing to break the "iron braces" of the alliance and make peace with Germans immediately, the Bolsheviks.

After coming to power, the Bolsheviks appealed to the German High Command for an armistice. Trotsky announced publication of the secret treaties with the Allies. In January 1918 the Soviet government repudiated all foreign and domestic debts. On March 3, 1918, after weeks of agonizing negotiations with Germany and after losing territories of Ukraine, White Russia, and most of the Baltics to the advancing German armies, the Soviet Russia signed a peace of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers. These steps finally took Russia out of the war but also placed her against her former allies. The Allies began to support and supply Russian

counterrevolutionary forces and launched military intervention against the Bolshevik government.

(5)

Russia was the first European power which collapsed during the war. However there was little specifically Russian in the process of socio-economic disintegration that caused this breakdown. For two years of war Russia's economic system was able to cope with the numerous problems and bottlenecks in economic mobilization. In winter 1916-1917, however, the economic system fell apart. It broke down because the government failed to institute an effective mechanism of mobilization and allocation of agricultural resources. In Petrograd, like in other big cities, the dismal situation with bread could perhaps be alleviated had the authorities established the system of rationing of food. However supply of bread deteriorated so rapidly that the authorities did not have enough time to take necessary measures. The dire social conditions fueled strikes, food riots, and protests in Petrograd and other big cities. The deepening social crisis intensified political struggle within the ruling class. A broad-based oppositional coalition demanded immediate reforms. Leaders of the opposition accused the government of criminal inaction and corruption, if not outright treason. In early 1917 Russia was in a situation of full-scale state crisis. In the end of February, mass demonstrations flooded the capital. Soldiers of the Petrograd garrison joined the insurgents. When the regular army had refused to suppress the rebellion, the Tsarist autocracy collapsed. The Provisional Government proved unable to stop the war because of Russia's political obligations before the Allies. Nor it could resolve complex economic and social problems of the country. Eventually, in October 1917 it was overthrown by the Bolsheviks, a radical socialist party which just a year before was virtually unknown to most Russians. The Bolsheviks were determined to stay in power by any price, including a separate

peace with Germans. The price for a separate peace was political isolation and foreign intervention by the Allies in Russia. The urban Jacobin dictatorship of Lenin and Trotsky had to pass a critical test of survival in the devastated country amidst civil war, foreign isolation and a permanent fear of aggression and restoration of the old regime.

### Austria-Hungary

#### (1)

On October 27, 1918, the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungarian Empire Count Julius Andrassy sent a note to President Wilson asking the President for a separate peace. In the context of the previous correspondence the note implied that Habsburgs were willing to sever the military alliance with Germany and to recognize the rights of Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs to independence. The next day, October 28, the text of the note became known in Prague. A huge demonstration against the Habsburg dynasty rallied in the main square: imperial insignia were torn off public buildings and soldiers' uniforms. The leaders of the Czech National Committee, the leading organ of the national movement, were unprepared to the mass demonstration and feared possible violent incidents against Germans and Jews. But these concerns turned out to be unfounded; the crowds proceeded peacefully. In the evening the general meeting of the National Committee adopted a "law of the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state." By this act Czechs separated themselves from the Habsburg Empire. The next day the Czech national militia, *the Sokols*, took over control in the city. On October 30, an emissary of the Czech National Committee Tusar introduced himself to the Prime Minister Lammasch in Vienna. As Tusar entered the office Lammasch stepped forward, "Your Excellency, I have the pleasure of

welcoming you as the Ambassador of the Czechoslovak state,” to which Tusor replied smiling, “Sir, the pleasure is all mine” (Zeman 1961: 226-227).

On October 29, mass meetings and demonstrations flooded the streets in Agram (Zagreb). The people in the streets sang praises to President Wilson. The Croatian National Council declared that Croatia and Dalmatia severed constitutional ties to Hungary and formed an independent state which would unite with Serbia. Like in Prague, the revolution proceeded peacefully. The Habsburg governor quietly resigned while officials continued to carry on administrative business as usual. A month later, on December 1, in Belgrade the South Slav provinces of the former Habsburg Empire united with Serbia in a one state Yugoslavia under the reign of the Karageorgiević dynasty (May 1966: 779-781).

On October 30 the revolution broke out in Budapest. People protested against the government appointed by Habsburgs. The streets of Budapest were inundated with revolutionary crowds. The rebels freed political prisoners including members of the Soldiers Council arrested few days before. The Soldiers’ Council arrested the military governor of Budapest, tore the insignia of the Monarchy from their caps, marched to the headquarters of the National Council, the central body of the Hungarian independence movement, and took their oath to the National Council. The loyal troops melted away. Late at night the insurgents seized the post office, telephone, police headquarters and the railway station. In the morning of October 31 the members of Hungarian National Council who expected the worst (“we shall probably all hang at dawn”) found themselves greeted by crowds of revolutionary soldiers and workers. The King (i.e. the Emperor Charles) appointed Michael Károlyi, a leader of the independence movement, a Prime Minister of Hungary. The same day the new government abrogated the Austro-Hungarian



compromise of 1867 transforming Hungary in the independent state (Galántai 1989: 325, Jászi 1969: 32).

In only a few days of late October 1918 the Habsburg Empire, which endured for four centuries, ceased to exist. Six new independent East European states emerged in place of the Habsburg monarchy: Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia. The process of dissolution almost everywhere took place peacefully, without major outbursts of violence and terror. It seemed that all conditions for the Empire's dissolution had existed for a long time and when it finally collapsed under the combined pressures of the Allies and the national movements few persons regretted its demise. Even the Emperor Charles, who renounced participation in the affairs of the government in November, left his office and the country with visible signs of relief and liberation.

But what happened to the Habsburg Army? The empire would not break up if the "imperial and royal" army resisted its dissolution. However in 1918 the wishes of the Habsburg soldiers reflected aspirations of the multiethnic population. After issuing the Manifesto of October 16, 1918, which transformed the Austrian half of the Empire into a federal state and was purported belatedly to satisfy the Wilson's demands of Czech and South Slav autonomy, The Emperor released officers from their oath of allegiance and permitted them to join the national armies of the emerging new states (Rothenberg 1985: 290, 297). The military commanders were authorized to contact national councils to maintain order and supply of the troops (Plaschka 1985: 349).

Not only in the rear but also in the front the army units began leaving their positions and heading home. The garrisons of the Habsburg Army handed their arms and munitions to the national military organizations. Like civilian authorities, the army collapsed along the ethnic

lines. As the last Foreign Minister Andrassy summed up the situation, “to avoid being killed, we committed suicide” (May 1966: 772).

This feature of the Habsburg collapse was unique. Although breakdown of all East European monarchies involved some degree of territorial and national disintegration, neither the Russian army nor the German army fragmented along ethnic lines. In revolutions and civil wars that followed World War One in these countries the military and paramilitary formations fought for the control of the center of the state. In the course of these violent conflicts the army (or a faction of the army) was able to recentralize and reintegrate the state. But as soon as the Habsburg army broke up along ethnic lines, the military shifted their loyalties to the new sovereign states, and none of these states was strong enough to subordinate other states, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire became terminal and irreversible.

(2)

For many decades the powerful centrifugal forces generated by the national movements have been seen by scholars as the main factor of the decline and disintegration of the House of Habsburgs (e.g., Deak 1977, Jászi 1929, Valiani 1973, Wank 1997). More recently a less deterministic and more contingency-centered approach gained acceptance (Cohen 1998, Deak 1994, Höbelt 2002, Sked 2000). Critiquing the fallacy of “misplaced determinism,” Alan Sked (2000: 269, 299) argues, for instance, that the Monarchy had not been in decline before 1914 and “to speak of decline and fall with regard to the Monarchy is simply misleading: it fell because it lost a major war.” He maintains, “It is by no means obvious that the nationality problem was the reason for its fall. Most nationalities fought for it during the First World War right up until the end. Before 1914, if anything, the nationality problem seemed to be abating. Its real weaknesses

in 1914 were military and financial, and this, in fact, had been the case throughout the nineteenth century. If these had been remedied, Habsburg history would have been very different.”

This new approach allows looking at the collapse of the Habsburg state from a new angle. The fact that the Habsburg Empire was multi-national and decentralized did not automatically predestine it to doom. Sked (2000: 301) is correct in stating that “in 1914 no one in the Habsburg Empire, save for a very few hot-headed students who lacked popular support, was in favour of breaking it up or dismantling it.” The Habsburg Slavs’ unwillingness to fight the war should not be interpreted as an unambiguous indicator of their disloyalty to the state. True, Czech or Ruthenian peasants did not feel much enthusiasm going to fight Russians, their Slav brothers (see Zeman 1961: 51-55). However, it is equally true that Russian peasants did not express a great desire to fight *for* Serbs, the Orthodox Slavs (see Wildman 1980: 77-78).

Let us look briefly at the Czech national movement which played a decisive role in undermining the Habsburg Empire in the final stage of the war. In the beginning of the war, the aspirations of Czech nationalists, predominantly members of the urban intelligentsia, did not go far beyond a quest for a greater autonomy within the Habsburg domain. The most radical of them, Kramář and Klofáč, hoped for liberation by Russians. With the Russian military defeats in 1915 these hopes waned. Most Czechs steadfastly supported the Habsburg state. By the end of 1915 the Czech nationalists lost any public support; their pro-Western leaders, Beneš and Masaryk, left the country for permanent exile. Zeman (1961: 86) described this period: “After Beneš’s departure, the Czech radicals were to go through a critical period. Their leaders were either abroad or in prison; the state authorities had intensified their efforts to stamp out treason. The military and the police co-operated in tracing dangerous elements among the population;

they were much better informed than at the beginning of the war, and the conflict between the military and civil administration was also abating. By the end of 1915 they were agreed on the treatment of treason. There were the darkest months of the war for the radicals; they carried on their work against the monarchy without many hopes for the future; their only driving force was their desire to protect the nation against the intensified ambitions of the Germans.”

This and other accounts cast doubts on the argument that national movements played the key role in undermining the Habsburg Empire. In 1914 and 1915 the national movements subsided; their leaders were arrested or went into exile. During two years in war the military regime successfully eliminated political opposition. In reality, it took two and half years of the total war, major military defeats, massive social dislocations, acute subsistence crisis, death of the old monarch (Francis Joseph), ascendance of the new emperor (Charles), political amnesty, convocation of the parliament and, most importantly, the Russian Revolution before the national elements began to recover their hopes and put forward their political demands. The deep economic and social crisis caused by war was the central factor which undermined the unity of the Habsburg Empire.

(3)

In contrast to Russia, where a food shortage in the cities was largely artificial, in Austria-Hungary scarcity of food was absolute. Although before the war the Habsburg Empire was self-sufficient in foodstuffs, the war brought about a rapid decline in agricultural production. Due to mobilization of a large percentage of farmers to the army, loss of the rich agricultural province of Galicia to Russians and the unavailability of imports from Ukraine and Rumania that usually balanced grain deficits in bad years, there was not enough provision to feed the country. In the first two years in the war the Habsburg agriculture was able to produce about two thirds of the

prewar volume of cereals. In 1916 the level of production declined to 60 percent of the 1913 level, in 1917 to 40 percent, and in 1918 to 35 percent. In 1916, due to a poor harvest, the production of potatoes suddenly dropped to 64 percent of the 1913 yield, while in 1917 and 1918 it fell to 22-23 percent of the last prewar year (calculated from Stubbs 2002: 112-114).

In Habsburg Empire allocation of food was further complicated by the fact that Austria traditionally produced less and consumed more food than Hungary. Two thirds of wheat flour, almost two thirds of corn, a third of beef, and a half of pork consumed in Austria were produced in Hungary, the breadbasket of the Empire. In early 1915, to assure domestic supply Hungary drastically reduced supply of foodstuffs to Austria. Most of the desperate Austrian appeals for food were left without satisfaction; formally Hungary was not obliged to sell food to Austria. Instead the Magyars preferred to sell surplus of food to Germany, in exchange for much needed raw materials and machinery (Herwig 1997: 277). The Austrian newspaper *Arbeiter Zeitung* complained, “It is not the English but the Hungarian blockade that is the cause of our misery; it is not the enemy but our ally that starves us” (May 1966: 669). Such paradoxical situation prompted some observers to claim that the Hungarian food policy was a key factor in the collapse of the Habsburg state (Loewenfeld-Russ 1986: 33).

In Viennese working class districts the food situation was truly desperate. In April 1917 the Viennese Major Weiskirchner received a postcard from an anonymous “Mother Starving With Her Children” who described her situation: “From the XIV District! Dear Mr. Mayor! Meat is very expensive and in very short supply. No vegetables. Potatoes one per day per person. Instead of ½ kg. of flour per week we get more potato flour – to do what? From day to day hundreds of thousands are waiting for sauerkraut and one sees a tub only once every 14 days... Why so seldom? We can’t hold out any longer. We have shown enough patience and sacrifice, it

can't go on. In the whole world, Vienna is the saddest off. Peace at any price..." (Cited in Healy 2004: 58).

The point that the Vienna was the "saddest off" was not far from truth. The daily official rations for Viennese workers in the end of the war provided from 830 to 1290 calories, less than in any major European capital. If a basic ration in Berlin included about 36 g. of meat and 375-500 g. of potatoes, in Vienna a consumer was allotted about 18 g. of meat and about 70 g. of potatoes (i.e., one per day) (Healy 2004: 44-45). The Viennese blamed in their plight the hunger blockade, war profiteers and incompetent officials. The waves of food riots shook the Habsburg domains.

During the winter 1917-18 the Habsburg economy reached the lowest point. The winter was unusually cold; the roads were covered by snow. The lack of coal resulted in closures of industrial enterprises and stoppages of street transportation (Schulze 2005: 89). The food shortages became critical. In the late 1917 Vienna received only about 13 percent of the required grain and from 7 to 17 percent of potatoes (Herwig 1997: 361; Wegs 1977: 128).

On January 13, 1918, due to the shortage of provisions, the Austrian government announced a reduction of flour ration in Austrian part of the Empire from 200 to 165 grams a day. The next day in protest against food shortage about 10,000 workers in the Daimler Motor Works in Wiener Neustadt went on strike. The next two days strike spread to Vienna and surrounding areas: locomotive works, Fiat plant, state aircraft factory, Krupp workshop in Berndorf and ammunitions plants in Enzensfeld, Hirtenberg, and Wollersdorf. On January 17 about 600,000 workers lowered their tools across the Austrian part of the Empire. On January 18 massive strikes began in Budapest and other Hungarian cities. Workers demanded more food, end of the military regimentation in industry, and an election reform.

Because the strikers correctly attributed the food crisis to the continuing war, peace became the central political issue in the workers demands. The protest erupted amidst peace negotiations with Russia in Brest-Litovsk. The workers suspected that the German expansionist ambitions would prevent reaching peace agreement soon. The Social Democratic Party in Vienna issued an anti-war declaration: "For immediate termination of the war! For a peace without overt or concealed annexations! For peace based on the unrestricted right of self-determination of all peoples!" In Budapest the Social Democrats put forward similar demands: "We demand peace, justice, and bread. The government must demonstrate its determination to end the misery of the war, the shortage of food, and inflation" (Plaschka 1985: 340).

On January 17, with hundred thousands workers on strike all over the Empire, the Emperor Charles telegraphed to Foreign Minister Czernin, the head of the Austrian delegation at peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk: "I must once more most earnestly impress upon you that the whole fate of the Monarchy and of the dynasty depends on peace being concluded at Brest-Litovsk as soon as possible. We cannot overthrow the situation here for the sake of Courland, Livonia and Polish dreams. If peace be not made in Brest, there will be revolution here" (Gratz and Schuller 1928: 98).

In Vienna the authorities went on to undertake the extraordinary measures for relieving food shortages. After emergency negotiations with the German authorities, conducted through the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin Hohenlone-Schillingsfürst, the German Imperial Grain Control agreed to lease to Austria 4,500 tons of wheat flour (to be returned from Hungary by March 15, 1918) (Gratz and Schuller 1928: 96). The Bavarian government promised to deliver to Vienna 2000 to 3000 freight cars of potatoes (Herwig 1997: 362).

As the situation in Vienna became explosive, the army transferred several divisions of troops to the vicinity of the capital. The Emperor asked the army commanders to work out the plans for establishing the military government in the case of emergency. Most Austrians, however, were determined to avoid violence and possible German intervention. Moderate Socialists called for negotiations with the government and sent a delegation to negotiate with the authorities. The Austrian Prime Minister Seidler handed to delegation a declaration from Czernin who assured the workers that a peace without annexations would soon to be negotiated and food supplies would be expedited. In Hungary Prime Minister Werkele has made similar assurances (Galantai 1989: 278). By January 21, after stormy debates among the Socialists, almost all of the strikers were called back at work and the situation in Vienna and Budapest was normalized (Zeman 1961: 139).

Meantime, the news of the workers unrest reached the Habsburg armed forces. On February 1, 1918, a mutiny began at the Fifth fleet at the naval base in the Gulf of Kotor on the Adriatic Sea. At noon a shot from the flagship signaled the beginning of the mutiny. The band which usually played in the officers' mess at a lunch time, started the Marseillaise. The red flags were hoisted over the ships. Initially, the sailors complained of hunger, cold, lack of clothing and demanded more meat and vegetables in their ration, new uniforms and shoes, less work and drill. When the Rear Admiral Hansa appealed to their duty and the chain of command the sailors yelled that there was no longer chain of command, "We are all equal, we are citizens!" On the next day the mutineers put forward political demands: peace without annexations, democratization of all governments and the right to self-determination. In the rush of events, however, the sailors failed to take control over the system of communications and appeal to other units. The navy command managed to localize the mutiny and call for loyal reinforcements. On



February 3 the Third fleet arrived to Kotor, the coastal artillery fired at the mutinies ships and several ships break away from mutineers. In the end, the mutiny was suppressed, about 800 sailors removed from the ships, dozens were court-marshaled and 4 seamen were executed (Herwig 1997: 364; Plaschka 1985: 346-347; Zeman 1961: 140-141).

The revolt in Kotor was only one of many mutinies that flared up among the Habsburg troops in early 1918. Mutinies erupted in Liepa, Reichenberg, Jičín, and Schönberg in Bohemia and Moravia; in Judenberg in Styria; in Zurawica, Sambo, Cracow, and Bielitz in Galicia; in Lublin, Krasnik, Kielce, Piotrków, and Zamość in Poland; and in Trencsén, Losoncz, Pozsony, and Sajoecség in northern Hungary. About 200,000 of deserters and escaped prisoners of war, so called “green cadres,” operated in Croatia, Bosnia, Slavonia, Galicia and other areas. One of the largest revolts took place in May 1918 in Rumburg, a German town in northern Bohemia, where soldiers, who returned from Russian captivity and have been attached to the new units, mostly Czechoslovaks, refused to obey the orders, captured arms, occupied the town, and looted food and tobacco supplies. The mutiny was suppressed by the reinforcements of the loyal troops. Court-martials were held and ten soldiers were executed (Plaschka 1985: 345-348).

Similarities between the events in Russia in 1917 and Austria-Hungary in 1918 were striking (Zeman 1961: 145). Why did workers’ protests and mutinies in the army and the navy fail to produce an Austrian revolution, similar to the February Revolution a year before in Russia? Several factors worked against that. First, workers’ strikes and army mutinies took place at different time and in different places. Unlike in Russia, protests in the workers quarters and mutinies in the army units did not merge into one revolutionary movement. The ethnic cleavages among workers and soldiers made it difficult to forge strong bonds of revolutionary solidarity. Second, the Habsburg government was able to undertake emergency measures and satisfy or

promise to satisfy workers' demands. Timely assistance from Germany was essential for relieving the food crisis in Vienna. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the Habsburg ruling class and the army retained political unity and did not turn against the monarch and his government. The authorities were able to establish a political dialogue with the moderate labor representatives while radical socialists failed to mobilize mass support among workers.

Although the social unrest of the early 1918 did not culminate in a political upheaval, it nonetheless struck a heavy blow at the corroding political structure of the Dual Empire. The power of Habsburgs was decisively undermined. On the top of the cumulative effect of four years of wartime economic and social disorganization, the mass social disorders in the beginning of 1918 opened a new structural opportunity for national movements at the peripheries of the state. Under pressures of mounting economic and social problems, military setbacks, and coordinated anti-Habsburg campaign on the part of the Allies, the Habsburg Empire began to fall to pieces. The authorities in Vienna and Budapest could not contain class conflict and national strife at the same time.

(4)

The Russian Revolution produced a formidable historical push for political mobilization in the Habsburg Empire. The forces of political opposition, particularly national movements, were inspired by the liberating thrust of the revolution. They readily embraced its ideals, particularly the slogan of national self-determination. The Habsburg rulers, on the other side, were shocked at what had happened to the Russian monarchy and resolved to prevent, as best they could, a similar outcome in Vienna. Because the Tsar's stubborn intransigence proved to be disastrous, the Habsburg government adopted another strategy, a strategy of social and political accommodation. Shanafelt (1985: 119) noted: "The collapse of the regime in Russia was an

example of the fate of any country which stayed in the war beyond the endurance level of its social and economic fabric. The Central Powers were not in much better shape, and the success of the revolution in Russia threatened to radicalize their own discontented lower classes so long as the fighting continued.”

In April 1917, to demonstrate attention to the public opinion and adherence to the democratic institutions, the Emperor Charles decided to reconvene the parliament, the Reichsrat, dismissed in the beginning of the war. He also urged a conservative Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza to extend suffrage and implement welfare measures in the Hungarian part of the Empire. When Tisza began to sabotage electoral reform, he was dismissed by the Emperor. In July Charles declared an amnesty for a large group of previously arrested and imprisoned individuals including leading Czech nationalists (Kramar, Rasin, Klofac and about 1000 others).

The convocation of the Reichsrat unleashed the flood of demands of Czech, South Slav and Ruthenian deputies for political autonomy and federalization of the Habsburg state. The Slovene deputy Korošec, for example, announced: “On the basis of the principle of nationality and of the Croat state rights, we demand the unification of all the lands inhabited by the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs of the monarchy in one autonomous state, free from all foreign domination, ruled in a democratic manner and under the sceptre of the Habsburg dynasty” (cited in Zeman 1961: 128). In earlier times the tone and the substance of such declarations would have been impossible.

The parliamentary debates accentuated the emergent pattern of fragmentation of the Habsburg ruling class along national, rather than political lines. The national elites strove to take control over social discontent and redirect it towards the national objectives. But this national mobilization would not be possible until the Habsburg state was critically weakened by the

wartime crisis. The nationalist movements took initiative and conquered the contested political space only as much as the Imperial state, besieged by the external enemies and undermined by the internal unrest, relaxed its hitherto tenacious grip over the society and relinquished its authority to the national elites.

The Bolshevik revolution in Russia in October and the United States declaration of war on Austria-Hungary in December provided an additional impetus and an ideological support for the oppositional forces. On January 6, 1918, the Czech politicians in Prague issued a famous “Epiphany Resolution” demanding freedom of the Czech nation. The declaration appealed to the nations’ right for self-determination and, characteristically, did not mention the Austro-Hungarian state. As one of the Czech leaders, František Staněk, explained, “We ask for the union of the Czech nation with the Slovaks, in a state enjoying complete... independence and possessing all the attributes of sovereignty.” (May 1966: 675) Again, be such a resolution adopted earlier in war, its authors, without a doubt, would be arrested, convicted, imprisoned, if not executed. But in January 1918 the most what the Austrian Prime Minister Seidler could do was to put it aside as “a fruit of war psychosis” (Zeman 1961: 175).

In summer 1918 the military and political situation in Habsburg domains rapidly deteriorated. The massive German offensive at the Western front failed to achieve its strategic goals. By the early August 1918 the Allies took over the strategic initiative at all major fronts. In mid September the Anglo-French began offensive in the Balkans and in two weeks defeated Bulgaria. The Allied governments recognized the rights of the oppressed Habsburg nationalities for self-determination and lend a full moral and material support to their claims. Politically, the national movements became a vanguard force of the Allies.

In the early October the Austrian government announced its plans of federalization of the Austrian part of the Empire and asked the Allies for an armistice. On October 16, 1918 the Emperor Charles issued an Imperial Manifesto which proposed to transform the Austrian half into a federal state with four components: German, Czech, South Slav, and Ukrainian. It was, however, too late. The Allies rejected the proposed autonomy of Czechoslovak and Southern Slavs people and demanded their full independence. In the end of October the Czechoslovak state was declared in Prague and the Yugoslav state in Zabreb. The new government in Budapest recalled the Hungarian troops from the front, formally abrogating the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise. After almost four centuries of its existence the Habsburg Empire disappeared.

True, the Empire cracked down under the combined force of the powerful international forces outside and the national movements inside but that would not be possible without the massive destructive effect of the Great War. Zeman (1961: 249) notes, "The national movements that eventually rent the state apart had little in common with the radicalism of the pre-war days. They developed in the hot-house conditions generated by the war; they were political mass movements headed by determined, if not always courageous, leaders."

(5)

In contrast to Russia, where the explosion of the revolution in February 1917 caught the rulers and the revolutionaries by surprise, in Austria-Hungary by October 1918 the processes of social and political deterioration were long under way. In the last year and a half of his rule the Emperor Charles essentially presided over a rapidly disintegrating Empire. This begs the same question which we posed in discussing the Russian case: Why did the Habsburg rulers not undertake all possible measures in order to withdraw from the all-European conflict before the war-induced crisis made the collapse of the state inevitable?

Charles and his advisors were well aware of the critical situation in the country. They also realized that the root of the deep economic and political crisis was war and that as long as the war continued the situation would only be worse. In a secret memorandum to the Emperor of April 12, 1917, forwarded to Berlin with an expression of the Emperor's full consent, the Foreign Minister Czernin reported: "It is quite obvious that our military strength is coming to an end... Any further endurance of the sufferings of the war is impossible... in the late summer or in the autumn an end must be put to the war at all costs. If Germany were... to embark on another winter campaign there would be an upheaval in the interior of that country" (Cited in May 1966: 495). He urged, "We are fighting against a new enemy, which is more dangerous than the Entente: international revolution... A quick ending of the war, perhaps at the price of great sacrifice, would give us the opportunity to counter successfully the approaching revolutionary movement" (Cited in Galantai 1989: 234). Czernin repeatedly appealed to the Germans to renegotiate military objectives and elucidate the possible terms of peace.

Foreseeing the coming political upheaval, the Emperor Charles wanted to end the war as soon as possible, with or without Germany. In March 1917 Charles entrusted his brother-in-law Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma (a brother of the Empress Zita), with a secret mission to French President Poincare to negotiate a separate peace with the Entente. In his message Charles promised to advocate Belgian neutrality, to reconstitute Serbia and Albania, to accept Russia's claim to Constantinople, and to recognize the French "just claims" to Alsace and Lorraine (Herwig 1997: 317). As a matter of fact, Germans have not been informed about these far reaching initiatives. The Allies discussed the Habsburg proposals but eventually turned them down because of the objections of the Italians, who entered the war hoping to annex the Habsburg territories and did not want to accept the status quo ante bellum.

Neither Habsburgs' appeals to Germany, nor peace proposals delivered to the Allies, found a receptive audience. This lack of attention reflected a junior Habsburg's status among the Central Powers. By 1917 Austria-Hungary completely depended on Germany in economic, financial and military terms. This dependency made concluding a separate peace impossible for the Habsburg regime. Large portions of the Empire's German and Magyar population insisted on a firm alliance with Germany. Had a separate peace been negotiated, Germans would have stopped supplies of grain and financial assistance, upon which Austria-Hungary was dependent, and thus provoked an immediate economic and political crisis (Shanafelt 1985: 152).

After strikes in January 1918 when the Germans emergency support proved to be essential and after conclusion of peace with Russia in Brest-Litovsk in which Germany played a key role, the dilemma of war versus a separate peace no longer existed; Austria-Hungary became firmly attached to the German expansionist strategy. In spring 1918 Austrians broke off any peace contacts with the Allies and placed all their hopes on the German offensive at the Western front (Shanafelt 1985: 184). In May the Emperor was induced to travel to the German headquarters in Spa and sign a binding treaty stipulating creation of a long-term political alliance, a military agreement and a customs and economic union. The German and Austrian Commanders, Hindenburg and Arz, signed the "Directives for a League of Arms" (*Waffenbund*) in which both sides took obligations to employ all national resources and all able-bodied men for war services, coordinate rules of organization, training and employment, and unify the railroad networks for common use (see Zeman 1961: 160-161). "Prussia has annexed Austria," *London Spectator* announced (May 1966: 721).

By aligning with the German military objectives in the West, Austria-Hungary signed her own death verdict. If until 1918 British and Americans did not exclude the possibility of having

the Habsburgs as a balancing actor in post-war central Europe, after Austrians' attachment to German plans in the West the Allies adopted the course on dismemberment of the Habsburg Empire. In summer 1918 Americans, British and French recognized the émigré national governments and provided their full support to the national movements.

In October 1918, when the national movements gained momentum and the Habsburgs agreed to accept autonomy of Slav nationalities, this no longer satisfied Allied demands. The United States rejected the plan of autonomy and demanded full independence for the new states. In Prague, Zagreb, and Budapest, where the new governments took power and the troops shifted their allegiance to the new centers of power, the Imperial authority meant nothing. The Emperor presided over the Empire which no longer existed.

As Austria-Hungary could not break the alliance with Germany and remained attached to its northern ally until the end, all-out economic war against the powerful Allied coalition shattered the institutions of the multinational Habsburg Empire. Blocked in the center of the Europe and beleaguered by the powerful enemies, the Habsburg state could not survive the combined effect of the deep economic crisis, mass social unrest, fragmentation of the ruling class, and the disintegration of the armed forces.

(6)

If it was Russia that won the race to hunger and revolution, Austria-Hungary was not far behind. In many respects the Habsburg experience in the economic war closely followed the Russia's precedent. Like her major opponent Russia, Austria-Hungary was cut off from outside world and external resources, that could, were they available, compensate economic losses and relieve shortages. Although nationalization of provision and rationing of food prolonged resistance, in the long run they could not resolve the problem. The subsistence crisis undermined



social stability in Austria-Hungary. Workers' strikes and mutinies of the troops in early 1918 almost caused the state to collapse. But the empire survived, primarily because it promptly concluded peace with the defeated Russia and Rumania. The price of this victory was submission to the German expansionist plans in the West. When the German gamble had failed the central authority became completely discredited and incapacitated. Since it could not stop the war, the national minorities, invoking the right of self-determination, decided to leave the failed enterprise. The central government had neither reliable troops nor the determination to stop the collapse. The desperate last-hour reforms only accelerated the disintegration. As soon as the Habsburg Army split into several national fragments, the Empire disintegrated.

## Germany

### (1)

On March 21, 1918, a long-awaited and carefully prepared German offensive "Michael" began at the Western front. In first two days the German troops reached a spectacular success. The overjoyed Kaiser granted schoolchildren a victory holiday and awarded Field Marshal Hindenburg the highest military decoration, the grand Cross of the Iron Cross with Golden Rays (Keegan 1998: 403). However, after initial advances the offensive had slowed down. The Allied forces were pushed back but the front did not collapse. The French and British troops fought for every inch of the French territory. In June, at cost of the heavy losses, the Germans managed to approach the positions they abandoned in September 1914, just about 55 miles east of Paris. But, like in the fall 1914, soon they were forced to withdraw. On July 18, 1918 the Allies began counteroffensive on Marne. Under massive assault of the Allied forces Ludendorff ordered a general retreat. On August 8 a British tank-led assault broke the German defenses near Amiens.

This day became known as the “black day” of the Kaiser’s army. Tens of thousands soldiers deserted and were missing. The balance of forces has shifted decisively in favor of the Allies. Every month 250,000 fresh American doughboys arrived to France while in August alone the German Army lost 228,100 men, 110,000 of them deserted. Ludendorff already had no manpower to balance the Allied superiority. In mid August at the meeting of a Crown Council at Spa an Austrian Emperor Charles asks the Kaiser to end the war. A few days later Wilhelm II conceded: “We are at the end of our capabilities. The war must be ended” (Herwig 1997: 424).

The failure of the German offensive finally became obvious to the military commanders. In a meeting of the Supreme Army Command on September 28, 1918 Ludendorff revealed that the war could not be won. On the next day there arrived the news that Bulgaria, the German Ally, signed an armistice with the Entente and promised to demobilize its army, evacuate Greece and Serbia, and allow the Allies to occupy its territory (Stevenson 2004: 380-381). The Bulgarian defeat became the last drop that forced the commanders to abandon their plans of total victory and revive the almost buried idea of a negotiated peace with the Allies. A critical situation at home did not leave any reasonable alternative. In their secret meeting of September 29 Hindenburg, Ludendorff and the Foreign Minister Admiral von Hintze came to conclusion that “we must forestall an upheaval from below by a revolution from above” (Broue 2005: 130). The military rulers decided to let the moderates form the government, negotiate an armistice and make necessary reforms. That would give a much-needed respite to remobilize the army and resume the war at the appropriate moment. A liberal Prince Max of Baden, known for his pacifist views, was selected a new Chancellor.

Initially it seemed that a staged “revolution from above” proceeded according to the plan. In the early October Prince Max formed the government, which even included two members of

the Social-Democratic Party (the Majority Socialists), and immediately sent President Wilson a note requesting an armistice. However, in a few days it became obvious that the Allies did not intend to let the Germans to prolong the existence of Prussian militarism and the Hohenzollern dynasty. After few diplomatic exchanges President Wilson announced that the conditions of the armistice could not be negotiated until the “military masters and monarchial autocrats” remained in power in Germany. Obviously, this demand was not good news to Hindenberg, Ludendorff, and the Kaiser himself. On October 24, circumventing the Chancellor and the monarch, the High Command issued a proclamation declaring Wilson’s conditions of armistice unacceptable to the army. That was too much even for Wilhelm II. During the meeting with the commanders on October 26 the Kaiser reprimanded Ludendorff that the government should have been consulted before the declaration was made. The exasperated Quartermaster General resigned. On the next day Austria-Hungary appealed for a separate peace with the Allies and broke free from the German alliance.

As the issue of the armistice hung in the air and the war continued, the German High Seas Fleet, which was largely inactive during the war, received the order to launch a sortie against the British coast. The navy commanders who expected that the Allies would demand destruction of the High Fleet and preferred “an honorable death” to a “shameful peace” decided to send the fleet with a suicidal mission against the British Royal Navy (see Horn 1969: Chapter 7). With an armistice in sight sailors did not wish to risk their lives, however. On October 28 mutinies began on several ships: *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, *Grösser Kurfurst*, *König*, *Markgraf*, *Thüringen* and *Helgoland*. The stokers put off the boiler fires while the sailors smashed the anchor windlasses. On October 30 the Commander Admiral von Hipper, confronting massive insubordination on the ships, had to cancel the sortie and call for loyal reinforcements (Watt 1968: 162).

A tense stand-off of the mutinied squadron and the loyal ships on October 31 was resolved by surrender of the two most rebellious vessels, *Thüringen* and *Helgoland*. The rest of the squadron was ordered to go to Kiel where 180 sailors from *Markgraf* were arrested and put in prison upon arrival. As the other sailors learned about the arrests, they decided to free their comrades. On November 3 a large crowd of sailors marched up the narrow streets of Kiel to the naval prison. A company of soldiers blocked their way and when the crowd of sailors approached, fired in the crowd. Nine sailors were shot dead and twenty nine wounded. The next day sailors armed themselves, formed the Kiel Sailors Soviet and took control over the city. The officers were arrested and the red flags hoisted over the ships. The sailors demanded peace, abdication of Hohenzollerns, abolition of the martial law, liberation of political prisoners, and electoral reform. Kiel workers joined sailors. A Majority Socialist Gustav Noske, sent by the government to keep the situation under control, was appointed by sailors a governor of Kiel. Insurgents sent their delegations to Hamburg, Wilhelmshafen, Lübeck, Cuxhaven and other ports (Horn 1969: 224-251, Ryder 1967: 140-142, Watt 1968: 163-169).

The uprising spread rapidly over the German port cities. By November 6, Hamburg, Bremen, Wilhelmshafen, and Cuxhaven fell in the hands of the workers' and soldiers' councils (Carsten 1972: 33-34; Ryder 1967: 142). The next day councils were formed in Hanover, Cologne, Bielefeld, Erfurt, and Brunswick. In Munich a mass anti-war demonstration of workers, soldiers, and sailors, with an Independent Socialist Kurt Eisner as their leader, seized power and formed the revolutionary government of Bavaria, ending at once a one thousand year rule of the Wittelsbach dynasty. The workers and soldiers overthrew a monarch in Württemberg and installed a socialist government in Stuttgart. On November 8, mass strikes and demonstrations reached Leipzig in Saxony (see Ryder 1967: 142-149).

In Berlin the situation was extremely tense and uncertain. The November revolt placed the largest working class party, the Majority Socialists, in a difficult situation. Throughout the war the SDP remained a loyal part of the political class which controlled a large number of seats in the Reichstag and even joined Prince Max's government in October. With the outbreak of Kiel uprising the SDP began losing control over the masses while the more radical Independent Socialists (USDP) and the left group of Spartakists rapidly gained momentum. If radicals won the situation in Berlin the SDP would lose influence among the workers. After futile pleas for the Kaiser's abdication, on November 7 the Social Democrats presented the government with an ultimatum. The central demand was that the Kaiser and the Crown Prince renounce the throne by Saturday afternoon, November 9, or the Social Democrats leave the government and relieve themselves of any responsibility of what might happen. The SDP leader Friedrich Ebert said to Max: "If the Kaiser does not abdicate, the social revolution is inevitable."

31

In the morning November 9 Berlin workers began a general strike and went out to the streets. After learning that the army was not willing to fight the insurgents the Kaiser in the army headquarters in Spa finally signed his abdication. But even before he resigned, in Berlin, in order to prevent violence, Prince Max had announced the monarch's abdication and entrusted authority to the deputation of the Majority Socialists on the conditions that the latter guarantee the public order and convene in due time a National Constituent Assembly. The office of Chancellor was handed to the SDP leader Friedrich Ebert. Huge crowds of people flooded streets of Berlin to celebrate the bloodless victory. Before the Reichstag a Majority Socialist Philipp Scheidemann,

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<sup>31</sup> It was not an exaggeration; the radicals (the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, the Independents, and the Spartakists) planned to launch an uprising in Berlin on November 11 (Carsten 1982: 225).

caught by the enthusiasm of the crowd, proclaimed the German Republic.<sup>32</sup> The SDP and USDP have formed a provisional six-member government called the Council of People's Commissioners (*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*) with three Majority Social Democrats (Ebert, Scheidemann, Landsberg) and three Independent Socialists (Haase, Dittmann, Barth).

The next day an important telephone conversation took place. The First Quartermaster General Groener informed the Chancellor that the High Command recognized the new government as legitimate and assured Ebert in the army's support of the new civilian authority. He also expressed the expectation that government would support the officers in maintaining discipline and order in the army and both authorities would fight together against Bolshevism. With relief Ebert accepted these suggestions. The army and the government thus reached a compromise which was to play the decisive role in future.<sup>33</sup> The prospect of total anarchy, like in Russia, was averted. The next day Wilhelm II departed to Holland for exile.

Why did the German Empire fall? The German crisis of November 1918 represents the greatest challenge to the internalist perspectives of the Imperial collapse. The Imperial Germany was neither weak nor backward. If the Russian wartime collapse can be explained by the abysmal economic and political backwardness of the Tsar's Empire and if the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire can be attributed to the surge of nationalism and national movements, what can explain the breakdown of the German Empire, the Europe's most economically advanced nation and, arguably, the most effective bureaucratic state?

It can be argued that the Kaiserreich collapsed because of the army defeat and thus a thesis of causal heterogeneity across cases would be sustained (e.g., Carsten 1982: 197, 216).

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<sup>32</sup> Two hours later a Spartacist leader Karl Liebknecht hoisted red flag over the royal palace and declared Germany a free socialist republic (Ryder 1967: 153).

<sup>33</sup> This agreement was officially endorsed in the government's statement of November 12 which confirmed authority of the officers and urged soldiers to maintain order and discipline (Ryder 1967: 160).

This argument, however, cannot be accepted. It is important to remember that at the outbreak of the November revolution the German troops still occupied the territory of northern France and Belgium, not to mention vast territories of defeated Russia. It is true that the German army lost a strategic initiative, the American troops began to arrive to Europe in numbers, the German allies (Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary) began defecting from the coalition, and it became painfully obvious for the Army commanders that the war could not be won. But it was not lost either. By November the morale of the German troops was not broken and the Allied forces met stubborn resistance. The British Commander General Haig expressed doubts about rumors of the forthcoming German surrender and talked about possibility of continuing the war for one more year (Offer 1989: 74).

In more general terms, a difficult strategic situation by itself, assuming this was the case, cannot be a sufficient cause of a state breakdown. A critical military situation may instill a spirit of patriotism, national solidarity and remobilize a nation against the common enemy. The history knows a number of such examples; one can just recall France in 1914 and 1918. If this does not happen then a fighting potential of the nation is seriously undermined and one needs examining the factors that make such remobilization impossible. In the case of Germany in 1918, I will argue, these factors were essentially the same as in Russia and Austria-Hungary: an economic collapse, a large-scale social unrest, a crisis in the ruling class, and a mutiny in the armed forces (the navy).

(2)

Although the collapse began as a “general strike of the army” joined by workers which led to the shift of a large segment of the political class (SDP) to the side of insurgents, it is impossible to explain the causes of the crisis in isolation from the general socio-economic

situation in the country. The collapse started in the navy but the revolutionary impulse did not emerge in the army ranks. The army registered the major anti-war upheaval that took place in the whole society. As Deist (1996: 205-206) put it, the mutiny at the fleet was only the “tip of the iceberg.”

Like her major protagonist, Russia, and the main ally, Austria-Hungary, Germany was placed under conditions of economic blockade which undermined her capacity of drawing resources, including provision, from the overseas. The domestic opportunities of increasing production and compensating the loss of imports were limited. Due to conscription of about sixty percent of agricultural producers (men) to the army and loss of imported fertilizers and fodder it was not possible to produce enough food. The level of cereals production fell from 100 percent in 1913 to 72 percent in 1916, to 54 percent in 1917, and to 53 percent in 1918 (calculated from Stubbs 2002: 112-114).

Like in other nations under blockade, Russia and Austria-Hungary, a massive subsistence crisis struck German cities in the winter 1916-17. By that time bread was already in short supply. But the real bad news was a catastrophic shortage of potatoes which traditionally made a large portion of the German diet, particularly among working class population. Because of the cold, wet autumn, and spread of phytophthora, a 1916 harvest of potatoes was disastrous, only a half of normal. In some cities potatoes disappeared for long periods of time. As turnip became a common substitute of potato in the German diet, the winter 1916-17 came to be known as the “turnip winter” (Chickering 1998).

The quality of most war food was extremely poor. Various *ersatz* (substitute) products replaced the habitual diet. Ersatz bread (*K-brot*) made with large addition of potato flour became a staple food of Germans. Coffee was made of tree bark, pepper contained 85 percent ash, milk



and beer were diluted by water. The Prussian authorities promulgated a circular stating that young crows were a good meat substitute and had a pleasant taste (Carsten 1982: 42). By the end of the war there were about 11,000 ersatz foods, including 800 items of meatless sausage (Chickering 1998: 45). Consumers deplored substitutes. An Australian woman, Ethel Cooper, who happened to be in Leipzig during the war, suspected that sausages contained rat. Her friend responded, “Oh I don’t mind *rat*... but I have a real horror of rat *substitute!*” (Cited in Offer 1989: 54)

As war continued the daily struggles for food became bitter. Davis (2000: 180-181) vividly depicts one of such episodes: “Asta Nielsen, newly arrived in Berlin from Denmark, described her horror when a skeleton horse collapsed in the street. “In an instant, as though they had been lying in ambush, women armed with kitchen knives stormed out of the apartment buildings and fell upon the cadaver. They screamed and hit one another to get the best pieces, as the steaming blood sprayed their faces. As latecomers arrived to collect remaining blood in cups, the women disappeared as quickly as they had come, “pressing the conquered lumps of meat to their breasts” and leaving only some bones behind.”

Incidents like this were not surprising given the meager official rations. In early 1917 workers in Berlin and other major cities were allotted 1,100-1,350 calories per day (Offer 1989: 29). In the cities located in rich agricultural area, like Bonn in Rheinland, the workers received a slightly higher average rations, about 1,420 calories (calculated from Offer 1989: 30). These numbers were comparable to those in Petrograd (from 1,050 to 1,700 calories) (Sorokin 1975:

269) and surpassed only those in the hunger-struck Vienna (830-1,300 calories) (Healy 2004: 45).<sup>34</sup>

Like in Russia, the hardships and malnutrition of poor population provoked food riots and other public disturbances. Widespread food riots (*Aufläufe*) started in October 1915 and grew larger and more frequent thereafter. Usually such riots began in large queues for food in which consumers, mostly working class and low-middle class women, waited for their rations (danced the “polonaise,” as Berliners joked). Like in Russia these lines soon became conduits of information, centers of collective organization and the most inflammable locales of social protests. The frequent expressions of public anger usually were directed against local authorities and profiteers. The authority and police observed growing queues with almost paranoid fear (Carsten 1982, Davis 2000).

On April 16 1917, in response to the announcement of reduction in weekly bread rations the day before, spontaneous mass strikes and large demonstrations of workers began simultaneously in Berlin, Leipzig, Danzig, Magdeburg, Halle and Braunschweig (Morgan 1975: 83). Only in Berlin about 217,000 workers went on strike (Feldman 1966: 337). At least a half of all strikers were women (Davis 2000: 202). The laborers protested against scarcity of food and demanded improvements in food supplies. Everywhere, except for Leipzig, workers’ demands were strictly economic. The Majority Socialists stayed out of the strike while efforts of the Independent Socialists to politicize the strike turned out to be unsuccessful. After appeal to the

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<sup>34</sup> Official rations made about two thirds of the actual consumption rates. In 1918 workers in Leipzig, for instance, were allotted 1,280 calories per head but the actual number of calories consumed was 1,900 calories (Offer 1989: 52). The difference was made up by the food purchased at the black market, produced at the garden plots, or obtained during provision trips to the countryside (*Hamsterfahrt*).

workers from Hindenburg and a promise of Food Commissar Michaelis to improve food ration, most strikers decided to return to work.

In August a smaller but a far more ominous incident of a food riot took place. On August 2, 1917, in protest against poor food rations and mistreatment by the officers, about 600 hundred members of a crew of the battleship *Prinzregent Luitpold* disembarked from the ship and went protesting in Wilhelmshaven. The next day they have been joined by sailors from the cruiser *Pillau* and other ships. The Navy commanders called for police and declared *Prinzregent Luitpold* under siege. When sailors returned to their ships their leaders were arrested. The investigation revealed that the leaders of mutineers kept connections with the radical pacifists from the USDP (the Independent Socialists) and formed a network of clandestine Socialist organizations in the Navy. Many sailors were sentenced to long prison terms while two ringleaders, Max Reichpietsch and Albin Köbis, received a death sentence and were executed by a firing squad (Broue 2005: 99-100, Horn 1969: 167).

In 1918 the economic and social conditions at the home front continued to deteriorate. The hardships and privations of the fourth winter under the state of siege took the situation to the final strain. Cold, exhaustion, war weariness, malnutrition, and epidemics plagued the German cities and the countryside. Germany was living in a state of permanent internal crisis (Feldman 1966: 443). It became increasingly apparent that the dismal economic conditions cannot be improved until the war is ended and the democratic reforms implemented. In 1918 workers protests became focused at political, not economic demands.

On January 28, 1918, in response to the appeal of the Independent Socialists, Berlin workers went on strike. By January 30, about 350,000 workers in nearly all major Berlin factories lowered their tools. In contrast to the labor protests of April 1917 centered about the

economic issues, in January 1918 workers put forward a seven-point program including the broad range of political and economic demands: peace without annexations or indemnities, representation of workers at the peace negotiations with Russia, improvement of the food supply, termination of the state of siege, end of the military control at the factories, release of all political prisoners, and democratization of the state including equal and universal suffrage in Prussia. An eleven-member “Workers Council” chaired by Richard Müller, a leader of the Berlin shop-stewards, was organized. The Majority Socialists, the largest working class party, were caught by surprise but eventually decided to support the workers’ legitimate demands. The protests quickly spread to Hamburg, Halle and Magdeburg (Feldman 1966: 449). On February 1 first incidents of violence between workers and tram drivers, who refused to strike, were reported in Berlin: “trams were overturned, electric wires cut, police stoned at (including one killed) and many government officials stoned in the streets” (Herwig 1997: 379).

In the beginning the government was willing to discuss economic matters with trade unions but categorically refused negotiating political matters with the Workers Council. As violence erupted in Berlin the authorities became resolved to suppress the conflict by the military force. The War Minister von Stein announced that the government would not “tolerate Soviets on the Russian model” (Herwig 1997: 380). Ludendorff demanded arrest of the strike leaders. Four army battalions were sent to support police in restoring the order. Workers meetings were banned, seven of the most important munitions factories were militarized, from 3,500 to 6,000 workers, including Müller, were drafted into the army or navy, leaders of the strike were arrested and court-marshaled. By February 4, after a week of disorders, the strike was suppressed by the army (Feldman 1966: 450-451).

Like a mass labor movement of early 1918 in Austria-Hungary, the social unrest in Germany did not result in a political upheaval. The discontent and anti-war ideology of the radical working class organizations did not spread to the middle class or the German ruling elite. Forced to take a stand, the leaders of the Majority Social Democrats, the largest working class party, decided to support the strikers' demands but did not turn against the policies of the government or the monarch. Most importantly, labor radicalism did not undermine the unity and discipline of the army, the mainstay of the Prussian state (Carsten 1982: 136). Unlike in Russia, the army did not take the side of the protesters. The isolated mutinies were suppressed. In February 1918 Hindenburg and Ludendorff succeeded in suppression and subjugation of the working class.

Because the state subordinated the society and the army subordinated the state, the breakdown of the state could only be possible with a breakup of the military institution. Only powerful external factors could weaken and delegitimize the army institution. German military defeats at the Western front in summer and autumn of 1918 were the crucial events that triggered the breakdown of the state. Once the authority of the Supreme High Command was undermined, the social protests became uncontrollable. Under pressure of the popular revolutionary upheaval, Majority Social Democrats, who constituted an influential and hitherto loyal part of the political class, were forced to withdraw from the social truce and turn against the monarch. Given the scale of the November uprising, the military suppression was ruled out of question. Once the monarch lost support of the army he was forced to resign.

(3)

Like the collapse of the Russian autocracy a year and a half before, the breakdown of the Imperial structure in Germany initiated processes of socio-economic, administrative and military

disintegration. The economic situation after the November revolution was extremely difficult. Despite the armistice concluded in November 1918, the Allied blockade continued and the economic crisis prolonged. Factories closed, industrial production fell, railroads came to standstill, unemployment soared, coal and food shortages plagued the German cities. Because military production stopped, the workers were left without work. The radical labor organizations put forward demands of nationalization of industries. The government appointed a special commission on socialization headed by Kautsky. On the top of that, the authorities had deal with thousands of soldiers and officers demobilized after conclusion of the armistice.

The new government, however, managed to prevent the radical socialization of industry on the Russian model promoted by the radical socialists. An agreement concluded between the industrial magnate Hugo Stinnes and the leader of the SDP-affiliated Free Trade Unions Carl Legien on November 15, 1918 played the key role in deradicalization of workers' demands. Employers accepted eight hour day and renounced company unions. They also had to agree on labor-management councils not only on plant level (that were instituted during the war) but also on a regional and a national level constructing thus a pyramid of labor-management councils from local level up to the national level. In March the government agreed to include provisions of the factory-council system in a new constitution. Along with a political pact between Ebert and Groener, the economic agreement of Stinnes and Legien laid the foundation of the social-corporate framework of the Weimar Republic (Maier 1975: 57, 64).

Another acute problem which Ebert's government confronted was a political and territorial disintegration of the state. In the days of November a multitude of the workers and soldiers councils established their authority in the German states. Some of them recognized the authority of the Ebert's government while some did not. A number of councils supported a quasi-

alternative center of power, a twenty-eight-member “Executive Council (*Vollzugsrat*) of the Berlin Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils” established by the revolutionary workers and soldiers on November 10, 1918. The *Vollzugsrat* sought to direct and control the Ebert’s government in the way like the Petrograd Soviet controlled and supervised the work of the Provisional government in Russia. While a Russian-type dual power did not fully emerge in Germany, the activities of the Executive Council undermined legitimacy of the Ebert’s government. The local revolutionary councils created their own military and police formations that established their own order in the cities that the revolutionaries controlled.

In the early January 1919 the confrontation between the moderate and the radical Socialists over control of police in Berlin culminated in a violent conflict. On January 3, 1919 the President of Berlin police Emil Eichhorn, a left-wing Independent Socialist, was dismissed by the Prussian state government which intended to consolidate its power in the capital. Eichhorn refused to resign and appealed to the Independent Socialists. On January 6 a general strike began and a massive workers’ demonstration went on the streets of Berlin. The insurgents occupied several ministries, newspapers and telegraph. By January 8 the Ebert’s government controlled only few buildings in the center of Berlin. Ebert and his supporters were barricaded in the Reich Chancellery. The Minister of Defense Noske managed to flee the capital to a suburb Dahlem, from where he hoped to prepare an assault on the revolutionaries (Watt 1968: 254-258).

The fate of the state depended on the position of the army. After the November uprising the army became the focal point of political controversies (see Ryder 1967: 184-187). The commanders could not longer rely on loyalty of troops in dealing with domestic disturbances. The “Christmas Eve Battle” in Berlin in which the Imperial army failed dismally to disarm revolutionary sailors of the People’s Naval Division who arrived from Kiel to “protect” the

socialist government showed that regular troops were unreliable and the new formations were necessary to deal with domestic disorder. In December 1918 the first volunteer corps of ex-servicemen willing to serve the Provisional government and fight the revolution were formed. In early days of January 1919 several thousand troops, soon to be known as the *Freikorps*, marched to the vicinity of Berlin.

When the Ebert's government seemed hung in the air, the Freikorps went in action. On January 11, 1919 the *Freikorps* mobilized by Noske began marching to the center of the city. On the night of January 11 to 12 they captured the Berlin police headquarters. On January 12 the Freikorps reestablished control of most of Berlin and began operations against the revolutionaries. The Revolutionary Shop Stewards called off the strike. The authorities began arrests among revolutionaries. On January 15 Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were arrested and killed by the Freikorps (Broue 2005: 256).

The suppression of the revolutionary uprising in Berlin signaled beginning of counter-revolutionary onslaught on the Councils in other German cities. In early February the Freikorps attacked Bremen. They dispersed the Bremen Council of Workers and Soldiers and reestablished the authority of Majority Socialists. Within several days other ports cities, Hamburg, Wilhelmshaven, Cuxhaven, and Bremerhaven were occupied by the Freikorps (Watt 1968: 299). Then Freikorps moved to the Ruhr area and suppressed the workers' strike in Ruhr. In early March the Freikorps pacified the radical stronghold in Saxony, Halle. In early May the Freikorps began their march on Munich and in two days freed the city from Communists and Independents who controlled the capital of Bavaria since the early November. The Majority Socialists returned to power in Munich.



Confronting massive political challenge from the radical left the Provisional Government could not afford procrastinating with the elections to the National Assembly. The Russian lesson was too instructive. The elections to the National Assembly took place in January 19, when a political situation was far from normalization. The elections brought success to the SDP which won 39 percent of the vote. But the most impressive accomplishment of the new regime was the fact that 85 percent of all German voters took part in the elections and thus expressed their support of the new government.

On February 6, 1919 the National Assembly convened in the Weimar's New National Theatre under protection of the Freikorps. Initially the Assembly agreed to adopt a temporary constitution of the Republic. Freidrich Ebert was elected a President. The new coalitional government with Phillip Scheidemann of the SDP as a Chancellor was formed. The final version of the Weimar constitution was adopted on July 31, 1919. With adoption of the Weimar Constitution the period of the state breakdown ended.

(4)

It is impossible to understand the breakdown of the German Empire outside the context of the total war in which the Empire was involved and, as some historians argue, it essentially initiated (Fischer 1967, 1975). The breakdown of the Kaiserreich, like collapse of Russian and Austria-Hungarian Empires, took place during the war and was caused by the war. The major difference of the German case was a much greater economic and administrative effectiveness of the German military-bureaucratic state which could stay in the war longer than other East European monarchies. That feature also invested a much greater role in "agency" than "structure" in the German case. If the Russian February Revolution "from below" was leaderless

and spontaneous, the German revolution “from above” was an outcome of many rational and premeditated strategic decisions taken by various agents in the time of crisis.

The role of the German military-bureaucratic elite was pivotal in initiating the change. When the 1918 spring-summer offensive failed, the risk of the defeat, revolution and collapse of the monarchy became serious. No matter how reactionary military rulers were they were not without intelligence and cold foresight. The balance of forces at the Western front, thanks to Americans, shifted to the Allies. The morale of the German army rapidly fell (Deist 1996). In the rear people starved while the Independent Socialists and the Spartakists harangued masses for strikes and demonstrations. The Bolshevik Revolution and the civil war in Russia provided the most vivid illustration of what might have happen if the timely and drastic measures to stop the war were not taken.

The critical economic and political situation in the country forced the rulers to choose between the two possible evils: “revolution from above” or “revolution from below.” The latter option meant the power of the commissars, requisitions, nationalization, persecution of the privileged classes, red terror, and civil war. Understandably the rulers opted for the lesser evil, the “revolution from above.” Hindenburg and Ludendorff wished to transfer power to the moderate opposition, let it conclude the armistice and make necessary reforms. That would give a necessary time to regroup forces and regain the power.

The rulers miscalculated in two points. First, they did not foresee that the Allies would demand the whole overhaul of the political regime as a condition for negotiating an armistice. That implied abdication of the Kaiser and resignation of the Supreme Army Command. Feldman (1966: 515) noted that Ludendorff “expected Foch to behave like an eighteenth century general and grant an armistice permitting both sides to remain on the existing battle lines.”

Second, the rulers underestimated the depth of the economic crisis and the explosive potential of the working class. They assumed that the traditional representative of the German working class, the SDP, still controlled the overwhelming majority of the masses. But it did not. When it appeared that the war would continue, large segments of workers shifted their sympathies from the SDP to the Radical Left, the USDP (Independent Socialists) and the Spartakists. To keep up with this political realignment the SDP had to move to the left as well. Eventually Ebert and his comrades had to join masses in their demand of abdication of the Kaiser which initially was not the SDP leaders' best option.

When it appeared that a spontaneous mass insurgence was under way and it was not possible to suppress it, the Kaiser abdicated and the Socialist government was installed. The Radical Left supported by the Soviet Russia tried to seize the power but the political agreement between Ebert and Groener prevented the total state breakdown of the Russian kind. The Communist takeover was avoided and the capitalist order was saved only by a slight margin. But for choosing the lesser evil the ruling elite had to pay a very high price.

Internally, because the SDP became a major political force, the ruling elite had to concede to the institutions of the corporate welfare state to which it apparently did not have any sympathy. The operations of free market were severely curtailed while collective bargaining and the nation-wide system of the labor-management councils was instituted and legitimized in the Weimar constitution. The SDP introduced a far-reaching social program extending welfare provisions and workers rights. In the corporate state all major decisions had to be reached by the bargain of the industry, workers, and the state while political parties in the parliament simply ratified agreements reached by these actors.

The external price for avoiding social revolution was even higher. On June 28, 1918, Germany was induced to sign the Versailles treaty. According to the Treaty Germany lost thirteen percent of its territory including Alsace and Lorraine, colonial possessions, and the mercantile fleet. The Treaty stipulated reduction of the German army to 100,000 servicemen, destruction of its navy, no air force was permitted, the Rhineland was to be permanently demilitarized. Germany had to pay immense reparations to the Allies. According to Keynes (2004 [1919]: 231-232) the burden of reparations imposed on Germany was unbearable and therefore unrealistic. But the German government did not have an alternative. It had to sign the Treaty because otherwise the war would resume and the nation no longer had the strength to fight it.

In the perception of the military rulers the nation was defeated because it was undermined by the internal enemy, or “stabbed in the back.” But the truth was that the four years of the total war of attrition undermined the economic and fighting potential of the nation. The soldiers and the population in the home front did not want the war anymore. Germany had lost an economic war and had to submit to the will of the victors.

(5)

Germany provides a paradigmatic case of a wartime state breakdown due to an economic collapse and a massive subsistence crisis. The key difference of the Kaiserreich from Russia and Austria-Hungary was that the German military-bureaucratic state was much stronger and more administratively effective than the corrupt and inactive Russia’s autocracy or the embattled on all fronts Dual Monarchy of Habsburgs. By the end of the war the military-bureaucratic dictatorship of Hindenburg and Ludendorff succeeded in suppression and subjugation of the working class and marginalizing political opposition. Therefore, the breakdown of the state could only be

possible with a breakup of the military institution. German military defeats at the Western front in summer and autumn of 1918 were the crucial events that triggered the processes of disintegration. Once the authority of the Supreme High Command was undermined, the social protests became uncontrollable. The anti-war uprising began in the Navy but soon it was supported by workers and the impoverished, war-weary civilian population. Under pressure of the popular revolutionary upheaval, Majority Social Democrats, who constituted an influential and hitherto loyal part of the political class, were forced to withdraw from the social truce and turn against the monarch. Given the scale of the November uprising and the predicament of the army, the military suppression was ruled out of question. Once the monarch lost support of the army, he was forced to resign. The provisional government of Ebert, like one in Russia of 1917, confronted the formidable political challenge from the radical left. However, the total collapse of the state, like one in Russia, was prevented by agreement between the new government and the military command. In the early 1919, by relying on assistance of paramilitary formations (the Freikorps) the government was able to suppress the radical revolutionary forces, recentralize the German state, adopt a new Constitution, and lay institutional foundations of new economic and political system. As a consequence of defeat and a price for averted social revolution, Germans had to accept the provisions of the Versailles Treaty which could be acceptable for a large portion of the German population only as long as the weakened state was susceptible to internal social unrest and external constraints enforced by the victorious Allies.

## France

## (1)

In December 1916, after two years of the bloodshed and exhaustion of trench warfare at the Western front the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army General Joseph Joffre was relieved of his duties. A “Papa” Joffre, a savior of the nation in the Battle of Marne, was replaced by General Robert Nivelle, whose brisk and unexpected success under Verdun where in October 1916 French troops recaptured forts Vaux and Douaumont revived a taste for attack and the hope for a quick victory. In this battle Nivelle applied a brilliant tactical innovation which broke the German defenses. He concentrated the French heavy artillery along a narrow front and launched the artillery barrage rolling continuously before the charging infantry (Keegan 1998: 322-323; Smith et al 2003: 117-118).

After his appointment a Commander-in-Chief Nivelle compiled a plan of a massive offensive on a large German salient at Chemin des Dames, a ridge near the Aisne River. This offensive was thought to bring about a long awaited rupture in the German defenses. Nivelle was confident and full of optimism; all cautions and reservations about the plan were ignored. Meantime, the Germans secretly withdrew their forces from the salient for about 40 kilometers east, to the carefully prepared Hindenburg Line and arranged a “defense in depth” leaving the French only a devastated landscape. When the offensive began on April 16, 1917, the advancing French infantry, knees in the freezing water and under cold rain mixed with snow and sleet, approached the new German positions, they were met with the wall of fire from the German artillery and machine guns. The French troops suffered heavy casualties; in two weeks of fighting they lost 147,000 soldiers including 29,000 killed. Nivelle could not believe that his

“rolling barrage” was a one-time trick and kept pushing the troops forward (Smith et al 2003: 118-119).

A first mutiny among the French troops began in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 18<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment on April 29. The battalion had been at the forefront of attack and lost two thirds of its troops. The remnants of the troops expected to be transferred to the Alsace front where the battalion would recover from its terrible losses. But on April 29, less than two weeks after it had been pulled out of the battle, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was ordered back to the front. Soldiers refused point blank to march. After several hours, the battalion commander, accompanied by a platoon of military police, managed to restore the order. The ringleaders were arrested. All instigators were sentenced to imprisonment except for five men who were sentenced to death. Four soldiers have been executed and one managed to escape (Watt 1963: 178-179).

This was only a beginning, however. During May and June 1917 mutinies spread through half of all French divisions. Most commonly, a mutiny in a given battalion or regiment involved a blank refusal at the embarkation points to take up positions in the front lines (Smith 1997: 144). Soldiers also demanded higher pay, more leaves, and better food. In some units soldiers elected councils of deputies, similar to the soldiers’ councils in the Russia (Smith 1994: 182; Watt 1963: 185-186). Many cases of collective indiscipline took place in the units that did not participate in the Chemin des Dames offensive (Smith 1994: 182). The total number of mutineers reached from 25,000 to 30,000 thousand (Smith et al 2003: 122).

As the offensive collapsed, the advance halted, the casualties grew, and the mutinies spread over the army, Nivelle resigned, and a new Commander-in-Chief, Philippe Pétain, was entrusted with a task of restoring the order among the troops. As one of his first measures, Pétain promised no major attacks in future. Instead he introduced a strategy of the “defense in depth”

(in fact borrowed from Germans) according to which most of troops concentrated in the second and third lines of defense. He also agreed to have more leaves and longer recover periods in rest camps. Of course, mutinies in wartime could not be left unpunished. In summer and autumn 1917, 3,427 soldiers were court-marshaled, 554 sentenced to death and 49 actually executed. By October 1917, Petain succeeded in eliminating mutinies among the troops (Keegan 1998: 331).<sup>35</sup>

The mutinies of 1917 constituted the most significant challenge to internal peace in any of the victorious powers (Smith 1997: 144). Why did the mutinies of May-June 1917, which spread in a half of the all French divisions, not turn into a large-scale rebellion, like February Revolution of 1917 in Russia or November 1918 uprising in Germany? Three structural elements of explanation can be identified.

First, the “zone of the army” and the “zone of the rear” were strictly isolated in France. In Russia the mutiny began in the Petrograd garrison. In Germany the mutiny of sailors started in Kiel. In both countries soldiers and sailors rapidly intermixed with workers, students and other civilians. In France disorders in the army were separated from social unrest at the home front. The army command kept the tightest possible secrecy about disturbances among troops and kept civilians, particularly politicians and journalists, away from the front as much as possible. Mutineers had made numerous efforts to seize trains and ride to Paris but these efforts have never been successful (Watt 1963: 198).

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<sup>35</sup> Given the scope of insubordination the French leaders became convinced that the armies would have to postpone any major assaults against the Germans until July 1918, when a million American troops would be available. Commanders counted upon a policy of a year’s delay and rehabilitation, during which time the French army could be equipped with airplanes, heavy artillery, tanks, and poison gas. By the time the Americans arrived in the promised numbers, the French army would be rested, its morale restored, and enough materiel accumulated to launch a final offensive with the Allies (King 1951: 170-171).



Second, separate mutinies were spontaneous and unorganized. They never coalesced into a one large rebellion. The objectives of mutineers were strictly local and military; it was more a professional military strike than an uprising (Pedroncini 1967, but see Smith 1994). The mutinied units were dispersed at the large territory along the frontline. The rioting units have never had a chance to establish links of communication with each other. The military authorities were able to deal with each case of insubordination separately.

Third, economic disorganization and social unrest at home did not reach the level of calamity, characteristic of Russia, Germany, or Austria-Hungary. Were the urban disturbances in France as great as in Russia, the government would be forced to use troops for suppression. Given conditions of the army it might have been possible that the troops would take the side of the civilian protesters. However, civilian protest in Paris and other French cities did not take the scope that would make intervention of troops necessary.

(2)

Why did civilians hold out? Like in the other belligerent nations the economic factor was most important.<sup>36</sup> France provides a perfect example of how a war-induced provision-supply crisis does not lead necessarily to a social explosion if the nation is able to compensate domestic decline by massive imports of foods.

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<sup>36</sup> Becker (1985: 326) points to the role of an ideological factor: "What, then, was the real explanation of French steadfastness? Without a doubt, it lay in the intellectual, spiritual and political leadership of the people; a near consensus, whether among teachers – except for a very small minority – or clergymen, or writers, existed when it came to the need to defend their country, and even though some writers felt an aversion to heroic and chauvinistic presentations of the war, and described its horrors with great realism, they never questioned the need for French participation." This explanation does not suffice. One should not diminish steadfastness and determination of civilians in other belligerent nations. Besides it is difficult to compare social-psychological qualities of the populations placed under different material conditions. Becker himself (1985: 325-326) acknowledges, "On the whole, the material circumstances of the French were not too unpleasant during the war. Not that people did not grumble, occasionally react violently or feel an almost permanent sense of anxiety: the farmers complained about the lack of labour, and many workers were housed in lamentable conditions, especially in industrial centers with their vast influx of new inhabitants. Nevertheless, national and local authorities – some with greater skill and efficiency than others – tried to ensure that material conditions did not deteriorate to the point of threatening serious breakdown."

Like in Germany, dislocations of the war brought about a steep decline in French agriculture. Due to mobilization of large number of agricultural workers and occupation of northern part of the country, French agricultural production dropped significantly. The total cereals production fell from 100 percent in 1913 to 82 percent in 1916 and to 60 percent in 1917. Between 1914 and 1917, wheat production, for example, declined from 7.7 million tons to 3.7 million tons million tons, representing thus the greatest relative loss among all major European nations (see Ferguson 1999: 252; Stubbs 2002: 112-114).

Like in Berlin, the first indications of wheat shortage appeared in Paris already in early 1915, when pre-war supplies of grain became exhausted. To relieve the capital, the military authorities began requisitioning supplies in the countryside. This practice, however, provoked protests of peasants, merchants and local authorities and was eventually suspended (Godfrey 1987: 84).

How was it possible? The answer is simple. France was able to make up her losses by massive imports of food. In October 1915 the government was authorized to purchase grain and flour from abroad and was provided with necessary funding. Already in 1916 the total grain purchase from Canada, Australia, Argentina and other countries reached almost 2.4 million tons (Augé-Laribé and Pinot 1927: 189). At the end of 1917 France imported almost as much as 640,000 tons of foodstuffs a month (Hardach 1977: 132).<sup>37</sup>

As a result, the norms of consumption were higher in France than among other major continental European countries. When the bread ration was introduced in late 1917, it was

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<sup>37</sup> Although massive imports of food did not compensate all losses, the situation with provision in Paris still was notably better than in Berlin, Vienna, or Petrograd. The government was able to rely on market mechanisms in allocation of food and resorted to administrative measures only in the end of the war. Until the very end of the war the restriction of food consumption was due to price increase rather than rationing. The state monopoly of grain was announced only in November 1917 and rationing of bread began as late as June 1918.

established at the level of 600 g for workers and 400 g for other consumers; in 1918 both scales were reduced to 500 g. and 300 g. respectively, that is remained almost twice as high as in Germany and Austria-Hungary (Hardach 1977: 132). In March 1918 at the conference in Paris the Allied powers adopted a minimum of 3,300 purchased calories as the rationing standard (Godfrey 1987; 181).

Barnett (1985: 183) commented: “Out of fear that the people would revolt, the French authorities made no attempt to stop the rural population hoarding their produce and did not enforce restrictions placed on consumption in the towns. Colonel House, assessing the position for Wilson, noted that ‘dinners are given in Paris that would be a scandal in America, not to mention England’, and remarked on the general atmosphere of normality in the areas he visited.”

(3)

Because living conditions in French cities during the war were better than in other large continental cities (Bonzon and Davis 1997), industrial conflicts did not acquire such immense scope and intensity like in the hunger-stuck Petrograd, Vienna, and Berlin. Most labor disputes remained sectoral and local, not nationwide, and were centered about wages and working conditions.

The major surge of labor conflicts began in April and reached its peak in June 1917 when strikes spread across the country and continued intermittently in the working districts of Paris and other cities. Labor conflicts began among female workers in the fashion industry, the so-called *midinettes*, but soon spilled to metalworking, munitions factories and other industries. The total number of strikers reached 100,000; a number twice as low as in Berlin in April 1917. The strikers’ protests were almost exclusively economic (low pay, overwork, supervisors’ abuse), not political. Although there were a plenty of reasons for discontent among laborers, no one

anticipated a revolutionary uprising (Becker 1985: 235). Christine Morel commented: “The strikes reflected the moral and physical fatigue of working men and working women; they did not reflect the birth of a revolutionary spirit” (Cited in Becker 1985: 211).

In early 1918 another wave of strikes which involved about one million of workers spread in Loire, Haute-Loire, Rhône, Montluçon, Bourges, Dijon and Paris. This time the challenge of the labor movement was more serious because trade union made attempts to coordinate the strike campaign at the national level. However by end of February the peak of strikes passed and the danger of rebellion was averted. Again, the workers protested but few of them wanted a revolution.

Besides better provision there were structural reasons for relative labor passivity. From seventy five to eighty percent among strikers were women. Most militant male workers of the age cohort from 20 to 40 were called to colors. Large groups of immigrant laborers were brought to France from colonies. A severe military regime was established in the munitions factories. Together these factors led to decrease in traditional working class solidarity. Although some labor agitation continued in April and May, it did not result in a serious political upheaval. Thus, the social protests in France in 1917-18 did not reach the scope which would lead to a state breakdown or social revolution.

(4)

What about the third determinant of state breakdown, a split in the political class? Until mid 1917 the political contestation among the French ruling class did not go beyond the normal wrangles and controversies. The focal point of these controversies was division of responsibilities between the civilian and military authorities during the war (see King 1951). However the May-June 1917 crisis in the army stirred up a major political turmoil. The

politicians wished to know who was responsible for the mutinies in the army and urban disorders. During the parliamentary hearings in early July scathing criticism was directed against the government and the high command. In their turn, the commanders blamed the subversive elements in the rear, socialists and pacifists in particular.

In summer and fall 1917 the public morale reached the lowest point. In Paris, a scandal around German subsidies for the radical left newspaper *La Bonnet Rouge* had given a start to a wave of scandals among political elite. On the military front, trench warfare did not show any sign of ending. The Italian disaster in Caporetto brought about a painful disillusionment. On the top of all this the news came that the Russian Bolsheviks, whose pro-German orientation was well known, seized power in Petrograd.

Fortunately the French still possessed the last trump. A fierce nationalist and seasoned politician, a seventy-six-year-old Georges Clemenceau, nicknamed for his energy and temperament the Tiger, was appointed Prime Minister in November 1917. He became the embodiment of a new national consensus and a hope for spiritual remobilization.

Clemenceau's political program was simple. In his response to the interpellation in the parliament he proclaimed, "I wage war!... In domestic policies, I wage war. In foreign policies, I wage war. Always, everywhere, I wage war... Russia has betrayed us, and I continue to wage war. Unhappy Romania has been forced to capitulate, but I still wage war... And I shall continue to wage war until the last quarter of an hour!" (Clemenceau 1917: 215).

In 1918 Clemenceau established a de facto "neo-Jacobine dictatorship" (Smith et al 2003: 139). All major decision were discussed and adopted in a small circle, the government only approved these decisions. The prime minister obtained authorization to enact economic legislation without parliamentary approval, by a simple decree. Clemenceau suppressed

opposition and trade unions. He used police, spies, dossiers. The radical and pacifist newspapers were ruthlessly censored. Clemanceau's political enemies from socialist-pacifist camp, Malvy and Caillaux, were deprived of parliamentary immunity, arrested and imprisoned.

Did these controversies indicate an irrevocable split or a crisis of the political class? The answer is negative. In fact a concept of a split in elite, when applied to a democratic polity like France, is inaccurate because in such polity the political class is inevitably divided and contentious. True, in France politicians attacked incompetent policies of the government. But they did not challenge the *union sacree* in their common cause against the enemy. Nor they challenged the legitimacy of the republican political regime. Although pacifist slogans had enough sympathetic audience they did not find large mass following because people were concerned primarily with their everyday economic needs, food, coal, housing.

(5)

To sum up, in contrast to the blockaded nations, France did not suffer the catastrophic shortage of food. Food shortages in Paris – simply a less varied and less attractive form of the pre-war diet – were scarcely comparable with the chronic malnutrition prevalent in Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary (Bonzon and Davis 1997). Until the very end of the war the restriction of food consumption was due to price increase rather than rationing. Maintenance of an adequate provision became possible because French were able to compensate their losses of domestic foodstuffs by massive imports. Because living conditions in French cities during the war were better than in other large continental countries, industrial conflicts did not acquire such immense scope and intensity like in the hunger-stuck Petrograd, Vienna, and Berlin. Most labor disputes remained local and were centered about wages and working conditions. The army mutinies of spring and summer 1917 placed the nation on the brink of the state crisis. However

the authorities were able to eliminate causes of discontent among troops and remobilize the population. Despite all wrangles and controversies among the French ruling elite, in the fall of 1917 the political class was able to regain its unity and determination to win the war.

### Britain

#### (1)

Descriptions of daily struggles for food in London strikingly resembled scenes in Petrograd. In 1917, queues outside grocery stores were forming early in the mornings and often swelled into huge crowds of few thousands. The mood of many customers, predominantly women, was angry. In some places women threatened to raid the stores unless provided with necessary items. Union leaders warned authorities that workers would not put up with 'having their wives and children waiting outside shop door almost begging for food to be sold to them' (Barnett 1985: 142).

Yet, with all too familiar pictures of shortages and hardships, situation in London and other major British cities could scarcely be compared to the conditions in Berlin, Vienna or Petrograd. In no time in the war there was a widespread privation or a chronic malnutrition in Britain. The queues in the cities signaled lack of due organization rather than actual shortage (Marwick 1965: 191). When in 1918 the government finally introduced rationing of food, queues and public disorders disappeared very fast. Wilson (1986: 514) notes that the disturbances of winter 1917-1918 revealed "far less hunger than anger."

An average caloric intake remained remarkably stable during the war in Britain. If we take an average 1909-13 rate as 100 percent, in 1915 consumption even increased to 103 percent. In the following years consumption declined insignificantly: to 99 percent in 1916, to 96 percent in 1917, and to 97 percent in 1918. An official caloric norm for an average man in 1918 in

Britain was 3,358 calories, three times higher than one in Vienna or two and a half times greater than one in Berlin (Dewey 1988: 203).

Ferguson (1999: 277) suggests that the difference between Britain and Germany in consumption of basic foods (e.g., meat and butter) should not be overestimated and that Britain suffered almost as great wartime reduction as Germany. But the numbers he presents are very selective. It is true that in 1918 Britons consumed 47 percent of the prewar quantity of fresh meat and only 14 percent of butter, but consumption of other staple foods, such as bread and frozen meat, remained at the 96 percent level. By 1918 consumption of milk increased to 107 percent, margarine to 215 percent, potatoes to 145 percent, and bacon to 221 percent (Bonzon and Davis 1997: 315). The loss of fresh meat and butter in the wartime diet was compensated by bacon and margarine. Some categories of the working class ate better during the war than before the war (Marwich 1965: 199).

In his study of the living standards in Great Britain Dewey (1988: 203-204) claims: “Whichever estimate is preferred, it is clear that the total energy supply was maintained almost unchanged during the war, in sharp contrast to the position in the Central Powers.” The economic war and disruption of traditional mechanisms of supply had brought in many economic interruptions and dislocations but the British society managed to avoid a subsistence crisis during the war.

(2)

What about social protests? Labor conflicts were common in Britain during the war. In fact a number of strikes and a number of workers involved in labor conflicts in Britain exceeded analogous numbers in all other major belligerent nations, except ones in Russia (Mitchell 1975: ). Yet, a cross-national comparison of wartime labor statistics is not informative because labor



regimes differed across nations. In Austria-Hungary and Germany, for instance, an industrial draft of all adult male population had been instituted and enterprises in most essential war-related industries were militarized. That meant that strikes in such industries were outlawed. A higher rate of labor militance in Britain thus indicated nothing else but a more liberal labor regime, not to a scope or intensity of social discontent induced by the war.

Most strikes in Britain remained local and centered about economic issues (Carsten 1982: 172; Chambers 1939: 425). Workers demanded higher wages, better housing conditions, protection of traditional union privileges but they did not call for the end of the war or change of the political regime. Of course, to some degree such pattern should be attributed, to a traditionally reformist and unionist, not a revolutionary, ideology of the British labor movement (Luebbert 1991). Such internalist, path dependency assumption is, however, non-falsifiable because economic conditions of Britain had never reached such a low point as those in the continental countries. In other words, we do not know how the British workers would react to subsistence crisis be they placed under such dire economic conditions as lower urban classes in Russia, or Austria, or Germany.

But let us push the question a little further. Why did widespread labor conflicts in Britain (as well as in France) remain largely local and decentralized? Why did they lack scale and intensity of social protests in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany? The deep internal divisions on the basis of skill, status, gender and ethnicity to which Wilson (1986: 522) points should be definitely taken into account. One may argue, however, that workers in other nations were not less divided across these lines (think of Austria-Hungary!).

The historical evidence, meantime, suggests an interesting observation. Many large scale strikes in the countries described above (e.g., Russia in February 1917, Germany in April 1917,

and Austria-Hungary in January 1918) took place as a direct reaction to state regulation of food consumption, either introduction of rations or reduction in rations. This common pattern suggests that state policies of food allocation might have been a powerful catalyst of social protests. They created a common identity and a sense of solidarity among urban consumers. The newfound solidarity arising from common deprivation cut across the class, sectoral and residential divisions because changes in food supply affected everyone. Because changes in rationing system dealt with the most fundamental necessity of life and affected thousands (if not millions) of people simultaneously, they generated mass protests.

Thus, the nature of social protests could differ depending on the mechanisms of allocation of food, market-based or administrative. In countries where the market mechanism was dominant, the living standards of the employees depended on the terms of the employment relationship with their individual employers. Because Britain (and France) relied on market mechanism in allocation of food, labor conflicts in these countries were centered about local employment conditions. If remuneration failed to provide the necessary standard of living, workers demanded high wages from their individual employers. In the countries that relied on administrative mechanisms in allocation of food the living standard of poor population depended of the amount of food apportioned by the authorities. In these countries the working and low-middle-class consumers directed their protests against state authorities. These protests materialized in the form of food riots and large scale public disorders.

Thus, although level of labor disputes was comparatively high in Britain, it was not the kind of social protest that led to state crises in other countries. In fact these strikes continued the pattern of the pre-war labor conflicts directed by trade unions and centered about the local employment conditions. Because economic situation and living conditions in Britain were much

better than in the continental Europe, political protests of the radical, revolutionary type did not materialize in Britain.

(3)

Like the French ruling elite, the British political class was divided over a variety of issues, which was not surprising for this oldest European representative democracy. However never during the war did there emerge a large political movement against the nation's participation in the war or against the existing political regime. Peace campaigns remained initiatives of individual politicians or unrepresentative political groups (see Carsten 1982).

One such episode was a controversy around participation of the leaders of the British Labor Party at the international peace conference of the European socialists in Stockholm in August 1917. The organizers of the conference, the moderate Russian socialists (the Mensheviks), planned convening representatives of labor and socialist parties for discussing possible steps of bringing peace to Europe. They invited socialists not only from the Allied and the neutral countries but also from Germany and Austria-Hungary. The invitation to attend the Stockholm conference caught the leaders of the British Labor Party in the difficult situation. On the one hand, labor leaders sympathized with the ideals of peace and international labor solidarity that the conference purported to espouse. On the other hand, the Labor leaders were members of the Lloyd George's coalitional government and meetings with representative of the enemy nations would be considered as undermining the nation's war effort. One of the Labor leaders, Arthur Henderson, a member of the Cabinet who just return from Russia, was in favor of participation in the Stockholm conference. However his position failed to gather strong support among the working class, not to speak of the ruling class. The Seamen Union even refused to transport a delegation to Stockholm, be foreign passports issued for the delegates by the

government. The government rescinded the initial permission to attend the conference.

Henderson had been forced to resign from the government.

Another episode of the anti-war action was publication of a Lord Lansdowne's letter in the *Daily Telegraph* in November 1917. Lord Lansdowne, a distinguished conservative politician and a member of the Asquith government, published a letter in which he expressed doubt in achieving victory and advised peace negotiations. The predominant reaction to Lansdowne's appeal was distinctly negative. Lloyd George called the letter "ill-advised and inopportune" and a conservative press generated a storm of protests against the Lansdowne's pacifism (Williams 1972: 197). Chambers (1939) says that "the Lansdowne Letter... dropped on the public like a bolt and looked unfortunately like some senile aberration."

Thus, in both cases the anti-war initiatives found neither a large social constituency among the working classes nor support among the ruling elite. Despite the hardships and discontent the peace initiatives did not appeal to the majority of Britons.

(4)

A relatively high level of social stability and solidarity of the British society in its determination to win the war translated into a high level of organization and military effectiveness of the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders. Of course, the morale of the troops did not remain unchanged. The year of 1917 was the most difficult time not only for civilians at home but also for the British troops at the continent (Englander 1997). In September 1917, for instance, disturbances erupted in the BEF base camp near the small town of Etaples, about fifteen miles south of Boulogne. Conditions at the camp (called the "Bull Ring" by the trainees) were harsh and oppressive. The soldiers who already served at the front had to undergo strenuous training as the draftees from home. On September 9, 1917 a clash between the trainees

and military police turned into the mass disorders in which one serviceman (Corporal Wood) was shot dead by the police and several wounded. For three days hundreds of soldiers rallied at the meetings and demonstrations outside the camp. Several loyal battalions were relocated to Etaples. Only by removing several officers and making improvements in the camp the commanders were able to restore order and discipline (Carsten 1982; Gill and Dallas 1975, 1985).<sup>38</sup>

The disorders in the BEF affected other units. During the war the British government recruited and sent to France about 100,000 servicemen of the Labor Corps, mostly natives of China, Egypt and other places. The outcome of these disturbances, less known than those in Etaples, was nonetheless more dramatic. On September 5, two companies of labor troops, stationed in Boulogne, refused to work and attempted to break out of camp. The commanders ordered to open fire. Twenty three were killed and twenty four wounded. Four days later a company of Labor Corps refused to work at Calais Base. In clashes with the regular forces four men were killed, fifteen wounded, and twenty-five imprisoned. Although the information on these mutinies is even scarcer than on the one at Etaples it shows that British forces did not escape the problem of order and discipline (Gill and Dallas 1975).

We need to place these disturbances in perspective, however. As Gill and Dallas (1985: 77) noted, the incident at Etaples hardly threatened the British military authorities with a disaster comparable to those which their continental counterparts confronted. Cronin (1989: 461) argues, “Compared to France, where troops mutinied en masse in 1917, or Russia, where the soldiers and sailors became the backbone of the revolution, or Germany, where, on the one hand, it was the sailors who precipitated the revolution of 1918 and, on the other, it was the organizations of ex-

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<sup>38</sup> Because the archival documents related to the Etaples mutinies will be opened to public only in 2017, historians still don't know how the mutinies ended.

soldiers who were instrumental in suppressing the left after the war, what happened in the British Army and Navy was pretty tame.”

(5)

Were there conditions for state breakdown in Britain during World War One? The answer is unambiguous: although there was some radical rhetoric and plenty of discontent “there was never any question of a collapse of state authority” (Cronin 1989: 458). Despite the strain of war and exhaustion Britain did not suffer social and political crises. Britain’s economic mobilization and war effort was successful in large part due to establishing an effective organization of production and allocation of food. That was possible mainly because Britain, as contrasted to the Central Powers, was able to keep her seaborne supplies largely uninterrupted. The access to overseas markets had a critical role in resolving a provision problem in Britain. By the eve of the war foreign producers (Canada, the United States, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand) made more than half of the British food market. Due to effective mechanism of provision supply labor conflicts in Britain did not reach the point of widespread social unrest, characteristic of Russia, Germany or Austria-Hungary. The ruling elite remained largely unified around the war effort. The British Expeditionary Forces in France maintained a high level of organization and discipline.

### Conclusion

The analysis above shows that a war-centered approach offers a sufficiently consistent interpretation of state breakdown in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. The East European absolutist monarchies did not survive the ordeal of the total industrial war. Nations that maintained access to the world-economy (Britain and France) were able to preserve social and political stability and avoid social crises during the war. Nations excluded from the world-

economy and forced to rely on their own resources (Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany) suffered deep economic and political crises. These states collapsed not because of their developmental anomalies but largely because of their specific location in geopolitical configurations of the coalition alliances that crystallized in their final form only during the war.

In contrast to Britain and France, that remained the integral parts of the world economy, Germany and Austria-Hungary found themselves under conditions of blockade. In spite of the German industrial potential and a large domestic resource base they could not sustain a long industrial war against a far more powerful military-economic coalition. Four years of war put tremendous strain on economic institutions and social fabric of these nations. In the fall of 1918 the Central Powers finally reached the point of exhaustion. They collapsed because they could not break the ring of the “grand strategic siege” in the global economic war (Stubbs 2002: 273).

Because Russia was separated by the enemy states from her Western Allies, Russia’s access to external resources was limited. The Russian government could not purchase a necessary amount of modern weapons, munitions, and supplies from her Western Allies. It also had to rely on own agricultural produce which proved to be hard to get. Although it fought on the side of the Allies, isolation from the world-economy resulted in the same disastrous outcome as in Germany and Austria-Hungary, only few months earlier.

It can be argued that it was weakness and ineffectiveness of the Russian autocracy which made it unable to mobilize food from the countryside. But does inability or unwillingness of a government to expropriate peasants lead necessarily to a subsistence crisis? No, it does not. The French authorities encountered a similar problem with their own recalcitrant agriculturalists. But the French government made no attempt to stop the rural population hoarding their produce and did not enforce restrictions placed on consumption in the towns (Barnett 1985: 183). Instead

of expropriating peasants or introducing rations the French authorities went on to buy foods overseas (Canada, Australia, Argentina, New Zealand, etc). Thus, the root difference between France and Russia explaining divergent outcomes of the economic war in these countries was not that the former was more industrially developed or republican or democratic and that the latter was predominantly rural or autocratic or reactionary but a simple fact that France had a free access to resources from overseas and Russia did not.

Now let's turn to *how* breakdown of authority took place. The major findings of the analysis can be summed up in several points:

1. Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany collapsed during the First World War and because of it. To posit that they were somehow destined to fall is to engage in ahistorical speculation. Even if we assume that they were doomed to perish, as some researchers suggest, nobody knows for how long they would persevere (years, decades, centuries?).

2. The economic disorganization in these countries was the most important factor that brought these states down. There is little evidence that state collapse was caused by military inferiority, or military inferiority alone. Even in those cases where military setbacks played a major role (i.e., Germany) they should not be considered out of the context of the general socio-economic conditions in the country.

3. The war-induced economic disorganization resulted in major disruptions of provision supply and subsistence crises in the major European states. The subsistence crises, however, affected the populations of the belligerent states in different degree. In the "interior" nations that were placed under conditions of economic blockade (Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany) living conditions were worse than in "marchland" nations that maintained free access to the world economy and imports from overseas (Britain and France).



4. In contrast to the social protests in Britain and France that were predominantly local, decentralized and centered about traditional bread-and-butter issues, the social conflicts in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany crossed the realm of economics and turned at the final stage of the war into the mass social movements against the war and the existing political regimes.

5. Under the impact of worsening economic conditions large segments of the ruling classes in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany withdrew their support from the official policies and took the side of the opposition. Political crises took different forms in these countries: a protracted conflict between the autocracy and the liberal opposition in Russia; a war-induced fragmentation and negotiated “divorce” within the multinational political class in Austria-Hungary, and a shift of a large segment of the political class into opposition in Germany.

6. A collapse of the army was a critical element of state breakdown. Neither a widespread social unrest nor a crisis of political class alone could bring about state breakdown until a part of the army joined (or launched) the insurgence. The violent confrontations of war-weary servicemen with the authorities placed the insubordinate units out of law. Confronting the perspective of being arrested and court-marshaled the mutineers made all efforts to spread the insurrection to larger contingents and thus make the revolution permanent. In those episodes where insurgents were able to merge with revolutionary workers, state capacity to suppress these movements was undermined. In the episodes where authorities were able to localize mutinies and prevent spread of revolts to civilian populations (like in France in 1917) the mutinies were suppressed.

7. One of the unanticipated findings of the study is an observation that sailors played a critical role in the revolutionary events. In the navies large contingents of men were organized

in ship crews and placed under uniform regimentation. The degree of cohesion and solidarity among crew members was probably greater than among more heterogeneous army units spread on the large territories. Also, the naval units were located close to port cities. It was easier to establish coordination between the sailors and revolutionary elements in these cities than between the army units in the front and the revolutionary elements in the rear.

8. As the regular army units proved unable or unwilling to suppress rebellions of soldiers, sailors and workers, the central authorities collapsed. The overthrow of the central state authorities accelerated processes of economic collapse, territorial fragmentation, administrative disorganization, and military disintegration.

9. New caretaker governments that emerged on the ruins of the *ancient regime* lacked legitimacy. Until a new constitutional framework was established, consolidation of new regimes depended critically on support of the existing social institutions.

10. The role of the military institution proved to be critical for the trajectories of subsequent political developments. In Germany where the new government (Ebert) reached the agreement with the army command (Groener) the new central authority was able to suppress radical revolutionary forces and reintegrate the crumbling state. In Russia where the new government (Kerensky) failed to reach the agreement with the army command (Kornilov) the central authority collapsed under assault of the radical revolutionary forces and the country plunged in the devastating civil war. In Austria-Hungary where the army disintegrated along national lines and national units re-subordinated to the new national authorities, the state itself disintegrated.

The evidence of support of the war-centered interpretation of the imperial collapse of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany allows us to reassess the role that social scientists used to

assign to internal factors of state breakdown (or revolutions or other social transformations).

It seems that political scientists and comparative sociologists tend to overestimate the role of the internal factors in analyzing outcomes of social change. Why did the Russian revolution take place? Because Russia, we are said, happened to possess a revolutionary working class! As experience of World War One shows, a historical contingency (or an interaction of a contingency and geopolitical constraints) may have a much greater impact than we used to think.

A historian of the Habsburg Empire, Alan Sked (2001: 303-304), reflected: “Why is it so difficult to see that what really went wrong in Europe was the First World War, which once again, was not inevitable, but whose consequences, as inherently unpredictable as those of any war, were disastrous for Europe. It is, of course, difficult for many people brought up in the old liberal or socialist historiography to think like this. For so many years, we were taught to believe that the Russian Revolution, for example, was necessary, popular and benevolent, that all the European empires were despotic, military polities in which, in contrast to Western Europe, no one had any rights. It is difficult to believe, therefore, that, say, in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, there was more political discontent in Western Europe than in Metternich’s Austria, where poor people may have had more rights. It is difficult to believe that there is perhaps more evidence of a police state in Britain in 1848 than in Austria. It is extremely significant surely that the organizers of recent conferences on the decline of the European empires could find no place on their agendas for papers on imperial Germany. And yet Germany was the most important of all the European Empires... The explanation of its absence is to be found, of course, in the fact that, in 1914, nobody thought that it was in decline.”

### **Part III: State Collapse and Property Redistribution (1917-1919)**

#### Russia and Germany: Divergent Trajectories

In the previous chapter I argued that a war-centered theory does account for the breakdown of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. But can such theory alone explain the emergence of a uniquely collectivist, communist regime in Russia? Can we leave aside such factors as preceding history, its communal agriculture, absentee landlords, its revolutionary working class, its radical intelligentsia, and the centralized Bolshevik party? Can we ignore the power of the revolutionary Leninist ideology?

Although a war-centered theory proved to be fairly consistent in interpreting the causes of breakdown of the three empires, it seems that it cannot explain what happened next. In most of the Central Europe (e.g., Germany or Austria) the processes of political transition brought to power moderate social-democratic regimes that launched major economic and political reforms but left fundamental institutional features of these societies intact. In Russia, where the Bolsheviks came to power, the revolutionary change resulted in a dramatic break with the past. Abolition of private property and establishing collective ownership of the means of production signaled a beginning of an unprecedented economic and political transformation.

Why has a communist revolution taken place in Russia and not in other countries? Consider Germany, for instance. Both imperial states, Russia and Germany, experienced deep economic and political crises at the final stage of war. In both countries the imperial dynasties collapsed and the provisional governments came to power. Both nations witnessed an upsurge of the radical labor movements. In both countries moderate and radical socialists fought for power. Yet in Russia the Bolsheviks overthrew the provisional government and abolished private

property. In Germany, on the contrary, the provisional government was able to stay in power and preserve economic institutions of capitalism. How can one explain such divergence of the revolutionary outcomes in these countries?

Most historical accounts of the Russian Revolution prioritize the role of an ideologically driven transformative agency (e.g., the revolutionary labor movement, the radical intelligentsia, the Bolshevik party, Lenin, and so forth). In a similar fashion, these accounts view state socialism, the outcome of the revolution, as a radical experiment of social engineering: Lenin and the Communist Party were determined to build socialism in Russia and in doing so they followed the general guidelines of the Marxian design of the new society (see Fitzpatrick 2001; Malia 1995, 2000; Pipes 1990, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2003; Scott 1998; Wade 2000).<sup>39</sup>

In my interpretation of the Russian revolution I adopt a different, more structural approach. The key difference, I will argue, was the extent to which state authorities in these two countries have been able to retain their administrative capacity after the breakdown. If a provisional government possessed institutional capacity which enabled it resolving problems of peace settlement and internal consolidation, like it happened in Germany, it prevented a radical redistributive coalition from coming to power. If a provisional government failed to resolve problems of peace settlement and internal consolidation, like it happened in Russia, the worsening socio-economic conditions created structural opportunities for takeover of the state authority by a radical redistributive coalition.

Thus, in contrast to most existing accounts of the Bolsheviks' Revolution this chapter places a primary emphasis on low institutional capacity of a power incumbent (i.e., the Provisional Government) than high institutional capacity of a political contender (i.e., the

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<sup>39</sup> See Harding (1992) for an excellent rebuttal of “inexorable histories” of the revolution as well as an accurate appraisal of Lenin’s view of the Russian revolution as only the first act of the world proletarian revolution.

Bolsheviks). The Bolsheviks coup d'état could have been prevented, were the new authorities able to stop war and begin resolving domestic problems. This, however, has not been done. Thus, instead of a conventional model of "socialism by design" I suggest a model of "socialism by default."

### Socialism as Redistribution

An economic system which began taking shape in Russia in 1917 and later was copied (with some modifications) in several countries of Europe and Asia is commonly known as state socialism. *State socialism* refers to a type of a command economy in which the state comes in possession of all or most economic assets of a nation. *Transition to state socialism* thus involves transfer of property rights over productive assets to the state, or state-directed socialization (nationalization) of major economic assets.

Such socialization may be conceptualized as a specific case of coercive redistributive action, by which one actor forcibly acquires properties of other actors. *Coercive redistributive action* differs from all other forms of collective action in so far as economic assets represent the primary object of contention and expropriation is carried out against the will of the owner. Such coercive expropriation may take various forms: a robbery by a mob, a requisition by the army, or nationalization by the state.

A *redistributive hazard* refers to a likelihood of a coercive redistributive action in a given group. Usually, a redistributive hazard is a function of (1) inequality in distribution of economic assets, (2) scarcity of economic assets, and (3) distribution of power resources among rich and poor.<sup>40</sup> If inequality is great, living necessities are scarce, and the poor have access to power

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<sup>40</sup> Boix (2003: 3) identifies a similar set of structural determinants for political regimes.

resources (e.g., they possess arms), a high redistributive hazard may eventuate in a coercive redistributive action.

### Incapacitation of State Authority

Under normal course of events, a large-scale coercive redistributive action is unlikely. Individual economic assets constitute private property. If anyone attempts to seize someone's property or interfere with exercise of property rights, the owner would appeal for authorities' intervention and, if the latter is sufficiently effective, the perpetrator would be arrested and punished. Thus, the state's protection of property rights predicated on unequal distribution of power resources prevents redistributive action.

What happens if state authority disintegrates? If repressive capacity of a state authority is critically undermined, a spontaneous process of coercive expropriation may be initiated. If there is no authority, laws and orders may no longer be enforced. Individual rights and freedoms (including property rights) may not longer be respected. The poor would begin seizing economic assets of the well-to-do classes: food, consumer goods, housing, land, and means of production. The greater incapacitation of state authority, the greater would be the scope and intensity of coercive redistributive action.

### Provisional Government: Challenges and Action

Let's apply this argument to breakdown of imperial states during war. A disastrous performance in a large-scale war often results in delegitimation of imperial authority, overthrow of a ruler, and termination of an imperial dynasty. A fall of a ruler or a dynasty does not necessarily result in a widespread coercive expropriation because coercion-wielding institutions such as army and bureaucracy may continue to operate and preserve the social order. The population may think that misfortunes befell on the nation because of incompetence of the ruler

and if the ruler would be replaced by a new authority the situation would improve. A new authority, if it is installed, may enjoy, at least initially, a considerable popular support.

This support is not absolute or unconditional, of course. If war continues a new authority can consolidate its power only if it (1) remobilizes the population and achieves military success, or, if it is unable to do so, (2) exits war. By undertaking either one of these actions the government can prevent further delegitimation of authority, protect social order, and minimize coercive redistributive action.

These actions, however, are not easy to undertake. The breakdown of the imperial regime initiates processes of liberalization. All of a sudden, subjects are given freedom, rights, and liberties. The key issue is whether individuals developed a sufficiently high level of national consciousness and national identity to commit them to a national cause. Unless individuals possess strong nationalist sentiment and have powerful incentives to fight (and die) for a new regime, they would find easy ways to ignore a new government's appeal for remobilization and sacrifice. Brinton (1965: 144) argued, "You cannot organize an army if you take Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity at all seriously."

Why it can be difficult to exit war? War, particularly a coalitional conflict, is a multi-actor engagement. It can be terminated only if all major parties of the conflict become determined to stop fighting. If one member of a coalition alliance decides to deflect and negotiate a separate peace, other members of the coalition may impose severe sanctions upon such state.

If the state capacity and economic potential of a nation are critically undermined but war goes on, the processes of economic and social disintegration would continue, urban subsistence crisis would deepen, and redistributive pressures from below would fuel social unrest. Every new ruling coalition would confront the same crises as the old one(s) but in a sharper form. The crisis



would push the nation along the downward spiral of war. Eventually, descend down this spiral of war, chaos, and disorganization may result in complete incapacitation of state authority and takeover of state authority by a radical redistributive coalition of lower classes.

### Logic of the Argument

In the final part of my dissertation I will focus at two episodes of state breakdown in the end of World War One: Russia (February to October 1917) and Germany (November 1918 to July 1919). Although in both countries absolutist states collapsed and the transitional governments came to power, the outcomes of political transitions differed. In Russia the collapse of the autocracy triggered widespread expropriation, which was finally institutionalized in state-directed nationalization by the Bolshevik government. In Germany a new government was able to channel demands of the lower classes in the framework of legal-constitutional deliberations and suppress radical socialization movement. The central thesis of this chapter is that these divergent trajectories can be explained by different institutional capacities of the provisional governments: lower in Russian and higher in Germany.

In the next (second) section of the chapter I will explore intensity of coercive redistributive action in Russia and Germany in three areas: industrial facilities, provision, and land. In the third section I will explain the difference in coercive expropriation by different degrees of state incapacitation in these two countries. Finally I will discuss the role of the armed forces as a key factor in state incapacitation or state consolidation.

### Coercive Redistributive Action: Russia and Germany

(1)

Let us begin with Russia. The Tsar's autocracy fell apart in the last two days of February 1917. Three features of this collapse distinguished it from similar events in other countries. First,

the breakdown of the old regime was rapid and absolute. The crisis not only eliminated the monarchy but also struck all major political institutions (army, police, civil bureaucracy). Second, despite an uneasy coexistence with the Petrograd Soviet, initially the democratic Provisional Government gained a broad popular support among various groups of the Russian society. Third, the influence of radical socialist groups, such as the Bolsheviks, was insignificant. During the war most of the Bolshevik leaders were sent in exile in Siberia or emigrated abroad (Rabinowitch 1968: 32). On the eve of the revolution the Bolsheviks - “the tiniest and most extreme of the socialist parties” (Skocpol 1979: 212) comprised of only about two thousand members in Petrograd (McAuley 1991: 27).

As the news of the fall of Romanovs reached the Russian cities, towns, and the countryside, old local authorities dissolved while various public committees, councils, and soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants deputies took power. The change ensued from the revolution proved to be much deeper than just a fall of a monarchy; it manifested the coming of long-awaited freedom and redefinition of all authority relations (see Figes 1996, Figes and Kolonitskii 1999, Stites 1989).

Economic institutions in Russia have been integrated in the edifice of the autocratic state. To a larger extent than elsewhere these institutions were created, supported and reproduced by the autocracy (see McDaniel 1988). As the monarchy and the administrative apparatus of the old regime came to pieces, a major change in economic relations began to unfold. The poor population, both in cities and countryside, began challenging the exiting distribution of wealth and, in some cases, seizing property of better-off classes. Below I will examine these actions in three primary arenas of popular expropriation: industrial facilities, provision, and land.

The *first* object of coercive redistribution was property of industrial and commercial enterprises.<sup>41</sup> The initial step in this direction was removal of the most hated managers and foremen. In the first days of the revolution workers often placed an unpopular manager in a wheelbarrow and rolled him with cheers through the factory gates in the nearby river or pond (see Keep 1976, Mandel 1983, Smith 1983). Sometimes worse things happened: “At the Putilov works, the director and his aide were killed by workers and their bodies were flung in the Obvodnoi canal” (Smith 1983: 55). The same fate befell on the leader of the factory’s Black Hundreds; the workers thrust him into a wheelbarrow, poured red hot lead over his head and trundled him off to the canal (Smith 2003: 18).

Establishing workers’ committees in the factories was another step in taking control over enterprises. These practices began at state-owned enterprises and spread to private companies. In the Petrograd Cable Works, a large state-owned company, a workers’ committee was elected as early as March 1. The management had to concede to workers demand to form armed militia paid by the management and to let the committee run the factory shop. In few days similar committees began to emerge in other Petrograd factories. Most of them functioned in metalworking and armaments industries and supported the war effort. These committees focused primarily on daily operations of their workshops, had no specific political affiliations, and rarely discussed political matters. The Bolsheviks played minor, if any role in the workers’ committees (see Keep 1976: 78; Mandel 1983: 104; Smith 1983: 60).

Although outright seizures of enterprises were rare, as the economic crisis deepened, the scope of the workers control expanded (Keep 1976: 77, Mandel 1983: 155, Rosenberg and

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<sup>41</sup> It is necessary to note that in the beginning of the revolution redistribution of property was not the central arena of class conflict. An eight-hour working day and higher wages were the primary workers’ demands (see Boll 1979: 77-78, Mandel 1983: 85-95). Strikes were major weapon of class struggle (Koenker and Rosenberg 1989, Rosenberg and Koenker 1987).

Koenker 1987: 314). Some workers committees began to control hiring and firing workers and show keen interest in their companies' sales and finances (Smith 1983: 148, 176). As many enterprises ran out of raw materials and fuel, the committees took upon themselves the task of supplying factories with these materials. To obtain fuel they sent their "pushers" to the coal- and oil-producing regions of the South and requisitioned fuel in the neighboring establishments (Smith 1983: 147).

Workers' activities were driven more by a practical need to maintain production rather than by desire to take over the enterprise (Mandel 1984). One of the labor activists, V.M. Levin, explained to workers: "All the works and factories of Petrograd are experiencing a crisis, but management do not display any activism in supplying their factories with a sufficient quantity of raw materials and fuels. As a result, workers may be thrown to the mercy of Tsar Hunger, unemployed. Therefore it is the workers themselves who must show activism in this sphere, since the imperialist-employers are not showing any" (cited in Smith 1983: 146). In some factories, like the Brenner works in Petrograd, laborers ventured to run factories themselves:

At the small Brenner copper-smelting and engineering works the owner informed the factory committee on 19 May that he had no funds left. He begged it to help him expedite outstanding orders as quickly as possible; which committee agreed to do; five days later Brenner announced that he was going to shut the factory for two weeks. The committee objected to this, since the factory had received advances of 420,000 rubles from the War Industries Committee for orders, which had not yet been completed. The factory committee therefore decided to dispense with Brenner and run the factory themselves... On 16 June the Peterhof district soviet agreed to check the accounts of the Brenner works and

to make an inventory of stock. It later agreed to oversee an experiment in self-management, by putting the deputy to the soviet in charge of operations at the factory. The factory was desperately short of capital, so the committee turned to other factory committees for help. The Triangle works lent the factory 15,000 rubles and the Putilov works sent some raw material, but this did not really help. At one stage the committee began negotiations with Brenner about his possible return, but his terms proved unacceptable. By August productivity was sliding fast, workers were not receiving their wages and drunkenness was on the increase. On 24 August the commissar of the local militia reported to the Peterhof soviet that he had received an order from the government to eject the workers from the factory. The committee then turned to the government to demand sequestration. After pressure from the CCFC, the government agreed in September to place the factory in charge of the Factory Convention (Smith 1983: 177-178)

A conflict at the Langezipen Machine-Construction Factory in Petrograd unfolded along the similar lines:

The conflict came to a head on 2 June when the director announced his intention of closing operations, citing a 33 per cent decline in output, 10 million ruble losses on state orders, and lack of funds, all due to the eight-hour day, a 50 per cent decline in labour productivity, constantly rising prices, and finally, shortages of fuel and raw materials. At the request of the workers, the Central Soviet (CS) of Factory Committees (elected at the conference in early June) enquired into the company's ownership. Although the director refused to cooperate, it was finally

ascertained that the original owner has been the Azov-Don Bank, but it had transferred its stocks to a certain Zhivitov, who in turn transferred them in the name of Kislyanskii. However, by this time, the director informed the workers that he had quite unexpectedly 'come across' 450 000 rubles, borrowed from an acquaintance, and production would go ahead full speed. But in the interim, the workers had set up full control over management. On 5 June, the factory committee reported: The situation of late at the factories of the Langezipen Co. Inc., i.e. 1) the refusal of the factory administration to recognize the control commission of the workers and employees 2) the violation by the administration of the decision of the conciliation chamber of May 6, 1917 on the amount of wages for employees and 3) the latest declaration of the administration of the closure of the plant – have placed us before the necessity of taking the following measures: 1) No goods or raw materials may be shipped out from the factory without permission of the factory committee, and also manufactured goods ready for shipment must be registered by the factory committee and are stamped by it. 2) All orders of the factory committee are binding on all workers and employees, and no order from the administration is valid without the sanction of the factory committee. 3) No papers or correspondence relating to the factory can be destroyed without the factory committee reviewing them. 4) To carry out the above tasks the elected control commission will begin to fulfil its duties from today. 5) The firemen and guards are duty-bound to keep watch over the factory's buildings against fire

(Mandel 1983: 149-150)

The Provisional Government made earnest efforts to mediate between labor and industrialists (see Ferro 1980: 153-156). The Menshevik Minister of Labor M.I. Skobelev decried arbitrary actions of workers. He admonished, “Comrade workers, remember not only your rights, not only your desires, but also the possibility of their realization; not only your welfare, but also sacrifices in the name of consolidating the revolution and the victory of our ultimate ideals” (Cited in Mandel 1983: 161). In August Skobelev issued a circular affirming that issues of hiring and firing fall in the exclusive jurisdiction of employed and forbade factory committees from meeting during working hours (Smith 1983: 180). Workers reacted with indignation and condemned the Ministry for “protection of capitalist interests” (Smith 2003: 25).

Being unable to prevent labor intervention in running factories, Skobelev equally failed to establish working relationships with employers who mistrusted the department headed by socialists. As a result, labor and employers were not able to negotiate any sort of corporatist agreement similar to those negotiated between labor and industrialists in Germany (Smith 1983: 171). Lacking an effective organizational framework for regulating employer-employee relations the government failed to prevent “creeping socialization” of industrial enterprises.

(2)

The *second* object of coercive redistributive action was provision. In March 1917, under pressure from the Petrograd Soviet, the Provisional Government declared a state monopoly on grain. A Menshevik economist Groman affiliated with the Petrograd Soviet has compiled an ambitious project of a nationwide organization for mobilization and distribution of consumer goods, including provisions, using a German system as a model (Sukhanov 1984). However, the new authorities lacked even a rudimentary bureaucratic apparatus to enforce the monopoly of provision. All efforts to organize a new system of supply have been successfully sabotaged by

the merchants and local authorities. The attempts to extract grain by force confronted fierce resistance of the rural population. Trotsky (1937: 412) commented, “The mechanism of the market, broken by the war, had not been replaced by that state regulation to which the advanced capitalist governments had been compelled to resort, and which alone permitted Germany to hold on through four years of war.”

In 1917 food supply in Petrograd, according to Ferro (1980), was worse than in other big cities because the Baltic Sea navigation had been interrupted by the German fleet and the railways had been blocked. Bread rationing was introduced in March, with 1.5 pounds per day for industrial workers and 1 pound for other consumers. By the end of April, the rations were reduced to 0.75 pound and even possession of a bread card was no guarantee of supply. Beginning July deliveries of grain fell below fifty percent of the necessary amount. The same situation prevailed with other rationed foodstuffs: meat, eggs, fat, and sugar. Queues for these foods began to form in the evening expecting uncertain distribution the following morning. After waiting for many hours in lines many consumers left the stores without a purchase (Ferro 1980: 163).

Due to shortage of food in big cities, the poor urban population resorted to a self-supply strategy, known as *meshochnichestvo*, or “sackmanism.”<sup>42</sup> The sackmen (or ‘baggers,’ as Argenbright (1993) called them) traveled to the peasant villages of the surplus regions to obtain grain, which they carried back home on their person in a sack. The authorities who wished to enforce the monopoly regulations tried to fight sackmen by forming a special food-supply militia

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<sup>42</sup> “Sackmanism” represented perhaps the most visible but not the only form of food redistribution. Yaney (1982: 472) identified five forms of such food-related violence: fights between hoarders and government agencies, attacks on estates to force them to cultivate land or give up their grain, attacks by food-collecting gangs on villages, fights between army and civilian grain purchasers; and fights between grain purchasers from different gubernias and uyezds.



but their efforts were effective only against the weakest of the sackmen, women and elderly.

More energetic sackmen formed larger gangs, hijacked trains and confiscated grain (Lih 1990: 76-79).

In Petrograd, workers and other employees organized food committees and food cooperatives. According to (Smith 1983: 87), during 1917 membership of Petrograd workers food cooperatives increased threefold, from 50,000 to 150,000. Yet, in absence of stable supplies these organizations offered little help. As the subsistence crisis deepened, the workers' protests shifted from the factory floor to the streets. Poor population called for searches of warehouses and apartments for hoarded food (Wade 2000: 189).

Supposedly, only official authorities, such as the Soviets, the district commissariats, and the food-supply committees were empowered to authorize searches of hoarded food. Yet, because various militias, the Red Guards, and other self-appointed authorities proliferated, it was difficult to distinguish legal searches and confiscations from illegal ones. Authorities issued orders strictly forbidding illegal searches but it was easy to forge documents. In many cases, soldiers' uniforms or militiamen's armbands were enough to silence the frightened property owners. Waves of coercive requisitions, often conducted by professional criminals, coincided with the periods of political crises, such as the July days, when the civil order evaporated from the streets completely (Hasegawa 2004: 48-49).

In summer and autumn 1917 such searches and confiscations, both authorized and unauthorized, became routine phenomena not only in Petrograd but in Moscow and many other Russian cities (e.g., Koenker and Rosenberg 1989: 259). Raleigh (1986: 263) documented a dynamic of an urban subsistence crisis in the provincial city of Saratov in the Volga region:

Dwindling food supplies exacerbated discontent. Several times in October Saratov actually remained without grain for a day or two because of snags in the transportation system and the peasants' reluctance to market their products. Although food had been scant at times in Saratov during the previous months, supplies had never before been totally exhausted. It is not surprising therefore, that some people feared that the Soviet's decision to conduct a general search for hoarded food would touch off disorders. Anti-Semitic feelings, encouraged by right-wing agitation, had spread throughout the city on the eve of the Soviet's intended search. Whatever second thoughts the Soviet had, however, were soon dispelled. Threatening that if the Soviet did not act immediately "we ourselves will go and search," a group of angry working-class women from the city's mountain neighborhood burst into a meeting of the Soviet's Executive Committee... Although the city's food-supply commission confiscated tons of rye flour, the food crisis in Saratov did not abate. On October 2 city authorities, consumer societies, and mill owners fired off complaints to the national government that Saratov lacked grain because Samara refused to send supplies. "The mills have stopped," they reported, "and they'll have to lay off workers; this will cause disorders in the city." Shipments of grain arrived irregularly. On other days bakeries had to shut down because of lack of flour. When rumors of the evacuation of Petrograd circulated in Saratov at the beginning of October, groups of citizens conducted illegal searches; additional armed guards had to be posted throughout the city to maintain order.

(3)

The *third* object of coercive expropriation was land. Land distribution before the war was extremely inequitable in most of Russia. The islands of large estates coexisted with a sea of small holdings and peasant communes. The collapse of authorities came to the rural population

as a complete surprise. It took some time to digest the news: in the first weeks of the revolution the countryside was silent (Trotsky 1937: 390). However, little by little, a tectonic elemental movement began to gain strength. Throughout the country peasants began violating century-old rights of ownership. Encroachments on large estates became more and more frequent with every new week. The landmarks separating communal land from privately-owned land were abolished and many tracts of land outside “*obshchina*” (*otruba*) belonging to strong peasants were reintegrated into the communal holdings (Gill 1979: 40).

In spring 1917 most land seizures were still implemented by ‘surreptitious’ methods. Instances of the outright seizure of all the land belonging to private land-owners were still relatively few (Gill 1979: 40-42). In many regions the landlords, frightened by the revolution, abstained from the spring sowing. The authorities, concerned with the spring sowing, passed a resolution which provided that, if a landowner refused to sow land, it should be placed at the disposal of the local food supply committees and rented for a fair price to local landowners, including peasants. The peasants quickly took advantage of the law, using it as a justification for appropriating private estate lands (Perrie 1992: 22; Wade 2000: 134-135). Landowners with German names were the first victims of peasants’ encroachments. Ferro (1980: 114-115) cited a document written by Prittwitz sisters from Penza province:

Everything has been quite orderly... we own about 3,000 *desyatins*, and employ nearly 100 people... A few weeks ago the situation began to change. Letters from our steward show that the peasants have seized part of the land and left us forty-five *desyatins* only; they are themselves cultivating the rest. They use our meadows and pasture for their cattle. After a short time the ‘village committee’ prohibited us from selling cattle, and there is no point in feeding the cattle, because we have to sell it to keep our property going. Finally,

following a decision of the 'volost committee', our prisoners of war were removed as well as the day-laborers we had employed. The estate is in hopeless position. Our stewards' speeches and objections have been fruitless, and the peasants are still aggressive.

The rural unrest reached its peak in the summer when peasants launched direct redistribution of land, seizures of crops, sacking estates, and terrorizing (sometimes killing) landowners. As it became known that the provisional government decided to postpone a comprehensive land reform until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, peasants became impatient. In many provinces peasants took possession of church and monastery land. In order to prevent return of proprietors of estates peasants often resorted to the means of "smoking out" the landowners (Perrie 1992: 27). Keep (1976: 212) reports an interesting eye-witness account of the destruction of the estate in the village Zykov in Ryazan province:

At mid-day the village assembly met to decide the fate of our property, which was large and well-equipped. The question to be decided was posed with stark simplicity: should they burn the house or not? At first they decided just to take all our belongings and to leave the building. But this decision did not satisfy some of the present, and another resolution was passed: to burn everything except the house, which was to be kept as a school. At once the whole crowd moved off to the estate, took the keys from the manager, and commandeered all the cattle, farm machinery, carriages, stores etc. For two days they carried off whatever they could. Then they split into groups of 20, divided up the loot into heaps, one for each group, and cast lots which group should get which. In the very middle of this redistribution a sailor appeared, a local lad who had been on active service. He insisted that they should burn

down the house as well. The peasants got clever. They went off to inspect the house a second time. One of them said: 'What sort of a school would this make? Our children would get lost in it.' Thereupon they decided to burn it down [the next day]. They went home quietly leaving a guard of 20 men, who had a regular feast: they heated the oven, butchered a sheep, some geese, ducks and hens, and ate their fill until dawn... this the night passed. The whole village assembled and once again the axes began to strike... They chopped out the windows, doors and floors, smashed the mirrors and divided up the pieces, and so on. At three o'clock in the afternoon they set light to the house from all sides, using for the purpose eight chetverti of kerosene.

In early autumn, violations of land rights became so widespread and diverse in character so they could be classified under numerous subtypes: destruction of estates; arson; seizures of estates, of arable land, of meadows and hayfields, of forests, of working livestock and equipment; illegal woodcutting, prevention of the cutting and transportation of timber; forced renting; removal of labor; and other actions. Many of these actions were further subdivided in organized and unorganized forms. Malyavskii (1981) identified as many as forty four forms of the peasant movement and 16,298 peasant disturbances from February to October 1917.

(4)

What about Germany? Did the collapse of the old regime in this country result in similar coercive expropriation on a large scale? Let's hold to the conceptual scheme used in the Russian

case and examine coercive expropriation in three domains: industrial enterprises, provision, and land.

The issue of socialization of industry came to the forefront of public debates in Germany almost immediately after the November Revolution. Yet, in contrast to direct popular action in Russia, the issue was tackled in a characteristically German, orderly and systematic, way. On November 12, 1918, the government announced that it was about to launch a socialization program. The cabinet concluded that some industries (coal, potassium) are ready for socialization and decided to refer the issue to a special commission of nine, which included such well-known socialist experts as Karl Kautsky and Rudolf Hilferding (Ryder 1967: 167-168). The Berlin Executive Council of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils agreed to entrust a socialization issue to the commission and proclaimed that the nationalization of industry 'should only be undertaken by the government and should be carried out systematically and organically, taking both the domestic and foreign situation into account' (see Mommsen 1981: 32-33).<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to Russian workers, German laborers did not take over property of industrial enterprises or interfered with management's functions. In overwhelming majority of cases the workshop managers worked as they did before. Instead laborers fought for a greater role of factory councils (*Betriebsräte*) in factory affairs. The idea of factory councils originated in the socialist quarters but was eagerly captured by German workers. Factory councils have been viewed as a primary way to socialization of industries (Moore 1978, Morgan 1975, Oertzen 1963).

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<sup>43</sup> It is necessary to point out that a great deal of labor radicalism was mitigated by a conclusion of the so-called Stinnes-Legien agreement between employers and unions which introduced an eight-hour working day, collective bargaining, and removal of "yellow" company trade unions.

The fact that workers were not eager to resort to overt violence by no means implied that they were passive and complacent. On January 13, 1919 delegates of councils and trade unions at the conference in Essen announced a beginning of socialization of the Ruhr mines and elected their own “commission of nine” to negotiate with the government and implement the program of socialization. The labor activists argued that ownership of the means of production was to pass to society in general, but the plant were to be administered by the factory councils (Morgan 1975: 224-225). The delegates of the conference adopted a manifesto which explained what they meant by nationalization:

Nationalisation: some people cannot imagine what this word means. It means that an end must be put to the exploitation of the workers by the employers, that the large plants should be taken away from the capitalists and made the property of the people. No one should henceforth be able to enrich himself through the work of others; rather all workers ought to benefit fully from the results of their work. A start should be made with the mines, the mineral resources, which more than anything else belong rightfully to the people and not to a few privileged individuals (Cited in Mommsen 1981: 34)

The new authorities did not feel much enthusiasm for turning management of one of the key branches of the economy over to workers’ councils, yet the labor movement in the Ruhr was too strong to be ignored. The government proposed a mixed system of management in which workers, managers, and the state together would control the operation of the coalmines.

The miners in Ruhr were not satisfied with half-measures. In early February they issued an ultimatum: the government must accept the factory council system for the mines, assign to the

councils the rights of supervision, and recognize the authority of the commission of nine. The authorities were given ten days to accept these conditions, otherwise miners would begin a general strike.

The *Betriebsräte* movement spread to other regions. Halle has become another stronghold of labor radicalism. Like Ruhr coalminers, workers in Halle demanded socialization through factory councils. Although in many respect labor movement in Halle resembled the Ruhr movement, there were important differences: all branches of industry and transport participated in the movement; the movement was less spontaneous and better organized; the labor was politically united under the leadership of the Independent Socialists (Morgan 1975: 229).

When in late February the general strike was announced in Berlin the government began to retreat. All of sudden, the government officials became receptive to the idea of socialization. On March 1, the SPD faction in the National Assembly presented a resolution calling for socialization. The next day Berlin was placarded with official announcements “Socialization is on the march!” and “Socialization is here!” At its party congress on March 22-23 the SPD leaders promised to include councils in the new constitution. Ebert announced introduction of appropriate legislation (Meier 1975: 65). The conflict over socialization was channeled towards routine legislative procedures.

(5)

The November revolution did not alter the existing system of administrative allocation of *provision* which was established in Germany in 1915-16. The system of administrative allocation of food functioned as before. The Allied blockade remained in force until July 1919; after the armistice it had been rendered even stricter (Gerschenkron 1966: 99).



Because authorities could ensure only meager rations, the subsistence crises created a phenomenon known as a *Hamsterfahr*, a self-supply activity similar to the Russian sackmanism. Thousands of families from the industrial areas left cities with the early morning trains for the countryside and returned home with the late trains, laden with sacks, crates, and baskets. Moeller (1986: 71) reports:

In the most benign cases, scroungers not eager to aid with the potato harvest and without the resources required to deal on the black market might use forged papers authorizing the confiscation of agricultural products, or might disguise themselves as nurses and plead from farm to farm for food for their hospital, thanking contributors with prayers. Still others resorted to theft from peasant homes, and in the early spring of 1919 a peasant's morning visit to his pastures might reveal the remains of animals butchered on the spot the night before; by the summer, the numbers of such incidents of direct, criminal attacks on peasant property had expanded greatly....New forms were also apparent in the collective action of workers to requisition directly the supplies that the authorities could not provide. In one instance, the district administrator in Hamm, a city on the edge of the Ruhr, reported that the entire work force of a mine had walked off the job to look for food. Joined by other workers and numbered over a thousand, they split up into armed groups of two or three hundred and, decked out with red flags and singing revolutionary songs, they set out into the countryside. Teams of four or five went from farm to farm demanding all available resources; any food taken was divided up immediately. Police attempts to control the situation led to an exchange of gunfire and the death of one peasant member of a local militia.

Except few cases like the ones described above, the expropriation of food in Germany did not, however, take such massive character like in Russia. Unlike in Petrograd and Moscow, where armed mobs of soldiers and criminals broke in houses and searched for valuables, the civil order in Berlin and other German cities was generally maintained.

(6)

Unlike the revolutionary Russia, the postwar Germany did not experience a major land reform, the absence of which was regarded by some scholars (William Roepke) as “one of the great mysteries of our time” (Gerschenkron 1966: 92-93). This mystery can be explained by the fact that in the most of the European Russia peasant smallholdings coexisted side by side with large estates, a situation most propitious to coercive redistribution. In Germany these two types of land tenure usually did not mix: either smallholdings predominated (in the West and South of Germany) or large Junker estates that used a hired migrant workforce (in the East).

To sum up, in both countries, Russia and Germany, collapse of state authority brought about increase in coercive redistributive action. This action resulted more from wartime economic disorganization and political collapse than ideological projects of radical parties. In Germany this movement was more organized than in Russia. Yet, scope and intensity of radical redistributive action, however, were much greater in Russia than in Germany. In Germany labor movement just constrained and modified operations of market economy but did not, by and large, change the existing property relation. In Russia coercive expropriation began to transform property relations, both in industry and countryside. It is important to note that this process started before the Bolsheviks' coming to power in October.

State Incapacitation versus State Consolidation: Russia and Germany

(1)

The material presented above supports the thesis that breakdown of state authority leads to property redistribution. But why did state breakdown result in a greater coercive redistributive action in Russia than in Germany? What was different in Russia if not the Bolsheviks? Below I will argue that difference in intensity of socialization should be attributed to different distribution of power in these countries. In Russia the new government turned out to be weak, ineffective, and unable to uphold social order. In Germany the new government was able to consolidate power.

Let's consider Russia first. Most researchers, following Lenin's and Trotsky's footsteps, conceptualized the political structure of 1917 in terms of the "dual authority," a coexistence of the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of the Workers' and Soldier' Deputies. Yet, it is also a common place in historiography of the Russian revolution that the Provisional government had all responsibility but did not have power while the Soviet had all power but did not bear any responsibility. Who did possess power then? If dual authority did take place, one center of authority should have prevented another center from pursuing policies that threatened vital interests of its social constituencies. If the provisional government expressed interests of the Russian bourgeoisie and landowners, why could not it stop the campaign of forced requisitions of their possessions?

This paradox can be easily resolved if one assumes that the Russian political structure in 1917 was not precisely a "dual authority" in which power was split evenly among two equal pillars. The actual locus of power was the Petrograd Soviet or, more precisely, a pro-Soviet

“revolutionary democracy,”<sup>44</sup> a coalition of workers, soldiers, and sailors in Petrograd. In fact, already in March 1917 the Provisional Government has lost most instruments of power, it was effectively incapacitated (see Sukhanov 1984: Ch.13, 15).

Why was the Provisional Government incapacitated? First, it did not control the army. In the first days of the revolution, to ensure support of the insurgent troops, the Petrograd Soviet issued the Order No 1 which instituted soldiers’ committees in all military units, subordinated these committees to the Soviet, transferred arms at the disposal of the committees, granted soldiers’ rights of citizenship and so forth. Together with abolition of the disciplinary power of the officers and instituting elective disciplinary courts this meant that officers lost power to keep soldiers in subordination. Soldiers at the front began electing their own authorities and ignoring the old chain of command. Troops affected by the Soviet’s pacifist campaign refused to fight, defied the orders of the commanders. In summer, in the wake of the ill-fated “Kerensky’s offensive” the army began a spontaneous self-demobilization. The failure of the Kornilov’s putsch in the late August only accelerated this process. By September-October 1917 the old army essentially ceased to exist as a functional institution (see Ferro 1972, 1980; Sukhanov 1984; Wildman 1980, 1987).

Second, the government, following an agreement concluded with the Petrograd Soviet, dissolved police and local administration. On February 27-28 the headquarters of police, secret police (*okhrana*), and the Corps of Gendarmes were stormed by the revolutionaries. A number of policemen were arrested, assaulted, some killed. Criminal records (files, photographs, fingerprints) were destroyed. Prisons were opened, prisoners, including criminals, set free. In

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<sup>44</sup> In the context of the revolution the term “democracy” assumed a distinct class-based meaning. The revolutionary democracy was identified with the “toiling people” in opposition to the upper and middle classes, or the “census society” (see Figes and Kolonitskii 1999, Kolonitskii 2003).

early March the government officially abolished the old police and the Corps of Gendarmes. All provincial governors and deputy governors in the provinces were dismissed about the same time, their authority being transferred to the chairmen of the provincial self-administration (*zemstvo* boards) who acted as the government's commissars. The government instructed local authorities to form citizens' militias commanded by elected officers and operating under the authority of *zemstvas*. In most cities and towns, however, such militias enjoyed little authority. In short, the provisional government deprived itself of any instruments of coercive power (Daly 2004: 205-208; Pipes 1990: 321-322).

Third, the February insurgence led to mass acquisition of weapons by workers. The insurgents obtained 40,000 rifles and 30,000 revolvers from the arsenal only. In the first days of March, under pressure of the "revolutionary democracy," the provisional government itself handed over 24,000 rifles and 40,000 cartridges to the revolutionary masses (Keep 1976: 90-91). Also, there existed many other sources: individual soldiers, police, and plundered storehouses. According to Wade's (1984: 39), there were over 50,000-60,000 rifles and other arms in Petrograd by July. After the July uprising the government attempted to collect arms but these efforts proved to be unsuccessful. In September and October arming of workers militias took organized and systematic form (see Wade 1984: 160-161).

Thus, the actual balance of power in the capital favored the Petrograd Soviet rather than the provisional government. The most perceptive members of the government came to understand precariousness of their position soon after the February revolution. On March 9, in response to the army command's appeals for the government's energetic action, the War Minister Alexander Guchkov, one the most intelligent politicians of the whole revolutionary epoch, telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief Alexeev: "The Provisional Government has no

real power of any kind and its orders are carried out only to the extent that this is permitted by the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which controls the most essential strands of actual power, insofar as the troops, railroads, [and] postal and telegraph services are in its hands. One can assert bluntly that the Provisional Government exists only as long as it is permitted to do so by the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies" (Cited in Pipes 1990: 307). The Guchkov's assessment was correct. It was a pro-Soviet "revolutionary democracy," which controlled the situation in the capital.

(2)

What was the political sociology of the "revolutionary democracy" in Petrograd? Three most active elements of radicalism can be identified: the Kronstadt sailors, the Red Guards, and the Petrograd garrison (Figs 1996). Most of the time these forces remained in the background of political developments, letting politicians playing their roles, but every time the situation turned critical they immediately appeared at the forefront of events.

The first element of radicalism was about eighty thousand sailors from the Kronstadt naval base located at Kotlin Island in the Gulf of Finland twenty miles west of Petrograd. The rebellion at Kronstadt, which began on February 28, turned into carnage. The Base Commander, Admiral Viren, was bayoneted to death, some officers were murdered at their posts, others taken to a ditch in Anchor Square and executed, more than 160 officers were arrested and imprisoned in the island dungeons (Figs 1996: 395; Mawdsley 1978: 14). By launching terror the mutineers had burned bridges behind themselves. The naval hierarchy was completely destroyed and power passed to the Kronstadt Soviet. According to an eyewitness, it was a case of "October in February." Kronstadt sailors rapidly politicized. On 16 May the Soviet declared itself a sovereign power and rejected the authority of the Provisional Government. The government,

meantime, did nothing to reestablish its authority. About six hundred Kronstadt agitators have been dispatched to the countryside to foment the unrest (Saul 1978: 89). The Kronstadt sailors, according to Trotsky (1937: 431), became the “fighting crusaders of the revolution.”

The second source of radicalism was the Red Guards, a radical workers’ militia formed in workers’ districts to protect the gains of the revolution.<sup>45</sup> After the February uprising workers militiamen refused to disarm and pledged to defend their factories and neighborhoods against criminals and counter-revolutionaries. During spring and summer 1917 the number of the Red Guards grew very fast. Petrograd workers willingly enlisted to the guards. Most of guardsmen were young and literate. A majority sympathized to one of the radical parties, usually the Bolsheviks or the Anarchists. The Red Guards were particularly strong in the most strike-prone metal factories of the Vyborg district. On the eve of the October revolution there were about 20,000 Red Guards in the capital (see Boll 1979; Figes 1996; Wade 1984, 1992).

The third element of the “revolutionary democracy” was the Petrograd garrison. The garrison played a crucial role in the fall of monarchy in February. According to the agreement between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, most of the garrison, that is about 250,000 servicemen, remained stationed in the capital after February. Political allegiances of soldiers varied; not every soldier was a socialist. The most radical part of the garrison was the First Machine-Gun Regiment, the best trained and literate troops in Petrograd, stationed in the Vyborg district, with around 10,000 men and 1,000 machine-guns. They considered themselves as guardians of the revolutionary democracy in the capital (see Figes 1996, Sobolev 1971).

To sum up, in the middle of war the capital became a site of the armed “revolutionary democracy” which neither the provisional government nor even the Petrograd Soviet were able

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<sup>45</sup> The term “Red Brigade” was first used by Bonch-Bruевич in his *Pravda*’s article on March 8 while the first actual Red Brigade was organized at the Sestroretsk Arms Factory in late March (Wade 1984: 83-84).

to control (Ferro 1980: 9). The nature of the post-February situation was well expressed by the chronicler of the revolution, the left Menshevik Sukhanov (cited in Boll 1979: 125): “The entire armed forces of the state, as never and nowhere before, found themselves in the hands of the Revolutionary Democracy and in its interest could, at any moment, be directed against whomever it pleased. There were no armed forces at the disposal of the properties classes against Democracy and the Soviet.”

(3)

How did this unusual distribution of power affect a property institution? The most economically consequential outcome of turmoil in the capital was that the Petrograd workers obtained arms. Keep (1976: 90-91) described the transformation which took place in the workplace after the insurrection: “When the men returned to work, some of those with arms took on the function of patrolling factory premises and maintaining order in industrial districts of the city. At first they pursued limited aims of a defensive kind: for example restraining ‘hooligan elements’ who were liable to get drunk and engage in actions that would discredit the new order. It was not long, however, before they began to direct their energies against suspected ‘counter-revolutionaries’, including of course managerial personnel.”

The disintegration of authority institutions and arming of workers resulted in a significant change in structural conditions of class relation in workplace. Under normal conditions, an employer had a backup of the legal enforcement institutions of the state: laws, regulations, courts, police, etc. But what could an employer do if police and the system of administration were abolished by the revolution wholesale? The coercive relationship between workers and management was reversed: the workers possessed arms and organizational structures (the Red Guards), whereas management had lost its factory guards and the ultimate threat of troops and



police. The bosses who refused to make concessions often were subjected to enforced appearance before the soviet or house arrest (Trotsky 1937: 423; Wade 1984: 67-68).<sup>46</sup>

By taking advantage of favorable change in conditions of bargaining, workers put forward a set of new demands: higher wages, the 8-hours working day, control over management, better treatment of workers, etc. These demands added a heavy burden on payroll. Due to shortage of fuel and raw materials and new demands of employees, many enterprises became unprofitable. Industrialists complained that the ‘inordinate demands’ of the workers made management of the enterprise impossible (Mandel 1983: 137).

Employers closed their companies, declared lockouts, and transferred their capital abroad. In Petrograd, for instance, the British owners of textile factories liquidated their accounts and shipped finished and semi-finished goods to nearby Finland (Mandel 1983: 137). Between March and July 568 factories employing more than 100,000 workers shut down operations (Smith 1983: 168). As Trotsky (1937: 413) summed up, “The whole misfortune lay in the absence of a “real” government. The Provisional Government was paralyzed by the Soviet; the reasonable leaders of the Soviet were paralyzed by the masses; the workers in the factories were armed; moreover, almost every factory had in the neighborhood a friendly regiment or battalion.”

The spread of lockouts pushed workers to the idea of transferring factories in the hands of the state. The inference seemed natural because the majority of private factories were working for the war, and that alongside them were state enterprises of the same type. Already in the

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<sup>46</sup> Some managers attempted to resist the worker demands but without success: “On July 7, the directors of the large Skorokhod Factory told the factory committee that they would no longer pay the members of the factory workers’ militia; the workers retaliated by seizing the commercial director and holding him until he ordered immediate payment of the militiamen” (Wade 1984: 126).

summer of 1917 delegations of workers began to arrive in the capital from the various parts of Russia with demands that the factories should be taken over by the treasury, since the shareholders had stopped financing them. Sequestrations were consistently growing in numbers but still relatively few (Ferro 1980: 147). As the authorities refused undertaking decisive measures workers came to the idea that it was necessary to change the authorities (Trotsky 1937: 421).

Thus, the very logic of the economic collapse induced workers to call for the soviet power (Mandel 1983: 141). By mid October the issue was not whether a socialist government, but when and how (Smith 2003: 221). On October 18 the All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees in Petrograd voted for the following resolution:

The government of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie is destroying the country, having demonstrated and itself understood its total inability to wage war, which it is dragging out for the sole purpose of smothering the revolution. It does nothing for the struggle against economic dislocation. Just the opposite – its entire economic policy is directed at aggravating the dislocation in the aim of starving the revolution to death and burying it under the debris of general economic ruin. The salvation of the revolution and the goals put forward for it by the toiling masses lies in the transfer of power to the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies (Mandel 1984: 289)

To sum up, Russian workers began taking control over industrial establishments before the Bolshevik coup d'état and, to a large extent, independently of the Bolsheviks. They did so in order to maintain production and means of living under conditions of the economic calamity.

Their action was driven by the need of survival, not by ideological motives. Because poor economic conditions of individual enterprises hinged upon lamentable economic conditions of other industries and transportation, more and more workers' representatives called for socialization and state regulation of industries at the national level. The Bolshevik insurrection in October just enacted the distribution of power which was shaping its form on the ground.

(4)

One question needs to be addressed before we move on to discussing distribution of power in Germany. If, as indicated above, the pro-Soviet revolutionary democracy in Petrograd was a decisive force behind the scene from the beginning, why did it take eight months before the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government and seized state authority? Why did it take so long for radicals to monopolize power?

The issue needs to be viewed in perspective. The collapse of the autocracy did not preordain the nature of the conflict that followed (Rosenberg and Koenker 1987: 297). Initially, most soldiers of the Petrograd garrison did not fight against the Provisional Government. Quite to the contrary, they supported the government hoping that it would bring long-awaited peace and land reform. This hope was reinforced by the Soviet's appeal for peace without annexations and indemnities of March 14. This appeal strengthened the common expectation that war soon would be over.

The optimism of soldiers began to wane in the end of April when the public learned about the Foreign Minister Miliukov's message to the Allies in which he had reconfirmed Russia's determination to fight until the total victory. The news of the Miliukov's communiqué outraged soldiers and civilians. On April 20, thousands of soldiers and workers came out to demonstrate on the streets of Petrograd. Many of them carried banners with slogans calling for the removal of

the ‘ten bourgeois ministers’, for an end to the war and for the appointment of a new revolutionary government. They saw the Miliukov note as a betrayal of the revolution’s promise to bring war to a democratic end. The demonstration of about 25,000 soldiers of the Finland, Moscow and Pavlov regiments urged the Soviet to take power (Figs 1996: 38-382, Wildman 1987: 11-13).

An appeal to the Soviet government was natural. In the days of the first Russian Revolution of 1905 the Petrograd Soviet was a champion of the workers’ power. In 1917, when the Soviet was reborn, workers viewed the moderate socialist leaders who dominated the Soviet as part of ‘revolutionary democracy’, as their ‘comrades’ (Mandel 1983: 158). Therefore they found it difficult to comprehend why the Soviet did not wish to take power. The numerous rallies and demonstrations of workers and soldiers under the slogan “All Power to the Soviets!” were purported to prompt the Soviet into a decisive action.

The Soviet leaders, meantime, avoided taking responsibility. The Menshevik and the SR leaders, who dominated the Petrograd Soviet, followed the Marxian thesis according to which the Russian revolution was a “bourgeois” revolution. Hence the bourgeoisie (i.e. the Provisional Government), not the Soviet, ought to lead the Russian democratic transformation at this stage. In this view they sided with the bourgeois politicians (the “ministers-capitalists”) in the Provisional Government. The April events showed the full absurdity of the situation in which the Soviet, the only center of power, enjoyed almost unlimited authority over troops and workers without assuming responsibility for military and state administration (Wildman 1987: 13).

Meantime, the mood of the armed masses was far from doctrinal schemes. The war continued. On June 16 the Russian army launched an offensive at the Southwestern front. Two days later the Provisional government decided to send five hundred machine guns with their

crews of the First Machine-Gun regiment to the front. This decision, whatever its strategic merits, contradicted the agreement between the government and the Soviet, according to which the troops that had participated in the revolution, should not be sent to the front. The outraged machine-gunners decided to take control of the capital and pass power to the Petrograd Soviet. They sent their representatives to other regiments, factories, and Kronstadt for support. The farewell concert for the departing soldiers in the People's House, where the regiment resided, turned into a major anti-government rally.

On July 4 soldiers of the garrison and sailors from Kronstadt established control over the center of Petrograd. The columns of troops and workers converged around Taurida Palace, the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet, and called for socialist members of the Provisional Government for negotiations.<sup>47</sup> Miliukov (1921: 243-244) left an interesting account of events unfolded before Taurida Palace that day:

Taurida Palace became the focus of the struggle in the full sense of the word.

Throughout the day armed military units gathered around it, demanding that the Soviet, at last, take power... [Around 4 p.m.] the sailors of Kronshtadt arrived and tried to penetrate the building. They called for the Minister of Justice, Pereverzev, to explain why the sailor Zheleznyakov had been arrested at Durnovo's villa.

Tsereteli came out and told the hostile crowd that Pereverzev was not in the building, that he had already handed in his resignation and was not longer a minister: the first was true, the second not. Deprived of a direct excuse, the crowd for a while was at lost what to do. But then the shouts resounded that the ministers

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<sup>47</sup> The Mensheviks Skobelev and Tsereteli, the Socialist Revolutionaries Chernov, Pereverzev and Poshekhonov (all formally accountable before the Soviet) joined the Laborite Kerensky in the coalitional Provisional Government in early May.

were responsible for each other: an attempt was made to arrest Tsereteli but he managed to escape inside the palace. Chernov emerged from the palace to calm the crowd. The crowd immediately threw itself on him and searched him for weapons. Chernov declared that under such circumstances he would not talk. The crowd fell silent. Chernov began a long speech about the activities of the socialist ministers in general and his own, as Minister of Agriculture, in particular. As for the Kadet ministers, bon voyage to them. The crowd shouted in response: "Why didn't you say so before? Declare that the land is being turned over to the toilers and power to the soviets!" A tall worker, raising his fist to the minister's face, shouted in rage: "Take power, you s.o.b., when they give it to you!" Several men from the crowd seized Chernov and dragged him toward the car, while others pulled him towards the palace. Having torn the minister's coat, the Kronshtadt sailors shoved him into the car and declared that they would not let him go until the Soviet took power. Some workers broke into the hall where the Soviet was in session, shouting: "Comrades, they are beating up Chernov!" In the midst of the turmoil, Chkheidze appointed Kamenev, Steklov, and Martov to liberate Chernov. But Chernov was liberated by Trotsky, who just arrived on the scene. The Kronshtadt sailors obeyed him and Trotsky accompanied Chernov back to the hall.

In the evening crowds of thousands of soldiers and workers gathered around the Taurida Palace. Apparently the SR-Menshevik's majority in the Soviet was not prepared to such unexpected turn of events. Fortunately for them on the night of July 4 and 5 loyal regiments arrived and relieved the Soviet from the captivity of the unruly "revolutionary democracy." As it became known later, the authorities presented the soldiers documents indicating that Lenin was a

German spy and convinced them to step against the Bolsheviks. As it often happens in political contestation, if one side does not take an initiative, the other side does.

Why were the Bolsheviks so indecisive? The Bolshevik leaders were still not certain about the actual balance of power in the country.<sup>48</sup> Russia as a whole was larger and politically more conservative than the revolutionary Petrograd. The position of the army at the front was not clear. The Bolsheviks were concerned that troops loyal to the Provisional Government would arrive and suppress the premature insurrection. In other words, the balance of power, they believed, was not decisively tipped to the radical forces yet (see Trotsky 1937: 62-84). Thus, instead of being the vanguard of the “revolutionary democracy,” as they were often depicted, in July 1917 the Bolsheviks found themselves dragging in the tail of events.

What was the immediate cause of the July uprising? The uprising was sparked by a refusal of a part of the Petrograd garrison to be transferred to the front.<sup>49</sup> It’s difficult to imagine such blatant military insubordination in any other of the belligerent nations. It indicated that disorganization of the army had reached the critical point. The dismal failure of the broadly advertised “Kerensky’s offensive” in July when troops refused to go in offensive *en masse* proved this point better than anything else.

In August, a newly appointed Commander-in-Chief Kornilov put forward a program in which he demanded restoration of the order: imposition of the martial law throughout the country, the restoration of the death penalty, the militarization of railroads and munitions industry (Figs 1996: 445). However, the Prime Minister Kerensky accused Kornilov in a

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<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the conventional perception of the Bolsheviks’ organization as a highly centralized, conspiratorial and single-willed order of professional revolutionaries, during the July uprising the Bolsheviks’ leaders turned out to be divided and ineffective. Although the Petrograd Committee and the Military Organization of the party insisted on guiding the insurrection, the Central Committee wavered (Rabinowitch 1968).

<sup>49</sup> A more general cause of rebellion was, of course, a decision to launch an offensive. Some researchers viewed this decision as a Russian democracy’s fatal blunder (Ferro 1971, Heenan 1987).

counter-revolutionary conspiracy and intention to install a military dictatorship. Kornilov was dismissed from his position and arrested. The Kornilov's debacle demoralized the officers' corps and effectively destroyed the last elements of order and discipline in the army. The failure of the troops sent by Kornilov to pacify revolutionary Petrograd meant that the government did not longer have reliable military force at its disposal. The last serious obstacle for the revolutionary democracy on the road to power, the army command, was removed.

It is critically important that the rebellion of the late October, like the one in the early July, was ignited by the proposed transfer of troops of the Petrograd garrison. Around October 6, 1917, when the Russian Navy suffered a major defeat in the Baltic Sea and there emerged a direct threat of the German advance to Petrograd, the government announced its intention to relocate about a half of the Petrograd garrison to the northern front. This news touched off vehement protests among soldiers and a thunderstorm in the left press. The radicals claimed that the government was planning to move to Moscow and to abandon the capital for Germans in order to suppress the revolution. These allegations were fueled by the revelations of the former speaker of the State Duma Rodzianko who declared, "Petrograd appears threatened... I say, to hell with Petrograd!" (Figes 1996, Rabinowitch 1976).

The threat of transfer to the front resulted in an explosion. Soldiers unanimously proclaimed their lack of confidence in the Provisional Government and demanded the transfer of power to the Soviet. The Petrograd Soviet (now dominated by the Bolsheviks) created a Military-Revolutionary Committee for defense of the capital. On October 21 the MRC proclaimed itself the ruling authority of the garrison, sent its commissars to the regiments, and informed the General Staff that all orders not countersigned by the MRC would not be implemented. By 25 October the capture of the garrison in the capital had already been



completed; the Provisional Government became defenseless (Figes 1996, Rabinowitch 1976, Wade 2003).

As Moore (1978: 374) summed up the gist of the story: “Far more important than the strength of the Bolshevik side was the weakness of the Provisional Government. This weakness was due to its inability or unwillingness to end the war, settle the land question, and get supplies moving into the cities, as well as more immediate events such as recent fiasco of an attempted right-wing military coup under General Kornilov, which alienated what moderate support the government still had. In this connection it is important to recognize that the insurrection did not take the form of crowds of workers streaming forth – either armed or unarmed – to attack the government’s strong points. What it amounted to instead was just a changing of the guards in front of a series of public buildings, usually with some argument or a bit of token resistance.”

(5)

Why were the German workers unable to enforce a radical popular socialization of the Russian kind? The answer is that in Germany power configuration was different. In Russia “revolutionary democracy” controlled the power institutions in the capital and the major cities. In Germany the situation was the opposite; the provisional government has managed to consolidate its power and suppress radical forces.

It was not obvious in the beginning, however. In November 1918 a political situation in Germany was a more pro-Soviet than one in Russia in February 1917. Broué (2005: 158) argues, “In reality, the chances of a German soviet revolution appeared on 9 November 1918 to be more serious than those of a Russian soviet revolution in February 1917... In Russia, the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries were in majority across the country, including the Petrograd Soviet. In Germany, on the contrary, the revolutionaries, left Independents, International

Communists and Spartakists, partisans of the dictatorship of the proletariat, led some of the most important councils.” According to the agreement signed between the government and the Soviet on November 22, the Executive Committee Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils was the ‘supreme organ of the revolution.’ It claimed a ‘dictatorial power’ and was empowered to appoint and dismiss members of the Ebert’s government as well as the officials of the individual states (Coper 1955: 112-113; Ryder 1967: 171).

Unlike the Russian radicals who supported the idea of the Constituent Assembly until their seizure of power, the German radicals opposed the convocation of the National Assembly from the very beginning. The radicals envisioned the republic of the soviets and rejected the ideas of the “bourgeois” parliamentary republic. Richard Müller, the Chairman of the Berlin Executive Council, declared that the assembly would meet only over his dead body (Ryder 1967: 170).

What was political sociology of the revolutionary forces in Berlin? Three elements of radicalism can be identified. The first element was the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, a group of radical labor activists led by Richard Müller. This organization originated in the turners’ branch of the Metal Workers’ Union. From the very outbreak of war in 1914 turners opposed the official union’s policy of civil peace (*Burgfrieden*). During war they managed to gain control over the whole munitions industry in the capital (Moore 1978: 287). Since May 1916 Stewards organized massive workers’ strikes in Berlin. In summer 1918 the leaders of the organization formed military groups in Berlin factories in order to take control over the streets of Berlin and the other large cities with the outbreak of the revolution. These troops obtained arms from various sources, including soldiers who were home on furlough and from the army depots. Since the November

revolution ended up peacefully these troops and weapons have not been used (Coper 1955:

66). Yet the Shop Stewards remained the vanguard of radical labor in the capital.

The second group was a political amalgam of radical Independent Socialists, Spartakists and Communists. The Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) was formed in April 1917 by the former members of SPD who disagreed with a conciliatory course of the SPD in the issues of war and peace. On November 9 three leading representatives of the USPD (Haase, Dittmann, Barth) joined the six-member socialist government. Yet, the radical wing of the USPD, The Spartacus League, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, opposed the government's policy. Until December 1918 they have been working within the general structure of the USPD. Disagreement with the USPD's decision to participate in the elections to the National Assembly induced the Spartakists to leave the Independents and form a new party, the Communist Party of Germany (KPD).

The third force of radicalism was the Naval People's Division formed by the revolutionary sailors who came from Kiel and Cuxhafen to defend the revolutionary government. There were about 3,000 sailors in Berlin by the mid December. Among the radical forces only the Naval People's Division represented an organized and cohesive military force. Although formally the Naval People's Division was subordinated to the pro-government's "Republican Soldiers' Army" (*Republikanische Soldatenwehr*) it enjoyed much autonomy in its actions. In the end of December it mutinied against the authorities demanding its pay. Although the conflict was settled, the sailors' loyalty to Ebert's regime has never been restored.

In general, as Watt (1968: 207) noted, "Within Berlin there were now a half-dozen competing paramilitary organizations. Some were armed civilians, some were mutinous sailors who fled from Kiel, others amounted to little more than organized gangs of thieves, and still

others were obviously the nucleus of a Red Guard on the Russian pattern.” It is perhaps impossible to assess the combat effectiveness of the forces and their supporters but it was certain that in numbers, organization, arms, training, and discipline they were no match to a quarter-million-strong potential force of the Petrograd soldiers, sailors and the Red Guards. There were less than 10,000 men determined to fight for a revolution in Berlin. Their chances against regular units of the German army were small. The most characteristic feature of the Berlin radical movement was that for the most part it consisted of workers and party activists, not soldiers. Most of the workers were willing to strike but not to engage in armed struggle (Broué 2005: 246).

(6)

Like in Russia, in Germany the position of the armed forces proved to be a decisive factor. In sharp contrast to the Russian authorities, the German provisional government managed to secure firm support of the army command. On the second day of the revolution, November 10, 1918, Ebert and Groener (acting on behalf of Commander-in-Chief Hindenburg) reached a secret agreement according to which army recognized legitimacy of the new government and pledged to support its authority while the government committed itself to maintaining order in discipline of the troops. The army command was agreed to support Ebert but not, as the commanders made it clear, the Berlin Council.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, although the army command pledged to support Ebert, the problem was that there were not enough loyal troops in Berlin. The situation in the capital was extremely unstable. The government leaders placed hopes on returning troops as a stabilizing factor. However, when the

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<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, not being satisfied with a verbal agreement, the army command requested an official confirmation of the government’s position. On November 12 the government confirmed the retention by the officers of their power of command and explained that soldiers’ councils had an advisory role and that “their highest duty was to prevent disorder and mutiny” (Craig 1955: 350; Ryder 1967).

demobilized troops under command of General Lequis entered the city in December 10, most of them dissolved among civilians in a matter of few hours. In late December the loyal troops, the Imperial Horse Guards, failed to disarm mutinied revolutionary sailors from the People's Naval Division. The Congress of the Soviets demanded radical reform of the army including abolition of ranks and elections of the officers by the troops (the so-called Hamburg Points). On the eve of 1919 the Ebert's government was left virtually defenseless (Craig 1955: 352, Moore 1978: 303).

It seemed that the German army followed the pattern of dissolution similar to the collapse of the Russian army. However, it was not exactly the case. The key difference was that the army command remained the legitimate authority and the chain of command has not been destroyed. Following the armistice agreement signed on November 11 the army was to be demobilized in two weeks. The demobilization proceeded in a perfect order. Formally the old imperial army did not longer exist. Yet the basic institutional structure did not disappear: the army command still functioned, many discharged servicemen maintained strong sense of loyalty to their divisions and battalions. At the same time the economic turmoil did not offer many opportunities for employment. Many ex-soldiers put the blame for defeat and anarchy on revolutionaries, shirkers, criminals and agitators.

In these conditions new voluntary organizations of ex-servicemen began to emerge in mid December. The first of such organizations was created by the commander of the 214<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division General Ludwig von Maercker in Westphalia. On December 12 Maercker appealed to his superiors for permission to create a corps of armed volunteers. The new forces had to be organized along lines of storm troops, function autonomously, and maintain strict military discipline. The volunteers, who initially have been called *Freiwillige Landesjägerkorps*

but quickly shortened to *Freikorps*, were required to have training in the Imperial Army. They were enlisted for the period of thirty days, which was renewable every month. The volunteers were promised generous pay and benefits. In early January a dozen of similar formations emerged in other places, including Berlin and Potsdam. Around the New Year's Eve Maercker troops relocated to the camp in Zossen, in vicinity of Berlin. On January 4 the Freikorps paraded before the pleasantly surprised Ebert and Noske showing that reliable troops willing to fight the revolutionaries did exist (Watt 1968: 250-251).

(7)

The violent clash between the Freikorps and the radicals came about in early January. At that time struggle between the government and the radicals over control of Berlin police forces came to its culmination. On January 4, 1919 the President of Berlin police Emil Eichhorn, a left-wing Independent Socialist, was dismissed by the Prussian state government which intended to consolidate its power in the capital. Eichhorn refused to resign and appealed to the Independent Socialists for support. On January 5 at the meeting in the police headquarters of about seventy activists including the Independents, the Revolutionary Shops Stewards, and two Communists (Liebknecht and Pieck) it was decided to launch the armed uprising (Watt 1968: 255-256).

On January 6 a general strike began and a massive workers' demonstration went on the streets of Berlin. The insurgents occupied several ministries, newspapers and telegraph. The next day they seized the Brandenburg Gate, editorial office of the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts*, the government's printing office and most important railroad stations. By January 8 the government controlled only few buildings in the center of Berlin. Ebert and his supporters were barricaded in the Reich Chancellery. The confused sailors of the Naval People's Division declared their

neutrality. The Minister of Defense Noske managed to flee the capital to a suburb Dahlem, from where he hoped to prepare an assault on the revolutionaries (Watt 1968: 254-258).

As the uprising expanded the resistance stiffened. In several places the insurgents entangled in fierce street fight with the newly formed *Freikorps*. By January 10 the uprising lost its momentum. On that day, using heavy artillery, mortars, and flamethrowers, the *Freikorps* of Colonel Reinhard launched a storm of the *Vorwärts* and seized the building. On January 11, 1919 the *Freikorps* mobilized by Noske in Dahlem began marching to the center of the city. On the night of January 11 to 12 they recaptured the Berlin police headquarters. On January 12 the troops reestablished control of most of Berlin and began operations against the revolutionaries. The Revolutionary Shop Stewards called off the strike. The authorities began arrests among revolutionaries. On January 15, the Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were arrested and brutally murdered by the *Freikorps* (Broue 2005: 256).

Suppression of the radical forces in Berlin allowed the government reestablishing its power in other areas, first of all in the port cities of the north, the birthplace of the revolution: Hamburg, Bremen, Wilhelmshaven, Cuxhaven, and Bremenshaven. In February, once the authority was consolidated in the capital and in the north, the government could deal with the radical labor movement in Ruhr, Halle and other places.

Defeats of revolutionaries in major cities showed the Communist leaders in Berlin that the initiative was slipping from their hands. A new leader of Communists, Leo Jogiches, decided that if the Communists did not strike immediately the last chance for the revolutionary takeover would be lost. By that time the Communists rejected the putchist tactics and decided to employ the main weapon of the proletariat, a general strike.

On March 3 the Communist newspaper *Die rote Fahne* called for a general strike.

The central workers' demand was disarming the Freikorps. If the Freikorps were neutralized, the leaders reasoned, workers could dictate their conditions to the government. At first the strike was successful. However, the leaders have not been able to restrain the radical forces. Armed revolutionaries attacked and captured several Berlin police stations. The Naval People's Division, which declared neutrality in January, this time decided to join the insurgents. All this gave the government a perfect pretext to use the full force of the Freikorps. Noske declared the state of siege and ordered "any person found with arms fighting against government troops to be shot instantly". The insurgents have been pushed to the east of Berlin where they have been rounded by the troops. Most of the revolutionary sailors were massacred by the Freikorps. About two thousand of insurgents have been killed, including the leader of the KPD Jogiches (Broué 2005: 272; Watt 1968: 303-308).

As the Freikorps pacified the radical labor movement in Berlin and other German cities, the government undertook strenuous efforts to ensconce the new regime in the constitutional framework. The political instability stemmed to a large extent from incomplete legitimacy of the new regime. In the turbulent days of winter 1918-1919 almost any military or paramilitary organization, from the Kiel sailors to the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, could seize power in Berlin and declare itself the guardian of the revolution. The regime could not be stabilized until it received popular approval and constitutional framework.

On February 6, 1919 the National Assembly convened in the Weimar under protection of the Freikorps. The Assembly adopted a temporary constitution. On February 11 Friedrich Ebert was elected a provisional President. A new coalitional government with Phillip Scheidemann of the SDP as a Chancellor was formed the next day. On February 24 the delegates received a draft



of a new Constitution. In mid March the political situation began showing first indications of stabilization. Most Germans did not want politics anymore, they wanted order and stability. There emerged signs of relief of food crisis: the Allies decided to begin food relief. On March 12 the first American food ship arrived to Hamburg with six tons of flour.

The project of socialization was one of the first casualties of political stabilization (Craig 1978: 413). The new constitution guaranteed rights of citizens, including property rights. Under provisions of the constitution, “private economic interests suitable for socialization” could be taken over by the state. In addition, the state reserved the right to induce private companies to combine with others in the same industry. These provisions, however, remained only abstract principles. Almost all recommendations of commission on socialization have been ignored. The commission came to conclusion that the government had no intention of socializing anything. On April 7, 1919 it resigned in a body (Watt 1968: 313). The major proponent of planned economy, the Minister of Economy Wissell, left the government in July (Rosenberg 1936: 109).

(7)

As the material presented above indicates, the campaign for socialization was a function of a shifted balance in relations of labor and employers which resulted from the breakdown of a state authority. These socialization demands reached their highest point in January and February when anarchy reigned in the streets of the major German cities. As the pro-government paramilitary formations suppressed the radical forces and political situation began showing tendency towards normalization, the projects of socialization were placed on a shelf.

An example of the Bavarian Soviet Republic provides additional evidence supporting a state-breakdown explanation of coercive expropriation. Munich, where the Independent Socialists led by Kurt Eisner came to power in November, remained the stronghold of radicalism

until early May, when it was recaptured by the Freikorps. Before it fell to the counterrevolutionary forces, the Bavarian capital represented a unique laboratory of political and economic innovations, often bordering with farce. Like elsewhere, the revolution in Bavaria was a result of collapse than a seizure of power (Mitchell 1965: 3, 110). Like elsewhere, the driving force of the revolution was a coalition of radical soldiers, sailors and workers. However, because the economic situation in Bavaria was better than in the northern German cities, the Eisner's government did not attempt to undertake any serious measures of socialization. It was postponed to indefinite future (Mitchell 1965: 120-121).

After several months of economic disorganization economic policies became more radical. The city ran out of coal, prices skyrocketed, factories closed, there were 45,000 unemployed. In mid March the government began serious consideration of a socialization program. On April 6, 1919 the Independent Socialist Ernst Toller and his comrades (known as the "Coffeehouse Anarchists") proclaimed a Bavarian Soviet Republic and announced a cascade of sweeping reforms: "The press would be socialized along with the mines, the banks would be reorganized and so would the bureaucracy, special revolutionary tribunals would replace the courts, living quarters would be registered, foodstuffs would be confiscated, the bourgeoisie would be disarmed and the proletariat armed, the Red Army formed, the Soviet Republic defended, the International greeted, the World Revolution extended" (Mitchell 1965: 310).

They were not given much time to implement these far-reaching reforms. After six days of the "Coffeehouse Anarchists" rule, the Communists (Max Levien, Eugene Leviné, Towia Axelrod) came to power in the mid April. They proclaimed dictatorship of proletariat. The exiled government of Majority Socialists in Bamberg declared food blockade of Munich which was cut off the rest of Germany. In response the Communists resorted to the drastic measures: "Because

of the blockade, the *Vollzugsrat* found it necessary to order the confiscation of all available foodstuffs in the city. This resulted in the entering and searching of private homes by groups of armed men, and permitted thefts and violations of privacy which the regime (though it tried) was helpless to control” (Mitchell 1965: 324).

It is noteworthy that political radicalization in Munich followed step by step the deepening economic crisis. As increasingly radical groups (the Independent Socialists, the “Coffeehouse Anarchists,” and the Communists) came to power, the more radical policies of coercive expropriation were declared (if not always implemented). Because Munich was cut off the rest of the country and did not have communication with other revolutionary centers these developments provide a unique insight in the evolution of radical policies in the city under blockade where regular authorities suddenly had disappeared.

### Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter I have sought to explain why in Russia, in contrast to other European nations defeated in war, particularly Germany, the breakdown of the central state authority had resulted in dramatic redefinition of property relations. I argued that coercive socialization, which had taken place in these countries, could be conceptualized as a specific form of coercive redistributive action. Hence, as the first step towards the explanation, I suggested examining scope and intensity of coercive redistributive action in these two countries after breakdown of authorities.

As I found out, in both countries, Russia and Germany, various measures of coercive expropriation of economic assets had taken place. Yet in Russia these processes had a greater scope and intensity than in Germany. Most importantly, only in Russia did they transform existing property relations, while in Germany, by and large, they did not.

What was unique in coercive redistributive action in Russia that turned it into large-scale socialization? Was it a massive and spontaneous land reform in the countryside, something that was clearly lacking in Germany? True, land redistribution in Russia represented the most ubiquitous form of coercive expropriation. Yet, the revolution in the countryside did not involve the change in the nature of economic relations. Division of landlord estates and absorption of separate peasant holdings by the commune did not lead to a socialized agriculture. Using the Marxian phraseology, such redistribution merely generated petty-bourgeois capitalism. As Lenin insisted, land nationalization would not be socialism. Peasants wanted land, not collective farms. As soon as they obtained land, they reverted to the century-old mode of self-sufficient production. The whole transformation in the countryside reinforced the archaic microcosm of the commune (*obshchina*), rather than prefigured a modern collectivized agriculture.

Efforts to establish centralized allocation of provision and other consumer goods did not transform the existing economic order either. All earnest efforts of the Russian authorities to enforce state monopoly of food failed. The collapse of the official food supply system triggered popular expropriation (“we ourselves will go and search”) and pushed most transactions to the black market. In 1917, war socialism in this sphere was declared but not enforced. As far as provision was concerned, Russia experienced more anarchy and disorganization than socialization.

In fact, it was socialization of industrial enterprises which began transforming economic and political institutions in the most fundamental way. Under conditions of severe economic crisis and campaign of lockouts Russian workers began taking management of enterprises into their own hands. Although direct seizures of enterprises were relatively few and the process of socialization in most cases reached only an intermediate stage (control over hiring/firing, sales

and supplies, company finances), the general tendency towards socialization of industrial enterprises became unambiguous. As the crisis deepened in winter 1917-1918, the campaign for workers' control turned into a spontaneous "nationalization from below".

Why did industrial socialization succeed in Russia and not in Germany? Was it because of the *revolutionary* character of the Russian labor movement and the *reformist* nature of the German labor movement? The bulk of the historical literature shows that the Russian working class was definitely militant but not necessarily revolutionary or socialist. Until mid summer 1917 labor concerns encompassed a variety of economic and political issues but rarely the demands to overthrow the government or begin nationalization (Koenker and Rosenberg 1989, Rosenberg and Koenker 1987). If one compares labor movement in Germany and Russia *at the point of the breakdown* (i.e. February 1917 and November 1918) one would find that forces of *labor radicalism* (e.g. campaign for socialization) were much stronger in Germany than in Russia. The radical labor movement in Germany failed not because it was insufficiently radical but because, as I shall explain in a minute, it was precisely a *labor movement*.

Should the processes of socialization be attributed to the Bolsheviks and their effective leadership? The process of coercive expropriation began *before* the Bolshevik takeover in October and *independently* of the Bolsheviks. The coercive redistributive action was driven by economic disorganization and necessities of economic survival, not by socialist doctrines (Smith 1983). During most of the transitional period, the Bolsheviks were politically marginalized and persecuted by the authorities. In July they failed to take power when the existing authorities in Petrograd (both the government and the Soviet) collapsed. Only in September did the radicals win a majority in the Soviets and establish themselves as a major political force. Eventually the

Bolsheviks became a critical ferment of political change, but only after several months of deepening crisis and disorganization.

In contrast to agency-centered accounts prioritizing the role of the “revolutionary labor movement” and the “revolutionary party,” this paper sought to develop a structural approach to explaining institutional outcomes of political transitions in Russia and Germany. I argued that distribution of power in the capital cities determined administrative capacities of provisional governments and the nature of transitional outcomes. Why was the German provisional government able to retain its administrative capacity while the Russian government lost its administrative capacity? As it follows from the evidence presented above, the presence of a large military force in the capital city proved to be the decisive factor in changing the balance of power from one side to the other.

During the war the Tsarist government turned Petrograd into a huge military training base and the arsenal of munitions. In February 1917, from 300,000 to 320,000 soldiers quartered in Petrograd and its vicinity. That was a unique situation among all belligerent nations. Did other countries have training and rehabilitation facilities for their troops? Yes, of course. Were there instances during the war when troops refused to go in the battle and mutinied in other countries? Yes, there were. In spring 1917 mutinies were registered in a half of all French divisions at the Western front, for instance. These troops, however, were located at the front, not in Paris and other French cities. In Russia the largest concentration of troops happened to be located in the capital city which also happened to be the largest industrial center with a large and militant working class.

Furthermore, in the days of February revolution the provisional government and the Petrograd Soviet reached an agreement, according to which authorities were not allowed to

remove revolutionary troops from Petrograd. Although by October 1917 the government had been able to reduce the number of soldiers by 80,000, every effort to withdraw troops faced violent resistance from the garrison. Every time the Provisional Government attempted to relocate troops to the front, soldiers mutinied. As the result, by October the provisional government became a hostage of a quarter million disgruntled soldiers and sailors. Expecting that the conflict would be over in the near future, they did not want to go on fighting. Eventually, when it became obvious that the government did not intend to negotiate peace, soldiers resolved to overthrow the Provisional Government. They were not able to succeed in July, because Lenin and the Bolsheviks have not yet been sure in the balance of forces which hinged upon the position of the acting army in the front. After the failure of the Kornilov's revolt in late August it became obvious that the acting army would not be able to restore the order. When the provisional government decided to remove a large part of the garrison in October, the troops mutinied again. This time the Bolsheviks provided effective leadership and the revolt succeeded.

Thus, labor radicalism and property expropriation in Petrograd and other Russian cities to a large extent came about as a by-product of plebeian praetorianism, i.e. the rule of the masses of insubordinate and disgruntled rank-and-file soldiers who took over control of an imperial capital. Presence of a huge military force undergoing rapid radicalization was critical in changing the balance of power in the capital. It is unlikely that Petrograd workers would win without soldiers. One of the Bolsheviks' leaders in Petrograd Nevsky declared in July: "No matter how well armed the working class is, the triumph of the revolution without the participation of the huge military mass is impossible" (Cited in Rabinowitch 1968: 50). Thus, soldiers, not workers or peasants, turned to be the real driving force of the revolution. "It is the state of the army, of

competing armies, not of the working class, that has determined the fate of twentieth-century revolutions” (Moore 1978: 43).

Carsten (1972: 19) explains: “Opposition to the war and to the semi-autocratic régimes no longer provided the impetus of revolutionary movements; the vast armies quickly dissolved themselves; the masses above all desired the return of peaceful and orderly conditions, and not new upheavals. All this explains why the revolution petered out so quickly, why the extreme left remained so isolated, and why the Bolshevik revolution did not spread to central Europe.” By concluding the armistice the German elite prevented the radical revolution of the Russian kind.

Would reaching a separate peace abate social radicalism? Obviously, it is difficult to give a definitive answer to this question but let’s look at the German case. In early November 1918 it seemed that radical revolution of the Russian kind was inevitable. Yet, the Kaiser abdicated and the Provisional government came to power. Immediately after the revolution, on November 11, the new government concluded the armistice with the Allies. The army began demobilization. Most soldiers wished to get home and that’s what the authorities allowed them to do. Soldiers returned to civilian life and tried to accommodate new conditions and concerns. Although the domestic situation was still extremely difficult, the issue of war ceased to be a factor of radicalization.

Why was the German communist revolution prevented? Largely, that happened because the new authorities immediately negotiated an armistice. Lack of knowledge of consequences of political action (or inaction) disappears when these consequences come about. The failure of the Russian Provisional Government to exit war prompted the German ruling class to be much more considerate when the war-induced crisis had approached the critical point. When a crisis reached the critical point the ruling elite chose to preempt a revolution from below by a “revolution from



above.” Such decision involved negotiating an armistice and forming government by moderate forces that agreed to make necessary social reforms but leave the foundations of the economic system intact. Demobilization of the army in two weeks (according to the armistice agreement) has eliminated the most dangerous force of radicalism. The German Provisional Government succeeded in gaining support of the existing institutions, facilitating a momentous agreement between trade unions and employers, and forestalling the radical socialists from coming to power. Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that *socialist revolutions in other countries (e.g. Germany) were likely to be prevented after the first socialist revolution had taken place because knowledge of consequences of authorities’ inaction induced provisional governments in other countries to act.*

Effectiveness of counterrevolutionary action was enhanced by international coordination of ruling elites. Because the revolution was a direct outcome of a war-induced economic crisis, these efforts included providing massive economic assistance (including imports of provision) to the population of nations most threatened by the revolution. Because ruling elites were effective in their preemptive action they were able to prevent the communist takeover. Yet, it proved to be far more difficult to suppress the revolutionary regime in Russia because such enterprise required a considerable amount of troops and resources in the situation when economic and military capacities of the Allied nations were seriously undermined. It was possible to contain the communist revolution but it proved more difficult to suppress it in its birthplace. *It was not an accident that a socialist experiment had to be undertaken initially in one country.*

## **Part V. Conclusion**

### **Reassessing a War-Centered Theory of Collectivist Regimes**

In this comparative historical analysis, I examined origins of collectivist regimes in total mobilization of industrial war. As I had shown in this study, World War One broke out when the European economy had attained a high degree of economic interdependence and interconnectedness. The outbreak of the all-European war changed economic conditions drastically. First, the conflict had disrupted interregional economic networks and transformed the European economy into several artificially truncated national units. As conflict intensified, the logic of economic autarky has replaced the logic of economic interdependence. Second, the Great War placed national European economies in the conditions of the intense military-economic competition. During this war, the logic of economic competition began to dominate over the logic of economic cooperation.

Due to the asynchronous pattern of European industrial development, national economic capacities of European states differed significantly. Politically, five European states I studied were considered the “great powers;” economically, however, not all of them were as powerful. Whereas the core European nations (Great Britain, France, and Germany) made significant advances on the way of industrialization, the semi-peripheral European states (Austria-Hungary and Russia) still remained at the initial stage of both industrialization and economic modernization. The “late” industrial development experienced by these semi-peripheral countries was driven primarily by their reform-minded rulers and foreign investors rather than by national capital; their economies displayed the characteristic patterns of disarticulated and dependent development. Of course, these developmental features did not preordain the collapse or the

revolutions. If the Great War had not broke out in 1914, if these countries had been left at the periphery of the conflict, or if the war had ended sooner, their relative underdevelopment would not have translated into strategic vulnerability leading to the breakdown.

The Great War did not make excuses, however. Due to massive use of new automatic weapons, the demand for munitions overcame even the most audacious expectations. One after another, major European nations confronted munitions crises and a critical challenge of catching up with their opponents. Even the most industrially developed nations found themselves in extremely difficult situations and had to increase their military production capacities in geometric proportions. If these nations failed to increase their capacities, their opponents would outrun them and win the war.

Already in the first part of the conflict (1914-1916), major European states launched extensive measures of economic mobilization. However, even these dramatic measures soon proved to be insufficient. During the second half of the conflict (1916-1918) the economic war turned into a galloping productionist race in which all national interests and national resources of the European states became subordinated to the needs of war (see McNeill 1982: Chapter 9). For the first time in history, availability of industrial and agricultural resources became a critical issue in war.

Access to war-related resources from overseas substantially eased the task of economic mobilization at home. If a nation had access to resources from its allies and colonies (e.g., Great Britain), massive imports from overseas decreased the need for economic mobilization at home. Inversely, a nation whose access to external resources was constrained (e.g., Germany) confronted a much more difficult challenge of all-out mobilization of domestic resources. Consistently with the military-fiscal theory of state formation (Downing 1992, Tilly 1990), the

interior nations that found themselves under conditions of economic blockade (Germany and Austria-Hungary) had to employ coercion-intensive methods of resource mobilization. These methods included such extraordinary measures as centralized distribution of war-related materiel, compulsory allocation of labor force, comprehensive regimentation of workplace conditions, nationalization and rationing of provision.

Wartime regimentation and extraordinary coercion-intensive methods of economic mobilization imposed severe limitations on rights and freedoms of laborers. These drastic economic measures called for enormous sacrifices and privations for the working classes. The hard-won gains of labor movement had to be sacrificed for the needs of national survival.

In most belligerent nations the labor accepted the need for sacrifice and conceded to the provisions of informal “social truce.” In the first two years of war major labor conflicts happened rarely. Nevertheless, the social truce concluded between capital and labor was not absolutely unconditional. First, most of the European population expected that war should not last indefinitely; in fact, in most countries people expected a victorious short war. Second, if success had not materialized and victory could be achieved only through sacrifice and self-limitation, all members of society should share such sacrifice equally (Davis 2000).

Among other things, such equality of sacrifice implied equality in everyday consumption. In the situation, in which most resources had been directed for needs of victory and living standards plummeted, it was expected that all citizens should have tightened their belts. It was not an accident that the Central Powers introduced measures of nationalization and rationing of food as soon as the first indicators of food shortages had shown up.

Even in the most developed European countries, however, such far-reaching measures of “war socialism” were difficult to implement. To ensure equitable consumption, the government

had to expropriate food from agricultural producers and distribute it equally among urban population. Confronted with an enormous organizational challenge and a possibility of social unrest, the nations that maintained access to the international markets, such as France, found it easier to import necessary foodstuffs than to expropriate domestic producers. On the other hand, the interior states, such as Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, did not have this option.

One of the key preconditions of success in implementing drastic regulatory measures of “war socialism” was whether or not a nation had developed a necessary economic and administrative infrastructure. In the context of this study, advanced economic infrastructure refers to sufficiently dense and developed networks of transportation and communication connecting various regions of the nation; on the other hand, administrative infrastructure refers to the predominance of modern professional bureaucracy relying on legal rationality and expert knowledge. In other words, to survive total war, governments should have a strong infrastructural power; which meant in turn that a nation in question should be sufficiently advanced in terms of their administrative efficiency.

Did the governments of the interior nations possess enough infrastructural power to withstand the test of war? My analysis showed that Germany had developed an advanced economic and administrative infrastructure, which enabled to enforce necessary regulatory policies. For almost four years in war the German command economy was able to supply armed forces with necessary goods. The German collapse in the end of the war should be explained, therefore, by factors other than infrastructural power. No matter how effectively the German economy functioned during the war, it came to depletion of necessary resources in a struggle

against a far more powerful coalition. Thus, the German collapse exemplifies *a type 1 failure*, a political breakdown due to a massive social unrest caused by *lack* of necessary resources.<sup>51</sup>

At the beginning of the Great War many thought that the Tsarist Russia should not experience shortage of anything. This large and populous country was abundantly endowed with industrial and agricultural resources necessary for strategic purposes. Russia, when compared to Germany, confronted a problem of a different kind. Russia failed to develop necessary economic and administrative infrastructure which would allow mobilizing its resources. During the war, the Russia's inept authorities had been unable to institute necessary regulatory measures that ensured equality of sacrifice among different groups of population. Shortage of food and social polarization in the cities caused massive social unrest among urban lower classes which toppled the ancient regime. The Russian collapse, therefore, exemplified *a type 2 failure*, a political breakdown due to the massive social unrest caused by state's *inability* to mobilize and allocate necessary resources.

As the Russian autocracy collapsed and the old legal order evaporated, the disgruntled lower classes launched a massive spontaneous campaign of coercive redistribution, both in the cities and countryside. As my analysis showed, this campaign started long before the Bolsheviks Coming to power and in the most part took place independently of the Bolsheviks.

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<sup>51</sup> The depletion of agricultural resources in Germany in the final stage of war was a combined result of several factors: first, even before the war domestic agricultural output did not cover domestic demand completely; second, during war about fifty percent of agricultural producers were drafted into the army; third, extensive wartime requisitions created disincentives to produce and led to substantial output reduction. Due to the Allied blockade imposed in 1915 and reinforced in 1917 Germany was not able to compensate reduced domestic output by massive imports of provision.

Was there Anything New in the Bolsheviks' Economic Policy?

Contrary to the popular image of the Russian revolution as a historical event conducted according to a preconceived ideological design, before the revolution the Bolsheviks had not worked out any specific alternative to the existing economic institutions (Malle 1985: 33). As the revolutionary soldiers and workers gained power on the streets of Petrograd in late October 1917, the Bolshevik leaders did not have any practical economic program in the agenda. The very fact of seizing power seemed almost as a miracle, and the leaders wondered for how long they would be able to stay in power before the counter-revolutionary forces overthrew them. As the Soviet power and the workers' control over the enterprises spread spontaneously over Russia, many Bolshevik leaders came to share the perception that workers' control at the enterprise level would be enough for running the socialized economy. Eventually, these leaders realized that workers' control or even self-management alone would not work as hoped. Scarcity of raw materials and disorganization of transportation indicated that such workers' control ought to be supplemented by bureaucratic regulation at the national level. To ensure the centralized direction of the socialized economy, the Bolsheviks created the Supreme Council of the National Economy (the VSNKh) in December 1917.<sup>52</sup>

Despite all talks of the "cavalry attack" on capital as launched by the Bolsheviks, the most serious measures of socialization had been introduced only after the party was in power for several months. It is true that the Bolsheviks hastened to establish control over banks and financial institutions immediately after taking the power. However, as far as most industrial

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<sup>52</sup> On June, 28 1918 the government promulgated the decree on nationalization of joint-stock companies. Even this measure, however, was adopted only after one the Bolshevik leaders, Radek, expressed his concern that the Russian capitalists could obtain the support of Germany to carry out the counter-revolution by selling their stocks and shares to German citizens (Malle 1985: 60).

enterprises were concerned, until June 1918 the impromptu measures of economic socialization continued to be undertaken in a haphazard manner which responded more to the pressures from below rather than any specific doctrinal prescriptions (see Malle 1985: 49-51).

Likewise, in the first months in power the Bolsheviks did not make major changes in food procurement. Despite the difficult situation in the cities, the Bolsheviks, like the Provisional Government before them, tried to enforce grain monopoly directing most of their effort at fighting bagmen. Only in May-June 1918, as the food crisis had rapidly exacerbated, the new authorities sanctioned direct expropriation of agricultural producers by armed groups of urban workers and soldiers (the “provision detachments” or “*prodotryady*”). To expedite expropriation in the countryside, the Bolsheviks instructed detachments to rely on assistance of the newly formed rural “committees of poor” (“*kombedy*”). Because rural poor had better knowledge of the actual amount of grain in villages they proved to be indispensable social allies in the class war launched against the well-to-do and middle peasants.

In general, leaving aside the revolutionary rhetoric of the new regime, the actual economic policies of the Bolsheviks displayed a far greater continuity with the wartime centralizing policies of the Tsarist government and the mobilization efforts of the Provisional Government than it is usually perceived. Whichever plans the Bolshevik leaders might have entertained before coming to power, once the Bolsheviks gained power they had to implement administrative measures similar to the ones adopted in Russia before the revolution. There were



relatively few organizational innovations in economic matters invented by the Bolsheviks themselves.<sup>53</sup>

One aspect of the Bolshevik policies, nonetheless, differed drastically from measures undertaken by the authorities in the Central Powers. Whereas in Germany and Austria-Hungary regulatory policies were implemented within the political framework of the existing military-bureaucratic regimes, in Russia the old regime proved incapable of implementing necessary regulatory policies. Existing social institutions (such as the bureaucratically impenetrable agriculture) prevented state-directed redistribution. As a result, like the old regime was overthrown by the radical redistributive coalition of urban and rural poor. The new authorities socialized economic assets and established administrative regulation of the socialized economy. However, instead of following the exemplary model of the German bureaucratic machine, the command economy, which began taking shape under Bolshevik rule, became a characteristically Russian phenomenon, a plebeian version of a command economy installed from below rather than from above.

#### What was Really Unique in the Russian Revolution?

The fact that the urban poor seized power and began redistributing property was not unprecedented in modern history. In fact, the first proletarian uprising, the Paris Commune, took place almost half a century before, in spring 1871. Consistently with the state-under-siege

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<sup>53</sup> Yaney (1981: 496) argued, for instance, that coercive food procurement has been adopted before the Bolsheviks: “Forced collections began before the February Revolution, and they continued under specialist rule during the following months. They were first introduced by men devoted to the institutions of private property, and their most extreme form – inciting factory workers to attack villages directly – first became government policy under a regime of liberals and socialists. Thus bolshevik methods, even the new measures introduced in the summer of 1918, did not proceed from Marxist ideology or even from choice. They were, rather, a direct outgrowth of the experience of agricultural specialists in interaction with peasants under the circumstances of a general European war... It is even incorrect to assume that Bolsheviks were more determined and consistent than their predecessors. Nicholas II and his generals were just as resolved to be ruthless in the summer of 1915 as Lenin was in 1918. The basic novelty in bolshevik methods lay in the extremity of the situation the bolsheviks faced, not in their inclinations or policies.”

argument developed in this dissertation, the uprising of Parisian workers began after several months of the Prussian siege of Paris during the final stage of the Franco-Prussian war. The Parisian workers stepped against the Thiers government, seized power, and introduced social legislation in favor of laborers including the right of employees to take over and run an enterprise deserted by its owner.

Like the Paris Commune, which followed the defeat of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War, the First Russian Revolution of 1905 followed the defeat of the Tsarist autocracy in the Russo-Japanese war. In December 1905 workers in Moscow and St. Petersburg almost succeeded in paralyzing the authority and taking state power.

At the end of the First World War, as the German monarchy collapsed in November 1918, the Independent Socialists and the Spartakists came to power in several German cities. Moderate and radical socialists were equally represented in the first transitional government. In many cities, particularly in the Rhur area, workers and their leaders were determined to pursue radical measures of economic socialization.

The forces of labor radicalism were particularly strong in Munich, where radical socialists proclaimed the Bavarian Soviet Republic in April 1919. As increasingly radical groups came to power, the more radical policies of coercive expropriation were declared (if not always implemented) in Munich.

At the end of March 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Budapest. The proclamation of power by the Council of the Peoples' Commissars followed the collapse of the old authority, which was triggered by external forces (the Colonel Vix ultimatum which demanded conceding a substantial part of the Hungarian territory to Romania). The Council of People's Commissars introduced martial law as well as declared abolition of titles and privileges,

separation of church and state, preparation to election of councils, establishment of revolutionary tribunal; finally, the council also drafted proposals for socialization of factories, apartment houses and latifundia (Mayer 1969: 555).

A cursory analysis of these episodes points to two interesting features. First, all experiments in revolutionary collectivism followed the breakdown of the old regime during war. The new authorities did not reach power until the old authorities had lost it. Second, all these historical episodes ended in a similar way: everywhere except for Russia in 1917-18, the revolutionary forces were defeated. Thus, the most unusual feature of the Russian Revolution was not that radical socialists seized the power but the fact that they were able to keep it.

Why were the Bolsheviks able to stay in power? It is not possible to give a detailed answer to this question in this study; nevertheless, two important factors, one internal and one external, should be identified. First, in contrast to most European countries, Russia possessed a weak middle classes and organized labor, the feature, which has translated into relative weakness of the moderate forces and their military formations. Second, most European nations during the war were both exhausted and unable to organize effective military intervention in Russia or provide sufficient help to the counter-revolutionary forces. Thus, the disorganization caused by war within Russia allowed the Bolsheviks to take power while the disorganization caused by the Great War outside Russia allowed the Bolshevik regime to survive in the first critical period of its existence.

#### World War as a World-Historical Event

The fact that the rise of collectivism has been determined in a large part by exogenous factors, such as world war, invites reconsidering the way comparative historical sociologists examine major political events. From my perspective, the key problem with mainstream

comparative historical analysis is its predominantly internalist focus. Many historical sociologists tend to view individual societies as discrete and self-sufficient units of analysis and to explain changes in these societies looking primarily at endogenous factors. They neglect the fact that societies represent interacting units of a larger sociopolitical system and that exogenous factors of change may be as important (or sometimes even more important) as endogenous ones.

Some perspectives in social science eschew the pitfalls stemming from such predisposition. In political science, international relations theory focuses directly at interactions among states that are viewed as units of the larger system. In macrosociology, the world system analysis and the world polity theory focus at the world-systemic dimensions of social processes. However, political scientists do not examine how these interactions shape institutional designs of individual states. Macrosociologists, on the other hand, highlight the systemic mode of determination in which local events do not have their independent dynamic outside the system; they are either systemic or anti-systemic.

As these two traditions of research, comparative and systemic, evolve, they display little mutual interest or engagement. Comparative historical sociologists factor out or abbreviate systemic effects in their studies. Systemic approaches underestimate autonomous, path-dependent logic of local developments. As a result, scholars explore determinates of social change either at the unit level or at the systemic level. Because many actual processes are determined by causal mechanisms working at both levels, scholars misinterpret the actual causal mechanisms. This conceptual problem creates errors that could be easily avoided had scholars been attuned to the interplay of domestic and systemic determinant of social events.

Analysis of world-historical events, such as world war, may serve as a powerful nexus integrating these two streams of research. As my study demonstrates, world-historical events

have enormous implications for social change in individual nations. First, these events change the balance of social and political forces and open windows of opportunities for subordinate groups that did not previously exist. Second, they forge new actors and identities. Third, these events invent new scripts and scenarios of action. Fourth, these historical events change balance of competing ideologies. A successful social revolution, for instance, may show that a certain ideological construction which existed hitherto in the minds of philosophers can be materialized. In such way, an ideology itself becomes a major agent of political change in individual countries.

A conception of “eventful temporality,” developed by Sewell (1996a , 2005), a perspective similar in its inspiration to the one adopted in this study, call for redefinition of the traditional methodological approaches in social sciences. It suggest that scholars should pay greater attention to historical events that have transformative effects on large groups of people.

The French Revolution is a good example of a world-historical event that generated momentous structural dislocations and upheavals in the world-system (Wallerstein 1990). The French Revolution not only brought about democracy, equality, and liberty to France and the large part of Europe, but also created an impetus for decolonization in many parts of the world. The French Revolution introduced new actors and new identities that soon became emulated in other countries: royalists, Girondists, Jacobines, Sanculottes, etc. It institutionalized modern political ideologies: conservatism, liberalism and socialism. Finally, it invented the very model of a mass popular revolution: prior to 1789 the word revolution did not carry the implication of a change of political regime achieved by popular violence (Sewell 1996b). After 1789, political

upheavals in Europe became interpreted against the powerful backdrop of the French revolution.<sup>54</sup>

In a similar way, the First World War became a world-historical event which changed the course of the modern history. In the early 1917, the war brought about a collapse of the formidable Russian autocracy. This event turned balance temporarily in favor of the Central Powers. However, it also changed the ideological modality of war which turned into a democratic crusade against forces of reaction and militarism. These new conditions prompted the United States to enter the war. The entry of the United States, the most powerful nation, into the Great War changed the balance of the forces in favor of the Allies, but also diverted their attention from the embattled Russia which soon fell victim of the Bolsheviks' coup. Scared by the Russian revolution, German rulers decided to preempt the upheaval from below with a "revolution from above." Nonetheless, German rulers also had to accept the humiliating conditions imposed by the victorious Allies on the Versailles treaty. Simultaneously, the cumulative effect of the war, the Russian Revolution, and the Versailles settlement destabilized the political situation in post-war Italy, where socialists launched a broad campaign for redistribution of economic assets. Like in Germany, the "red menace" generated a broad right-wing counter-mobilization, spearheaded by the Mussolini's fascists. In 1922, fascists seized power in Italy and articulated an ideology and a script for action for the extreme right in other countries.

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<sup>54</sup> The Russian political turmoil, for instance, became anticipated and framed as a revolution long before it actually broke out. The actual events of the Russian revolution were interpreted in the French terms: thermidor, etc. Kerensky tried to imitate Napoleon; others imitated other French characters (Shlapentokh 1996, 1998). In perception of many contemporaries the Russian revolution represented staging a French drama on the Russian soil. Had not the French revolution invented the model of the popular revolution, there would be no such event as the Russian *revolution*.

The moral of the story is simple: history never repeats itself. Once such world-ideological transformation has occurred, the causal determinants of subsequent political events would differ from those that existed before such change. These new determinants include not only modified structural configurations but also a new dominant discursive idiom through which subsequent events are viewed and interpreted. Emergence of the collectivist regimes after the Russian Revolution, therefore, should not be studied outside the context of the massive transformation in structures, identities, scripts, and ideologies, which the First World War and the Russian Revolution generated.

This leads us to something that I would call a “lineage effect” in comparative historical analysis. Assume one selects three representative cases of a certain structural or an institutional change (e.g., a social revolution, an establishment of welfare states, a liberation from colonial rule, or a transition to an egalitarian gender regime) and studies them separately trying to discover invariant structural configurations producing such outcomes. The problem with such research would be that one of the most important determinants of any event would be the preceding event in the sequence which not only vastly contributes to creating structural conditions for subsequent events but also produces the very discursive construction against which subsequent developments are interpreted and framed.

How can sociologists study macro-social events given the lineage effect? There are two possible ways of dealing with a lineage paradox. The first, an economical, way is to “control” for it. That means studying only the first case in the sequence in which the structural conditions have not been yet affected by the lineage effect. The second way is to study the similar events precisely as the chains in the sequence of the world-historical events. The second method allows possibility of studying several cases but in this strategy all lineage effects, direct and indirect,

should be taken into account and traced down in the most meticulous way. Of course, it is impossible to identify such effects without theoretical specification of a sequence.

#### Future Research

If one sets out to study a major macrosocial phenomenon and takes the notion of eventful temporality seriously, one should always begin with studying the first historically consequential episode of such phenomenon. Comparative sociologists gain little knowledge in examining intermediate links in the chains of events without exploring the cases chronologically. If one studies, for instance, a fascist variety of collectivist regimes, one needs examining the fascist movement in Italy and only then in other countries. Why so? Simply because fascist movements in other countries have been given a major impetus and model for action by the fascist movement in Italy. Without such reference, any study of endogenous determinants of fascism in any country would be incomplete.

Furthermore, it is impossible to understand the fascist movement in Italy without examining the First World War, the Russian Revolution, the aborted German revolution, the revolutionary episodes in Austria and Hungary, the Versailles settlement, and the combined impact of all these metamorphoses on the Italian polity. Of course, one may choose to assign causal priority to the pertinent endogenous factors (e.g., the agrarian class structure in Italy) but it is impossible to examine the contingent world-historical events of the twentieth century ignoring global political interdependence.

Keeping these considerations in mind, I see two potential directions of future research of origins of the collectivist regimes. The first line of research would explore emergence of a fascist variety of collectivist regimes, with a specific focus on Italy.



The political dynamic generated by the First World War was critical for the fascist mobilization in this country. In Italy, like in other countries, war produced major economic and political crises in that authorities failed to resolve. Moreover, war forged major radical forces struggling for transforming property relations in industries and the countryside. Like in other countries, post-war Italy found itself on the brink of state breakdown: the central authorities seemed equally unable to prevent spontaneous land redistribution in countryside, seizures of factories in major cities, and annexationist adventures of the right extremist groups abroad, like the D'Annunzio seizure of a disputed city of Fiume in Dalmatia in 1919.

In 1919-1920 the political situation in Italy seemed to unfold according to the revolutionary scenario. The central state authority proved to be ineffective while the political situation in Italy could be properly described as a multiple authority. However, there were several conditions that made social situation in Italy more similar to the German conditions in 1918-19 than the Russian conditions in 1917-18. First, due to the prevalence of small peasant holdings, relative weakness of communal structures, and the relative insignificance of large land estates (except for some areas in the Southern Italy), the impact towards land redistribution in Italy was markedly lower than one in Russia. Second, in the cities a large propertied class of middle and small bourgeoisie fervently resisted any attempts of economic redistribution advocated by the radical labor. Workers and the urban poor did not outnumber the propertied and educated urban strata to the degree they did so in Russia. In other words, like in Germany, a relatively large middle and lower-middle constituency fed the popular counter-revolutionary mobilization which culminated in the formation of the fascist movement and the fascist seizure of power in 1922.

The second line of potential research would apply a war-centered theory developed in this study to examining origins of the collectivist state in the People's Republic of China. Like other states of the Eurasian mainland, in the early twentieth century China has been involved in the devastating war against Japan. Similar to wartime experience of other interior countries, China found itself isolated from the world economy and had to rely mostly on its own resources. Like in other countries, the existing Chinese political regime, the Kuomintang state, collapsed and the situation of multiple authority emerged. Similarly to other nations, the Chinese-Japanese war forged a mass coalition of radical popular forces challenging the existing social order. In many aspects, the Chinese revolution represented even a better example of the success of the popular redistributive movement under conditions of the wartime state breakdown than the Russian Revolution. One should be aware, however, of the fact that the Chinese revolution took place in the world that had drastically changed since 1917. The existence of the first communist state in Russia, the work of the Communist International (*the Komintern*) and the massive economic and political assistance provided by the Soviets played a major role in success of the communist revolution in China.

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