УДК 94(47).084«1917/1939»

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Continuities and differences between Soviet and Russian foreign policies from the elite perspective, 1860–1928

In his book «State and Revolution», Lenin explained his views on the character of the revolutionary state: how revolution changes social relations and transforms the functions of the state, which eventually withers away[1]. In the paper this point of view is turned upside down, as its starting point is how the revolution became a state that bore remarkable structural continuities with earlier states.

In order to understand the role of elites in the formation of early Soviet foreign policy, the Russian revolution needs to be observed as a state-building process. This allows us to emphasize continuities in the creation of a new regime and a sovereign state, and the role of elites in it[2]. Not just any concentration of decision-making constitutes elite: it requires the emergence of a cohesive, unitary and self-conscious group[3]. On the other hand, the context for change is formed by the modernization process, a transformation from agrarian to industrial society. According to Barrington Moore, Russia represents the communist or peasant revolution variant of this process. The dissolution of the previous social order in Russia began from the 1860s after the emancipation of the serfs[4], and the creation of a new one by the Bolsheviks began after the civil war, during the 1920s. As the Bolsheviks promised a socialist society, this makes it, firstly, important to relate their actions to the Marxist ideals they claimed to uphold, and secondly, to assess the position of the Bolshevik elite as the nucleus of a new ruling class. Here two concepts provided by Antonio Gramsci, hegemony and passive revolution, can be useful[5].

The themes of continuity and change, both in the elite position and foreign policy, can be addressed through the following questions: how did the process of structural change in Russian society influence the role of elites? In what ways did Soviet foreign policy change in comparison to that of the Russian Empire?

Defining Russian and Soviet political elite

The main dimensions for observing both the Imperial and the Soviet elite are openness and coherence[6].

Here the definition of the Russian elite is based on Lieven, with 215 members in 1894–1914 in the State Council, appointed by the emperor. The State Council was a consultative body for the ruler in budgetary and legislative matters. After the 1906 constitution, the State Council became the upper house, receiving budgetary power and a veto on legislation. The composition of the appointed members varied little[7].

Hereditary nobility had a 90 % share among the appointed members of the State Council during the period. The remaining 10 % were mostly junior state officials or professionals. Only two persons came from the merchant estate, and two others from the lower middle class (tradesmen, artisans). On the other hand, when competing for official appointments, the nobility was not that over-represented: its members (1.2 million) equaled 2/3 of all the other non-noble (professional, clerical and merchant) estates combined. In the case of education, because of their social background higher education was the norm. The clear majority of 67 % had civilian education, while the remaining 33 % had military. For civilian education, the three most popular institutions were the St Petersburg and Moscow universities, and the Imperial School of Law. Regarding the whole group of 215, 34 % had university education and only 2 % had middle level education. The ethnic composition of the State Council's appointed members was not quite as coherent as their social background, but variance remained limited. In practice, the categorizations of ethnicity were not often clear-cut, but were mostly based on the father's recorded nationality. 72 % were «old Russians», mostly families that traced their ancestry to the pre-Petrine era. The second largest group, of German origin, had a 28 % share; half of these came from the Baltic Provinces. Only two other minorities of the Empire were represented. There were six persons of Finnish (Swedish speaking) origin, and two from Poland. No Jews, Ukrainians or Caucasian or Baltic people were among the appointed members. As the ethnic composition can be taken as a more general representation of the ruling class' attitude towards minorities, it may well explain the strong minority overrepresentation in the revolutionary movements[8].

As for the Soviet foreign political elite, it is first necessary to characterize the Soviet political elite in general. The Soviet political elite is here defined as Central Committee membership or candidate membership of the All-Russian or the later Communist Party of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet regime from 1917–1991

it had a total of c. 2000 members. The Central Committee (CC) was the party's decision-making body between congresses: it elected the smaller administrative organizations, such as the Politburo and the Orgburo. The CC was elected from the party congress delegates through a list election over which the party leadership had considerable influence. The size of the CC varied in the 1920s between 23 and 138. The CC members have been divided into four generations between 1917–1991 according to year of birth: 1) «Old Bolsheviks» (1880–1900), 2) «Class of 38» or «Brezhnev generation» (1901–1920), 3) «20th Party Congress» or «Gorbachov generation» (1921–1940), and the last, 4) «Might have been» (1941–). The first generation was very influential, as it brought about two revolutions, both when taking power in 1917 as well as in beginning the 5-year plans and forced collectivization. It remained dominant until 1937, when it also suffered a heavier share of Stalin's terror than the second generation[9].

The group of «Revolutionary elite» or «Revolutionaries in power» have been excluded from the first generation, meaning 78 persons who were members of the earliest CCs in 1917–1922. This group in turn is related to the Soviet foreign political elite, defined on the basis of 11 CC members in the 1920s who were involved in foreign affairs or foreign trade administration.

The «Revolutionary elite» was mixed both ethnically and regarding education. Great Russians were the largest group, composing 47 % (37/78). The second largest ethnic group was Jews, 17 % (13/78), while the third position was divided between the Balts and the Ukrainians, both with 10 % (8/78) share. In comparison, in 1922 the rank-and-file of the party was more Russian dominated, the Great Russian share being 72 %, Ukrainian 6 % and Jewish 5 %. 40 % had higher education, 33 % had secondary education, including unfinished, and 27 % primary level or none. Within the Revolutionary elite, the older ones, those who were not elected after 1920, had a clearly higher ratio of higher education (47 % vs 25 %) when compared with the ones who were elected after 1920. As for the social origins of the revolutionary elite, peasant (31 %) and worker (21 %) backgrounds dominated[10].

The eleven foreign politically involved members of the CC in the 1920s had somewhat different composition. When compared with the Revolutionary elite, the shares of the two largest ethnic groups had changed places: the Jews were the largest with the share of 5/11 (54 %), the Great Russians coming second with 3/11 (25 %). The rest were of Ukrainian, Latvian and Bulgarian origin. In the area of education, 6/11 (54 %) had higher, university level education, while all the rest had a secondary level education, meaning high school, institutes or a teacher seminar. There was also personal experience from abroad, as 5/11 had been emigrants. In addition to these, two more had studied in foreign universities. Regarding the social background of the foreign political elite, a middle class background, from teachers and physicians to civil servants, was the most common. Only one had a peasant background, two came from nobility, and none from the working class (table 1)[11].

Table 1

The Soviet foreign political elite with non CC membership in 1920s

Non-CC members in 1920s	Party membership	Family background & education	Nationality & place of birth	1918–1930 foreign administration
Aleksandrovskii S. S., 1889–1949	1906	–	Jewish (NKID)	Chief of C. Eur. dep. in NKID1924–1925, ambassador 1925–1939: Lit., Fin., Czh.
Aralov S. I., 1880–1969	1918	–	Russian	Ambassador 1923–1925: Lat., NKID collegium 1925–1927, for. depart. BSNH 1927
Ganetski Ia. S., 1879–1937	1896	–	Jewish	NKID collegium 1921–1923, NKVT
Karahan(jan) Lev Mikhailovich, 1889–1937	1917	–	Armenian	Dip. career 1917, dep. PC NKID1918–1921, 1922–1923, 1925–1934, ambassador: Pol., Chi.
Kopp Viktor Leontievich, 1880–1930	1917	–	Jewish	NKID collegium 1923–1925, ambassador 1919–1930: Ger., Jap., Swe.
Litvinov Maksim Maksimovich, 1876–1951	1898, CC 1934–1941	Official (sluzhaischii), high school, emigrant 1907–1918	Jewish (Belostok, Grodno)	Ambassador 1918–21: UK, Est., dep. PC NKID, PC1930–1939
Lorenz Ivan Leopoldovich, 1890–1941	1919	University studies in Poland (?)	Jewish (Lodz) (UM)	Dip. career 1918, ambassador: Lit., Fin., Lat., NKVT collegium (?–1935)
Maiskii Ivan Mihailovich, 1884–1975	1921, candidate CC 1941–1947	Physician, Munich university, emigrant 1908–1918	Jewish (Kirillov, Volgoda)	Dip. career from 1922, ambassador 1929–1943: Fin., UK
Rozengolts Arkadi Pavlovitch, 1889–1938	1905, CC 1934–1937	Trader, higher economical (?)	Jewish (Vitbesk)	C. d.a. 1925–1927 UK, PC of foreign trade (NKVT)
Stomonjakov Boris Spiridonovich, 1882–1941	1902	–	Russian	Ber. trade mission 1921–1925, dep. NKVT 1924–1925, NKVT collegium 1923–1926, NKID collegium 1926–1934
Chernyikh Aleksei Sergeevitch, 1892–?	–	–	Russian	Ambassador 1923–1939: Fin., Lat., Per., NKID collegium 1926

In brief, it would seem the foreign political elite of the 1920s was clearly more minority-dominated than the Revolutionary elite, and even better educated than the older group of the Revolutionary elite.

Limits and objectives of Imperial Russian foreign policy, 1860–1914

According to Alfred J. Rieber, Russian foreign relations can be better understood from the viewpoint of persistent, but not permanent, factors. These are 1) relative economic backwardness, when compared with Western Europe, or, during the cold war, the United States and Japan, 2) permeable or porous frontiers (frontier zones) all along the periphery, 3) multinational state and society composed of ethno-territorial blocs, and 4) cultural marginalization or alienation, beginning from its position between Latin West, Byzantine and Mongol/Islamic cultures, continuing on ideological bases after the Russian revolution[12].

The turning point for Russian foreign relations during the 19th century was its defeat in the Crimean war in 1856, when it lost its previous strong, even hegemonic position among the European great powers, following the Napoleonic wars. The Crimean war exposed to the rulers of Russia the extent to which the empire had fallen behind its Western adversaries both technologically and economically. This created the basic objective of regaining great power status. Domestic reform became the means for the ruling elite to catch up with the West, as well as to protect their own position.

The reforming project culminated in the emancipation of the serfs in 1861[13]. It was bound to cause tensions within groups supporting the autocracy, as well as increasing expectations among the peasants. The cost of the Crimean war and the reparations after it had already brought Russia close to bankruptcy. However, the reforms required considerable investments in indemnities for the landowners and railroad investments, but taxes or tariffs could not be increased significantly: the aristocracy could not be alienated after the emancipation by tax increases, and tariffs had to be lowered in order to receive new technology. These structural conditions meant a growing dependency on foreign capital.

Russian foreign policy up to 1914 experienced considerable economic limitations on the prolonged use of force most of the time. From the Crimean War onwards, objectives in the Balkans remained ambitious despite limited means, including taking the Turkish Straits should the Ottoman Empire collapse. The growing significance of Slavic nationalism from the 1870s made the Balkans more significant than colonial advances in Central Asia or the Far East. That made it easier to reach agreements on spheres of influence in Asia with the British than with the Austrians on the Balkans, where Slavic nationalism threatened multinational Austro-Hungary. The second decisive development was the tariff war with Germany, resulting in a switch from Ger-

man cooperation and financing to cooperation with the French in the 1890s, which grew close to a financial dependency, especially after 1905. This committed Russia to the core of European power politics, the Franco-German antagonism. On these grounds it would have been difficult for Russia to rebuild its great power status and to modernize its economy while still keeping out of general war, even for more skilled political leadership than it had during the last tsar[14].

The turning points of Soviet foreign policy, 1920–1925

The main issues of conflict between the Soviet government and the bourgeois, parliamentary governments of Western and Central Europe were the legitimacy of political systems, loans/investment and reparations. Conflicts over these themes, or attempts to solve them, either by force or diplomatically, structured their relations significantly in the 1920s. Reparations and loans were also crucial in the relations between the Western powers and Germany[15]. Despite the instability of Soviet-German relations, a treaty on political and military-industrial cooperation was signed in 1922. This relationship became the cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy for the 1920s, as it allowed them to break both their isolation and the potential unity of western, capitalist great powers.

The first significant redefinition in Soviet-Western great power relations took place when the Bolshevik victory in the Russian civil war became evident, from early 1920. Central and Western Europe were clearly not yet ripe for revolution and capitalism seemed able to stabilise for at least a couple of years. This underlined war-weary Soviet Russia's need for recovery and rebuilding. It encouraged those, like Lenin, Aleksey Rykov, Leonid Krasin and Grigori Sokolnikov, who favoured «cohabitation» — moderation in relations with capitalist countries — to create the bases for recovery through NEP and monopolised foreign trade with Great Britain and Germany.

According to the British, after the civil war integration through trade would grant them more influence on the Soviet government in the new situation than use of force or the threat of it. This was based on the interpretation of the significance of the Russian market, firstly on the British, but also on general European economic recovery after the First World War. However, trade and legitimacy were connected in the Soviet-British, as well as Soviet-German, trade negotiations: the bourgeois governments demanded the end of Soviet propaganda directed against them and the Soviets demanded the cessation of support to White Russian emigrant organizations as well as diplomatic recognition[16].

Soviet policy towards the border states, which, with the exception of Romania, had been parts of the former Russian Empire, was also directly based on the outcome of the Russian civil war. After the stabilisation of independence in this area in the form of bourgeois governments, partly with German or British support, the Soviet aim was to neutralise these countries as White supply bases during 1919, and then

establish trade links through them. Despite a clear legitimacy conflict between the nationalism of the new nation-states and bolshevism, and varying trade interests, they succeeded in 1920 with Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but failed with Poland and Romania[17].

Significance of military and diplomatic approach in 1919

After observing the basic circumstances guiding the formation of Bolshevik foreign relations, it may be interesting to study a practical case of Soviet foreign policy formation from the period of the Russian civil war (1918–1922). Judenitch, operating from the vicinity of the Estonian border, made two attempts to take St Petersburg, the first in summer, the second in late autumn 1919. When he had been checked the first time, the Bolsheviks began a «peace offensive», making peace proposals to their Western border countries, including Finland, the Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and Poland. This would have neutralized Judenitch' troops, and allowed the Bolsheviks to concentrate forces against Denikin, who at the time was advancing steadily from the South.

The case is based on telegram exchanges between the commissar of foreign affairs (Chicherin), the commissar of the Red Army (Trotsky) and the leader of the Bolshevik party (Lenin) on how to address the probable retreat of Judenitch' forces towards the Estonian border.

The discussions between Chicherin, Trotsky and Lenin in the late autumn of 1919 are both an example of the role of Chicherin in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy and of the relation of ideology and so-called national or state interest in Soviet foreign policy. Chicherin's quite formal arguments and more moderate position in relation to the Estonians are significant. He seems to be a firmer believer in ideological means when he suggests a propaganda campaign instead of a military offensive. Although he contacts both Trotsky and Lenin, Trotsky mainly answers through Lenin, which would reflect Chicherin's subordinate position in foreign political decision-making.

However, it is clear that Chicherin's view prevailed. His argumentation on the harmfulness of open threats from both military and diplomatic standpoints was very clear. He also pointed out the risks related to intervention, as Soviet Russia could not expect the support of the local Estonian population. This distanced him from the ideological interpretation of foreign relations and showed him responding to available information. Chicherin's final statement to Trotsky comes close to the traditional concept of state interest. Not excluding military intervention as such, he observes only that any explanations or declarations considering Soviet troop actions should be provided only after they have taken place. Chicherin's ability to argue for the state's interests, putting aside the prospects of revolution in Estonia, should not surprise us. His foreign political expertise came directly from his diplomat family and the tsarist foreign ministry.

These observations would fit the general practice, in which Chicherin acted as Lenin's foreign commissar and, on the basis of his support, formulated and implemented Lenin's initiatives, without deciding on their substance. Chicherin's influence on Soviet foreign policy probably reached its height during the power struggle in the party after the death of Lenin, during the mid-1920's.

Significance of political and economic influence in 1926

The corner-stone of Soviet foreign policy, special relations with Germany, could be challenged by the West through an agreement on the German war reparations and their payments with the U. S. financed Dawes Plan, and by general détente in Western Europe. In September 1924, the British Labour party Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald proposed, with acceptance of the French, the invitation of Germany to the League of Nations. In September 1925, mutual guarantees on French, Belgian and German Western borders were agreed on in Locarno, with the support of Great Britain and Italy[18].

This change was acknowledged in the Soviet foreign political leadership, and initiatives aiming for the continuation of the relationship were launched. The Soviet Union and Germany reached an understanding about the terms of modified Rapallo co-operation during spring 1926, on the basis of Germany limiting its responsibilities as a member of the League of Nations. The Germans gained more freedom of action. The Soviets in turn received guarantees against German participation in League of Nations sanctions or granting military access to Western powers in case the Soviets were defined as aggressors in a conflict[19]. This was the context in which the Soviet Union prepared and launched non-aggression pact initiatives, originally separately, aimed at the Baltic States and Finland. The first phase of this project, from preparation in January to the public proposal on March, will be observed here mainly through the evaluations of the Soviet representative in Helsinki, Ivan Lorenz (see table 2).

Table 2

The Soviet foreign political elite CC members in 1920s

Members	Party & CC 1917–1930 membership	Family background & education	Nationality & place of birth	1918–1930 foreign administration
Berzin Jan Antonovich, 1881–1938	1902, 1917–1918	Peasant, teacher seminar, emigrant 1908–1917	Latvian (Vindau)	Envoy 1918–1932: Swiz., Fin., Aus.
Ioffe Adolf Abramovitch, 1883–1927	1917, candidate 1917–1919	Trader, studies in Berlin & Zürich universities	Jewish (Simferepol)	Brest-Litovsk peace, envoy 1918–1927: Ger., Jap., Chi., Aus.
Kollontai Aleksandra Mihailovna, 1872–1952	1915 (mensh.), 1917–1918	General (nobility), high school, emigrant 1907–1917	Russian (St Petersburg)	Envoy 1923–1945: Nor., Mex., Swe.

Krasin Leonid Borisovich, 1870–1926	1890 (RSDRP), 1924–1926	Civil servant, technical institute, emigrant	Russian (Kurgan, Tobolsk)	PC of foreign trade (NKVT) 1921–1923, envoy 1921–1926: Fra., UK
Krestinskii Nikolai Nikolaevitch, 1883–1938	1903, 1919–1921	Teacher, St Petersburg university (law)	Ukrainian (Mogilev)	Ambassador 1921–1930: Ger., dep. PC of foreign affairs (NKID)
Rakovskii Hristofor Georgiovitch, 1873–1941	1917, 1919–1927	Monpellier university (medicine)	Bulgarian (Kotel)	PC of Ukr. foreign affairs, ambassador 1923–1927: UK, Fra., dep. PC NKID
Radek Karl Berngardovitch, 1885–1939	1917, 1919–1924	Teacher, Cracow university	Jewish (Lvov, Austrian Galitsia)	Chief of press dep. in NKID 1918–1920
Sokolnikov Grigorii Jakovlevitch, 1888–1939	1905, 1917–1919, 1922–1930	Physician, Paris university (law), emigrant 1909–1917	Jewish (Romny, Vitebsk)	PC of finances 1922–1926, envoy 1929–1932: UK
Chicherin Georgii Vasilievitch, 18721936	1918, 1925–1930	Diplomat (nobility), St. Petersburg university (philology), emigrant 1904–1918	Russian (Karaul, Tambov)	Dep. PC NKID 1918, PC1918–1930
Trotskii Lev Davidovitch, 1879–1940	1917, 1917–1927	Land owner, high school, emigrant 1906–1917	Jewish (Janovka, Kherson)	PC NKID 1917–1918
Kamenev Lev Borisovich, 1883–1936	1901, 1919–1926	Railroad engineer, high school, university studies	Jewish (Moscow)	Dip. work 1917–1918, PC NKVT 1926, envoy 1926–1927: It.

The Soviet embassy had already begun preparations for their initiative to Finland in mid-January 1926, well before making it public in March. The preparations were connected to Finnish propagation of a large «Northern Pact», including Nordic and Baltic countries, based on the principles of Locarno border guarantees.

The Soviet-Finnish negotiations were to be based on the earlier Soviet-Turkish agreement though this was not expected to «meet ready ground» in Finland. Finland was expected to value the non-aggression element most highly. Difficulties were expected to arise in defining the neutrality obligations, especially when related to applying League of Nations sanctions, in case the Soviet Union were defined as the aggressor against some third country. Lorenz understood that from the Finnish viewpoint it was most advantageous to connect the neutrality obligation only to unprovoked attacks against the Soviet party, «but in my opinion, for us it is slightly

advantageous»[20]. This probably meant that the Soviets expected to be labelled as aggressors by the League of Nations, regardless of actual developments, for example, with Poland.

The idea of conducting simultaneous negotiations with Finland and Sweden led to discussions in early February between the Soviet representative, Lorenz, and the Swedish representative in Helsinki, Hamilton. According to Lorenz, Hamilton was not at all excited about of the Finnish «Northern Pact» idea. Hamilton thought it would be «dangerous to connect the stable and peaceful situation in Scandinavia to questions where such stability does not exist». He claimed to have advised the Finns: «It is said that conflicts must be localized. But one has to be able to also localize the good relations, and not to endanger them by bringing alien elements into them». This Lorenz interpreted to mean that Finland should secure its relations with the Soviets directly, and not dabble in the general Baltic question[21].

A week later, in mid-February, the Soviet representative contacted the Commissariat on his earlier initiative for a «political agreement» with Finland, which he felt had not received a full response from the Baltic department. He believed the matter had to be reviewed, since «Our relations with Finland sum up differently than with the other Baltic Sea countries, and this is being more and more understood here». Lorenz had also underlined this point of view to the Swedish representative Hamilton, who hinted that he had arranged for the major Swedish paper in Finland, Hufvudstadsbladet, to print an article opposing the Finnish Baltic orientation. This co-operation pleased Lorenz, who was hoping for more of the same from the Swedish press of Finland[22].

After these contacts with the Swedish mission had smoothed the way for their initiative, the Soviet mission opened other channels in February, to the Finnish domestic political field. The Soviet representative met the chairman of the Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP), Väinö Tanner, at a Finnish foreign ministry soiree. The SDP was not in the government, but it was the largest party in Finland at the time. According to Lorenz, Tanner expressed interest in the Soviet economy and in the trade agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union. Tanner claimed as well that he supported a quick resolution of the trade agreement in the parliamentary commission for foreign affairs. Despite the support expressed in the SDP newspaper, Tanner rejected the border-state conference in Riga, coming very close to the views of the Swedish representative in Finland: «We, the Finns, need to follow the Swedish point of view, and avoid all that could be dangerous for us». Hamilton's advice seems to have found at least one ear among the Finns[23].

The SDP was not the only party contacted, as the Soviets had already earlier established contact with Georg Schauman, a leftist member of the bourgeois Swedish People's Party, representing Finland's Swedish-speaking minority. Lorenz was interested yet again in the border-states' Riga conference, and the possible participation of the Finnish general staff. However, Schauman did not know much about these things[24].

The first phase of the non-aggression agreement initiative came to an end on March 12th 1926, when the Soviets made public initiatives, both to the Baltic Countries and Finland, leading to a mixed response. However, in the first week of March, Lorenz was optimistic. He had agreed with Hamilton that both the Soviet Union and Sweden had «a common interest in 1) that the idea of Baltic alliance in which Finland is a member, and 2) that an idea of a collective guarantee agreement, including Finland and the Baltic Sea countries, will not arise again». Even during the day that he presented the initiative in Helsinki, Lorenz remained quite committed to increasing support for it by meeting a left social democrat, J. F. Aalto. Aalto was briefed on the advantages of a bilateral treaty with the Soviet Union, and the risks of a multilateral guarantee pact leading towards a Polish-dominated alliance. Aalto agreed, promising to support the view in the social democratic party and publish it in his newspaper, «The People's Labour»[25].

The Soviet initiative was officially met with stalling and concern, especially in Finland. Lorenz had some critical comments to offer to the Commissariat, not only related to the fact that he had not been informed of the simultaneous publication of Soviet non-aggression initiatives in the Baltic countries as well. Taking into consideration the official Finnish coolness in particular, he claimed that the Soviet side had tried to advance too quickly. The Finns should have been prepared by informing them «before we acted in the rest of the Baltic Sea countries», in order to avoid raising suspicions about Soviet objectives. Lorenz still confirmed, however, the evaluation of the Finnish government as a cautious interlocutor, willing to avoid commitments to «careless combinations» unless specifically in their interest. This was why, according to Lorenz, the Finns found the Soviet initiative unpleasant. Finland was believed to have sincerely given up the Baltic alliance and aimed instead at a Northern or North-Western pact, connected to the guarantees of the League of Nations, specifically concerning the status of the Åland Islands[26].

From the perspective of Soviet Baltic sea objectives, as well as from the relationship of ideology and state interest, certain similarities and differences can found between both cases. In both cases Soviet foreign policy, if not the army, aimed more at the neutralization of the Baltic countries or Finland than at occupation or submission. In the latter case of Soviet-Finnish relations in 1926, the main Soviet method for the neutralization of Finland, as well as the other Baltic countries, were the proposed non-aggression agreements. However, the significance of the Baltic Sea coast as a border zone for the Soviet Union remained.

Connections between ideology and state interest, or practice, are clearer in the case of Soviet-Estonian relations when Chicherin argued against even temporary occupation. In the case of Soviet-Finnish relations, ideology would seem to be limited mostly to finding contacts from the Finnish domestic political field. Up to the mid-1920s most of the Soviet contacts were with the left parties, or from the left wings of bourgeois parties, like the Swedish People's Party. On the other hand, the interaction of foreign and domestic politics is clearer in Soviet-Finnish relations, as seen in Soviet interest in contacts and considerations of a trade treaty.

The role of the elites in founding Soviet foreign policy, 1918–1928

The Soviet elite began to emerge during the civil war around the party officials and the army, was strengthened by the communist factory managers in the 1920s, and formed a new ruling class in the 1930s[27]. The background of this elite is related to the character of the previous regime. The major difference between the Imperial and the Soviet elites was the change from an exclusive to an inclusive elite. This was reflected in the growth of openness and the significant change in ethnic and social composition, albeit somewhat less in education. However, both elites were remarkably coherent, the Imperial one on the basis of social origin (noble estate) and education, the Soviet one on the basis of higher party position and related ideology. When comparing the Soviet elites, the foreign political elite of the 1920s appears more exclusive than the Revolutionary elite of 1917–1922. This is based on the stronger position of higher education and middle-class background in it than in the Revolutionary elite.

Russia, like some other agrarian bureaucracies, can be understood as a statist society, where employment in state service was an important means of social mobility. Education was a significant factor in applying for state or other public offices and was especially appreciated by the marginalized minorities[28]. In this sense, the break in the elite composition between Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union was almost total. However, Chicherin, as the founder of the Soviet foreign administration, offers a rare example of direct individual continuity, both as a former representative of the aristocracy and as a former official of the Imperial Russian foreign ministry. On the other hand, the Soviet representative in Finland, Lorenz, as a Jew[29], exemplifies the rise of educated minorities like the Armenians, Jews and Latvians.

Unlike the Empire, in the Soviet Union elite formation and the creation of the state was a simultaneous process in the post-civil war crisis of 1920–1921. Consolidating the regime now required administrative corrections in rationing, economic concessions in the form of the New Economic Policy and a swift increase in political control. This meant not only the exclusion of other socialist parties from the soviets, but also exclusion of any kind of spontaneous working-class activity from the soviets. The soviets were transformed into parts of the state administration through increasing the numbers of nominated officials and functionaries (nomenklatura) in them, while at the same time raising workers' standard of living, in return. This resulted in a powerful state machinery and labour control without precedent. The connection and ultimate union of state administration with the party, together with the vanguard character of the Bolshevik party, made this development logical, and the party-state was completed mostly by 1923[30].

Generally, the hegemony of the ruling class is reached through a genuine inclusion of the elements of other social groups in its ideology in a kind of alliance-building process, instead of neutralizing or excluding them. In Gramscian terms, the new Soviet ruling class completed the transformation of society and establishment of hegemony

through a passive revolution, neutralizing other social forces, including working-class activity. This interpretation is based on Gramsci's comments on Trotsky's America-inspired views in 1921 on the primacy of industry and coercive industrial methods increasing discipline in production. This kind of combination could lead to a new form of Bonapartism. About a decade later Trotsky's ideas were adapted to practice by Stalin.

When comparing the foreign policy of late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet Union, a number of differences can easily be pointed out. Generally, because of the lack of ideological antagonism with the rest of the world, Russia also had greater room for manoeuver than the Soviet Union. Continuities can be based on Rieber's persistent factors, of which two are decisive for both Russian and Soviet foreign policy. First is the relative economic backwardness of Russia and problems of capacity related to it, which became significant during the 19th century. The second, porous borders, has an even longer history behind it. It underlined the enduring importance of border zones, for example the Baltic Sea coast, which had significance for the Russian security both against Germany from the 1890s, as well as against the Western powers in the 1920s from the civil war bases. Lastly, in both cases foreign policy was strongly based on one principal partner in Europe, either France from the 1890s or Germany in the 1920s.

A common aim for both the Imperial and the Soviet elites was the stabilization or consolidation of the regime, and increasing of the state's influence in the international arena. Both were limited by the backward economy of the country and both saw a solution in modernization programs, requiring social engineering. This created the need for large investments, and consequently, a potential threat of dependency on foreign capital. The only way to diminish this threat through domestic sources was the increasing of agricultural exports.

However, here the solutions of the Imperial Russian and Soviet elites differed considerably from each other. The Imperial elite aimed to solve this problem through the emancipation of serfs and with foreign credit. Long-term lending, first from German, then from French markets also brought partial political dependencies. The transition of Russian landowners to commercial agriculture, capitalism, remained by and large unsuccessful and did not destroy the peasant society. Instead, it increased tensions between the landowners and the peasants, and thus made the peasants a potential base for revolutionary change. In this sense, modernization was successfully completed only during the Soviet period[31].

The Soviet elite instead finally achieved the consolidation of their new regime and the modernization of the economy through more radical means at the end of the 1920s. However, despite the nationalization of the tsarist debts, the British, Germans and French had negotiated seriously on credit with the Soviet Union several times in the context of financing German war reparations, a major problem of the European economy. Only after further credit and concession negotiations had failed by the mid-1920s and the economic and social conflict between towns and countryside had grown as a consequence of the NEP, did the Soviets look for new solutions[32]. Forced collectivization became the means for both consolidating the social bases of the new regime by de-

stroying the peasants, and for financing quick industrialization without foreign capital after 1928. Structural conditions posed partly similar demands on early Soviet foreign policy as they had done on Imperial Russian foreign policy. These meant avoiding open military confrontations if possible when strengthening the foreign political position, though this did not preclude the use of exaggerated foreign threats for domestic political purposes, like for quick industrialization or crushing opposition.

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A. Kähönen. Continuities and differences between Soviet and Russian foreign policies from the elite perspective, 1860–1928

Despite the promise of equality in radical, socialist form, the Bolsheviks quickly became the nucleus of the new elite and ruling class in the Soviet Union. A practical viewpoint regarding this result is founded on viewing the revolution as a state-making process, instead of a complete upheaval of power structures. This allows us to compare continuities and differences between Imperial Russian and Soviet foreign policy, based on the roles of elites in their formulation. An overview of the foundations of Russian foreign policy from the mid-19th century is related to two cases of Soviet foreign policy, during the Russian civil war and the 1920s, respectively. The comparison shows a significant change from exclusive to inclusive elites. However, coherence remained high in both elites. Although both polities faced similar constraints, the solutions of the elites in addressing them differed radically.

Key words: Russia, revolution, state-building, elites, education, nationality, foreign policy, border zone, great power, foreign investments.

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