

loyal supporters within the politburo, notably Lazar Kaganovich and Viacheslav Molotov. Trotsky left the country.

Dexterous though he was in defining Soviet policy, Stalin now had to ensure that it fulfilled its promise. By 1928, by the terms of his first Five-Year Plan, Stalin proposed to seize farmland, force the peasants to work it in shifts under state control, and treat the crops as state property—a policy of “collectivization.” Land, equipment, and people would all belong to the same collective farm, large entities that would (it was assumed) produce more efficiently. Collective farms would be organized around Machine Tractor Stations, which would distribute modern equipment and house the political agitators. Collectivization would allow the state to control agricultural output, and thus feed its workers and keep their support, and to export to foreign countries and win some hard currency for investment in industry.

To make collectivization seem inevitable, Stalin had to weaken the free market and replace it with state planning. His ally Kaganovich proclaimed in July 1928 that peasants were engaging in a “grain strike,” and that requisitioning their crops was the only solution. Once peasants saw that their produce could be taken, they hid it rather than selling it. Thus the market appeared even more unreliable—although the state was really to blame. Stalin could then argue, as he did, that market spontaneity was the fundamental problem, and that the state had to control food supplies.

The coming of the Great Depression seemed to prove Stalin right about the unreliability of the market. On Black Tuesday, 29 October 1929, the American stock market crashed. On 7 November 1929, the twelfth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalin described the socialist alternative to the market that his policies would quickly bring to the Soviet Union. He promised that 1930 would be “the year of the great transformation,” when collectivization would bring security and prosperity. The old countryside would cease to exist. Then the revolution could be completed in the cities, where the proletariat would grow great on food produced by the pacified peasantry. These workers would create the first socialist society in history, and a powerful state that could defend itself from foreign enemies. As Stalin made his case for modernization, he was also staking his claim to power.

While Stalin worked, Hitler inspired. Whereas Stalin was institutionalizing a revolution and thereby assuring himself a place at the top of a one-party state, Hitler made his political career by rejecting the institutions around him. The

Bolsheviks inherited a tradition of debate-then-discipline from years of illegal work in the Russian Empire. The National Socialists (Nazis) had no meaningful traditions of discipline or conspiracy. Like the Bolsheviks, the Nazis rejected democracy, but in the name of a Leader who could best express the will of the race, not in the name of a Party that understood the dictates of history. The world order was not made by capitalist imperialists, as the Bolsheviks believed, but rather by conspiratorial Jews. The problem with the modern society was not that the accumulation of property led to the domination of a class; the problem was that Jews controlled *both* finance capitalism and communism, and thus America, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. Communism was just a Jewish fairy tale of impossible equality, designed to bring naive Europeans under Jewish thrall. The answer to heartless Jewish capitalism and communism could only be national socialism, which meant justice for Germans at the expense of others.

Nazis tended to emphasize, in the democratic years of the 1920s, what they had in common with other Germans. Hitler's National Socialists were like most other German parties of the 1920s in their revulsion at the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis had a certain obsession with their manifest destiny in the East: where German soldiers had been victorious in the field in the First World War, and where Germany had ruled a large occupation zone in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Baltic region in 1918. Unlike European rivals such as France and Great Britain, Germany had no vast world empire; it had surrendered its modest overseas possessions after losing the war. Thus the east European frontier beckoned all the more. The Soviet Union, seen as an illegitimate and oppressive Jewish regime, would have to fall. Poland, which lay between Germany and its eastern destiny, would have to be overcome along the way. It could not be a buffer to German power: it would have to be either a weak ally or a defeated foe in the coming wars for the east.

Hitler tried and failed to begin a German national revolution in Munich in November 1923, which led to a brief spell in prison. Though the substance of his National Socialism was his own creation, his coup d'état was inspired by the success of the Italian fascists he admired. Benito Mussolini had taken power in Italy the previous year after the “March on Rome,” which Hitler imitated without success in Munich. Italian fascists, like Hitler and his Nazis, offered the glorification of the national will over the tedium of political compromise. Mussolini, and Hitler following him, used the existence of the Soviet Union within domestic politics. While admiring the discipline of Lenin and the model

of the one-party state, both men used the threat of a communist revolution as an argument for their own rule. Though the two men differed in many respects, they both represented a new kind of European Right, one which took for granted that communism was the great enemy while imitating aspects of communist politics. Like Mussolini, Hitler was an outstanding orator and the one dominant personality in his movement. Hitler had little trouble regaining the leadership of the Nazi party after his release from prison in December 1924.

Stalin rose to power in the second half of the 1920s in large measure because of the cadres whom he appointed and could trust to support him. Hitler drew support by way of personal charisma, and expected his associates and supporters to devise policies and language that corresponded to his rhetoric and imagination. Stalin interpreted Marxist thought as necessary to hasten his rise and defend his policies, but at least until 1933 he was never free to interpret Marxism exactly as he liked. Hitler, on the other hand, inspired others to do his practical thinking for him. In prison Hitler had written the first volume of his biographical manifesto, *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). This and his other writings (especially his so-called *Second Book*) expressed his plans clearly, but they were not part of a canon. Stalin was at first constrained by what his comrades might do, and later concerned by what they might say. Hitler never had to maintain even an appearance of dialogue or consistency.

Hitler made a certain compromise with the German republic after his release from prison. He practiced parliamentary politics as the leader of his National Socialist party, if only as a means of spreading propaganda, identifying enemies, and approaching the institutions of power. He tried to stay out of prison, even as Nazi paramilitaries engaged in brawls with left-wing enemies. In 1928, after the German economy had shown several consecutive years of growth, the Nazis took only twelve seats in parliament, with 2.6 percent of the votes cast. Then came the Great Depression, a greater boon to Hitler than even to Stalin. The collapse of the German economy summoned the specter of a communist revolution; both helped Hitler come to power. The international economic crisis seemed to justify radical change. The seeming possibility of a revolution led by the large Communist Party of Germany generated fears that Hitler could channel toward nationalism. In September 1930 the Nazis won 18 percent of the vote and 107 seats—and then won the elections of July 1932, with no less than 37 percent of the vote.

By 1932, German parliamentary elections were a demonstration of popular support rather than a direct route to power, since democracy in Germany existed only in form. For the previous two years, heads of government (chancellors) had induced the president to issue decrees that had the force of law. The parliament (Reichstag) convened only thirteen times in 1932. Hitler was appointed chancellor in January 1933 with the help of conservatives and nationalists who believed that they could use him to keep the large German Left from power. To their surprise, Hitler called snap elections, and used his new position to assert his party's hegemony over German society. When the results were announced on 5 March 1933, the Nazis had defeated the social democrats and the communists in dramatic fashion: with 43.9 percent of the vote, and 288 of 647 seats in the Reichstag.

Hitler was remaking the German political system in spring 1933—at the same time that Stalin was asserting his own personal authority in the Soviet Union.

In 1933, the Soviet and Nazi governments shared the appearance of a capacity to respond to the world economic collapse. Both radiated dynamism at a time when liberal democracy seemed unable to rescue people from poverty. Most governments in Europe, including the German government before 1933, had believed that they had few means at their disposal to address the economic collapse. The predominant view was that budgets should be balanced and money supplies tightened. This, as we know today, only made matters worse. The Great Depression seemed to discredit the political response to the end of the First World War: free markets, parliaments, nation-states. The market had brought disaster, no parliament had an answer, and nation-states seemingly lacked the instruments to protect their citizens from immiseration.

The Nazis and Soviets both had a powerful story about who was to blame for the Great Depression (Jewish capitalists or just capitalists) and authentically radical approaches to political economy. The Nazis and Soviets not only rejected the legal and political form of the postwar order but also questioned its economic and social basis. They reached back to the economic and social roots of postwar Europe, and reconsidered the lives and roles of the men and women who worked the land. In the Europe of the 1930s, peasants were still the majority in most countries, and arable soil was a precious natural resource, bringing energy for

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economies still powered by animals and humans. Calories were counted, but for rather different reasons than they are counted now: economic planners had to make sure that populations could be kept fed, alive, and productive.

Most of the states of Europe had no prospect of social transformation, and thus little ability to rival or counter the Nazis and the Soviets. Poland and other new east European states had tried land reform in the 1920s, but their efforts had proven insufficient. Landlords lobbied to keep their property, and banks and states were miserly with credit to peasants. The end of democracy across the region (except in Czechoslovakia) at first brought little new thinking on economic matters. Authoritarian regimes in Poland, Hungary, and Romania had less hesitation about jailing opponents and better recourse to fine phrases about the nation. But none seemed to have much to offer in the way of a new economic policy during the Great Depression.

In 1933, the Soviet and Nazi alternatives to democracy depended on their rejection of simple land reform, now the discredited pabulum of the failed democracies. Hitler and Stalin, for all of their many differences, presumed that one root of the problem was the agricultural sector, and that the solution was drastic state intervention. If the state could enact a radical economic transformation, that would then undergird a new kind of political system. The Stalinist approach, public since the beginning of Stalin's Five-Year Plan in 1928, was collectivization. Soviet leaders allowed peasants to prosper in the 1920s, but took the peasants' land away from them in the early 1930s, in order to create collective farms where peasants would work for the state.

Hitler's answer to the peasant question was just as imaginative, and just as well camouflaged. Before and even for a few years after he came to power in 1933, it appeared that Hitler was concerned above all with the German working class, and would address Germany's lack of self-sufficiency in foodstuffs by means of imports. A policy of rapid (and illegal) rearmament removed German men from the unemployment rolls by placing them in barracks or in arms factories. Public works programs began a few months after Hitler came to power. It even appeared that the Nazis would do *less* for German farmers than they had indicated. Though the Nazi party program promised the redistribution of land from richer to poorer farmers, this traditional version of land reform was quietly tabled after Hitler became chancellor. Hitler pursued international agreements rather than redistributive agrarian policy. He sought special trade

arrangements with east European neighbors, by which German industrial goods were in effect exchanged for foodstuffs. Hitler's agricultural policy of the 1930s was a bit like Lenin's of the 1920s: it was political preparation for a vision of almost unimaginably radical economic change. Both National Socialism and Soviet socialism baited peasants with the illusion of land reform, but involved far more radical plans for their future. *these ✓*

The true Nazi agricultural policy was the creation of an eastern frontier empire. The German agricultural question would be resolved not within Germany but abroad: by taking fertile land from Polish and Soviet peasants—who would be starved, assimilated, deported, or enslaved. Rather than importing grain from the east, Germany would export its farmers to the east. They would colonize the lands of Poland and the western Soviet Union. Although Hitler spoke generally about the need for greater “living space,” he never made quite clear to German farmers that he expected them to migrate in large numbers to the east—any more than the Bolsheviks had made clear to Soviet peasants that they expected them to concede their property to the state. During collectivization in the early 1930s, Stalin treated the campaign against his own peasants as a “war” for their grain; Hitler counted on victory in a future war to feed Germany. The Soviet program was made in the name of universal principles; the Nazi plan was for massive conquest in eastern Europe for the benefit of a master race.

Hitler and Stalin rose to power in Berlin and Moscow, but their visions of transformation concerned above all the lands between. Their utopias of control overlapped in Ukraine. Hitler remembered the ephemeral German eastern colony of 1918 as German access to the Ukrainian breadbasket. Stalin, who had served his revolution in Ukraine shortly thereafter, regarded the land in much the same way. Its farmland, and its peasants, were to be exploited in the making of a modern industrial state. Hitler looked upon collectivization as a disastrous failure, and presented it as proof of the failure of Soviet communism as such. But he had no doubt that Germans could make of Ukraine a land of milk and honey.

For both Hitler and Stalin, Ukraine was more than a source of food. It was the place that would enable them to break the rules of traditional economics, rescue their countries from poverty and isolation, and remake the continent in their own image. Their programs and their power all depended upon their control of Ukraine's fertile soil and its millions of agricultural laborers. In 1933,

Ukrainians would die in the millions, in the greatest artificial famine in the history of world. This was the beginning of the special history of Ukraine, but not the end. In 1941 Hitler would seize Ukraine from Stalin, and attempt to realize his own colonial vision beginning with the shooting of Jews and the starvation of Soviet prisoners of war. The Stalinists colonized their own country, and the Nazis colonized occupied Soviet Ukraine: and the inhabitants of Ukraine suffered and suffered. During the years that both Stalin and Hitler were in power, more people were killed in Ukraine than anywhere else in the bloodlands, or in Europe, or in the world.

CHAPTER 1

THE SOVIET FAMINES

Nineteen thirty-three was a hungry year in the Western world. The streets of American and European cities teemed with men and women who had lost their jobs, and grown accustomed to waiting in line for food. An enterprising young Welsh journalist, Gareth Jones, saw unemployed Germans in Berlin rally to the voice of Adolf Hitler. In New York he was struck by the helplessness of the American worker, three years into the Great Depression: "I saw hundreds and hundreds of poor fellows in single file, some of them in clothes which once were good, all waiting to be handed out two sandwiches, a doughnut, a cup of coffee and a cigarette." In Moscow, where Jones arrived that March, hunger in the capitalist countries was cause for celebration. The Depression seemed to herald a world socialist revolution. Stalin and his coterie boasted of the inevitable triumph of the system they had built in the Soviet Union.¹

Yet 1933 was also a year of hunger in the Soviet cities, especially in Soviet Ukraine. In Ukraine's cities—Kharkiv, Kiev, Stalino, Dnipropetrovsk—hundreds of thousands of people waited each day for a simple loaf of bread. In Kharkiv, the republic's capital, Jones saw a new sort of misery. People appeared at two o'clock in the morning to queue in front of shops that did not open until seven. On an average day forty thousand people would wait for bread. Those in line were so desperate to keep their places that they would cling to the belts of those immediately in front of them. Some were so weak from hunger that they could not stand without the ballast of strangers. The waiting lasted all day, and sometimes for two. Pregnant women and maimed war veterans had lost their right

*Execution
by
hunger*