

## A bad revolution

I have no trouble with the passing of the Csars 100 years ago. Russia deserved better. A way had to be found to involve the people in their government.

Instead the revolution caused more misery and suffering. As is the way with most violent revolutions the revolutionaries unleashed a tyranny on those who disagreed, and a pogrom of those they did not like. The small independent farmers were wiped out. Religions were suppressed. Dissidents were tortured, imprisoned or killed. A revolution born of war fatigue ended Russian involvement in the First World War, but the Communist government then hurled Russia into even greater losses through killing many of her own in internal mass murders. They followed this with a major commitment to war with Germany in the 1940s.

The revolution peddled the myths of Marxism, whilst the revolutionaries battled each other over how far they should spread their power and message abroad. The proletariat were told they would inherit the earth. Instead they lost their remaining freedoms, drafted into industrial labour, placed in rented flats and made to live and work as the state dictated. The production machine was heavily slanted to making armaments, at the expense of consumer items for the public. The favoured few at the top of the single ruling party lived and worked in the palaces of the Csars and in modern luxury whilst most Russians were denied cars and consumer goods that became common in the west as the century advanced.

Russian literature is so often the story of struggle and of the secret service, of torture and autocratic rule. Living standards fell well behind western ones whilst freedoms were also denied. It is strange that various western intellectuals thought the Communist system superior and were prepared to write for it or even to fight for it or spy for it. In my youth I developed a passionate dislike of the Communist message and its social consequences. I saw the USSR shoot people who tried to leave the eastern bloc, whilst anyone in the west was free to go and live in the USSR if they chose. I noted that even the most ardent pro Communists amongst the intelligentsia usually opted to stay safely living in the freer west