

## USSR – a 'new' state

The leaders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) adopted several **novel measures**, not seen in the rest of Europe, to **chalk out the future path of growth and development**.

1. **Building socialism** in the country of revolution was in many ways as heroic a struggle as making a revolution was.
  - a. There was **no model of an actually existing socialist society** for the Bolsheviks to model their experiments on.
  - b. Neither did there exist a detailed blue-print of what socialism in practice entailed, comparable to Marx's analysis of capitalism.
  - c. **Rapid economic growth, social justice, and guarantee of individual fundamental rights was not as easy to combine in real life as it was in theory.**
  - d. There were bitter political differences, debates over strategies and goals, and experiments with successive policies over building socialism.
2. The Bolsheviks had to develop a **new socio-economic and political order of things** in the socialist state which was not based on capitalism.
3. The USSR had to **face isolation from the West European powers and the USA** over its anti-capitalist stance. For several years, it **seemed as if Russia was 'out of Europe' as it didn't share the European values and systems.**
4. The early legislation aimed at **destroying the legal and economic bases of capitalism** and laying the foundation for socialism.
  - a. It almost meant a **reversal of the earlier foreign policy** and the entire capitalist ethic of private profit, individualism and consumerism.
  - b. This **approach of the new Russian state was starkly in contrast with the approaches of the liberal European states** of France and Germany.
5. **Private resources in industry were abolished** and the **workers were given control over the factories** in the new Russian state.
6. A second major intervention by the new Russian state was in **agriculture**, nowhere to be found in the capitalist Western Europe.
  - a. By the **Land Decree of November 1917**, landlordism was abolished, and the **entire land nationalised and given over to peasants** for hereditary use under individual production.
7. On 28 December 1917, **all private banks were nationalised**, and in February 1918, all shareholders in banks expropriated and all foreign debts repudiated.

The Russians were limitedly successful in the establishment of a state on the 19<sup>th</sup> century ideals of Marxian socialism. The Soviet Union was able to achieve economic development while simultaneously pursuing Marxist goals of social welfare and egalitarianism, which, however came with substantial costs in both human lives and human rights. (566 Words)