

Revisiting the Myth of Revolution, Civil War and Social Disorders in Doctor Zhivago

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-economic disorders in the lives of ordinary people in Russia generated due to the revolution in 1917 and the consequent civil war illustrated in the historical fiction Doctor Zhivago by Boris Pasternak, a prominent Russian poet and novelist. History and literature are inextricably linked. Literature, especially fiction, provides a detailed picture of people's lives in a society. So, fiction can be a living document of the society it has been written on. Moreover, Boris Pasternak actively participated in the reality of that time. The Russian revolution had left a profound impact on Russian society and the other parts of the world. The word 'Revolution' always makes people thrilled. It has a call for unknown romanticism and dreams of change. But a 'revolution' does not affect everyone's life similarly. This paper finds out the impacts of the October revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War—how the myth of revolution paradoxically backfired in the lives of the common mass, bringing social disorders and trauma to the greatest extent in the lives of Russian people portrayed in Doctor Zhivago.

Keywords Disorder · Doctor Zhivago · Misery · Party · Revolution · Moscow · Russia ·

1. Introduction

“The relationship between literature and history is clearly an intimate one. Literature is particularly important in spreading ideas and images about things which are unfamiliar to the general reading public, thus helping to shape opinion and through it policy.”

--Allen J. Greenberger (Greenberger, 1969)

Doctor Zhivago is a historical fiction that records Russia's socio-economic and political history of its most crucial time. The Russian Revolution in 1917 marked the beginning of the first communist government in Russia and made the

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ideology of communism significant worldwide in the 20th century. Communist parties started forming in certain countries after the October revolution of 1917. Russia became the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Russian SFSR or RSFSR) and, later on, part of the USSR, ultimately dissolved in late 1991. The revolution made people dream of a society free from centuries of exploitation, slavery and injustice on the one side. On the other, it gave birth to civil war resulting in suspicion, oppression, carnage, famine, death etc. All these profoundly affected millions of people involving their day-to-day lives. Pasternak describes the effects of the Russian revolution of 1917 and the civil war through the protagonist of this novel, a physician and poet, Doctor Yurii Andreievich Zhivago.

Irving Howe opined, “*Doctor Zhivago*, the novel which climaxes the career of the Russian poet Boris Pasternak, is a major work of fiction; but it is also—and for the moment, perhaps more important—a historic utterance.... *Doctor Zhivago* opens in the first years of the century, spans the revolution, civil war and terror of the thirties, and ends with an epilogue in the mid-1940s.... Pasternak refuses to accept any claim for the primacy of ideological systems. Avoiding any quest for the ‘essence’ of modern terror, he prefers to observe its impact upon the lives of modest and decent people” (Howe, 1958). However, the novel was refused to be published in the USSR. Later, the manuscript was smuggled to Italy, published from Milan in 1957 and subsequently translated into several languages by 1958. Soon after publication, the book became an international best-seller. In that year, Boris Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. But he was compelled to denounce it. Six days later, after declaring the award stated in a telegram to the Nobel Committee: “Considering the meaning this award has been given in the society to which I belong, I must reject this undeserved prize presented to me. Please do not receive my voluntary rejection with displeasure” (Howe, 1958).

Irving Howe also opined that Yuri Zhivago, the novel’s central figure, is Pasternak’s alter ego. The novel had been written on a vast and intricate canvas. It was not published in the Soviet Union until 1987. However, this study will examine the effects that the outcomes of the Revolution and civil war left on the mass people of Russia. The English translation of the novel by Max Hayward and Manya Harari in 1958 has been studied for this paper. Many more non-fictional sources have been used for investigation and validation.

Pasternak took the other side leaving the pro-revolutionary authors’ premises in this book showing his critical reasoning and understanding of society, humanity and the growth of new statecraft, which shows the silky horizon embedded with equity, justice and morality. Despite the glorification of the October Revolution by most Russian authors, he has shown himself up against the tide of his time. The following points would be the testimony of the statement for establishing the paper’s central argument that revolution brought anarchy, not peace; social disorder, not harmony; strain and trauma, not appeasement; totalitarian statecraft, not welfare.

2. Revolution, Civil War and Disorders

The October revolution in 1917 evoked the deadliest civil war of the twentieth century. The war put unbearable strains on Russia with enormous losses. The lives of almost tens of millions were lost or changed forever in the subsequent conflagration—war, epidemic, famine, imprisonment, massacre, dislocation and exile (Bullock, 2008, p. 07). Pasternak sharply illustrates the sufferings caused by the disorders in Russia of that time in *Doctor Zhivago*. Anarchy prevailed throughout Russia, affecting every sphere of life. Towns are burned and plundered. The novel's central character, doctor Yurii Zhivago, worked at the health department of the Army during World War I. He had the opportunity of visiting some of their units, where he observed extreme mismanagement. He wrote to his wife that disintegration and anarchy peaked in therny (Pasternak, 1958, p. 111).

Mutinies in the army were widespread during the beginning of the revolution, and their slogan was, from Pasternak's novel, "Turn your bayonets against your masters". Pasternak portrays such an incident in *Doctor Zhivago* where he provides the account of Gints, the Cossack officer and Pamphil, the Red soldier, acting under Kerensky. Gints tried to convince the rebels to stop their revolutionary insanity, an enthusiastic young officer. But the soldiers had already seen a lot of bloodsheds. They were not going to be convinced by these words. They laughed at him. Later, Pamphil shot him, and the revolutionaries thrust their bayonets into his body (Pasternak, 1958, p. 130). The whole of Russia was in chaos. Elites and the bourgeoisie were shot. Thousands of Russian soldiers were demobilized. And many of them, without jobs and orders, hungry and desperate, went in search of food or money (Bullock, 2008, p. 38).

The revolution and war also severely affected the agrarian sector. Russia was an agriculture-based country, and many of the population were peasants. The revolution also shook the peasantry. According to E. H. Carr, the hopes and excitement of the October Revolution caused peasant disorders in many parts of Russia. In April 1917, Lenin illustrated that "peasants are already seizing the land without compensation or paying a quarter of the rent" (Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, 1952, pp. 35-36). This recklessness of the peasants created turbulence in the socio-economic fabric. The peasants became desperate for their own land for which they had been waiting for a long time. Revolution has given them this hope, the dream of their own land. And then they were ready to fight any establishment breaking every rule. Boris Pasternak tells about the outbreaks of peasant disorders. There were peasant rebellions everywhere. They were against whoever happened to be in power, the Reds or the Whites (Pasternak, 1958, p. 186).

3. Violence: Mass Killing of the Civilians

Violence was one of the worst consequences of civil war. There were looting, bombardment, murders, and horrors in Russia (Pasternak, 1958, p. 246). Socialist Revolutionaries particularly wanted to incite a revolution by ousting the old

regime. Assassinations and bombings became the specialism of their terrorist wing (Harris, 2016, p. 16).

This novel is a record of the violent situations during those days. There was a regular battle on the streets between the soldiers who supported the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks. Social safety also collapsed, and the lives of the commoners became highly troublesome. There was skirmishing all over Moscow. At the time of rifle fire, passers-by were often killed by stray bullets (Pasternak, 1958, p. 159). Day to day life of the people was hampered. Yurii Zhivago is seen as helpless because he could not collect some milk when his son was very sick due to the rifle fire in the street (Pasternak, 1958, pp. 159-60). Pasternak also sporadically records the pogroms on Jews in Russia (Pasternak, 1958, p. 249). Russia had to pay the price of revolution and civil war at the expense of many lives. However, there is no accurate number of lives lost due to civil war. An estimation shows that the number of dead in the Red Army from battle and disease is as low as 425,000 and as high as 1,213,000. In the White Army, the number ranges from 325,000 to 1,287,000. And 200,000-400,000 died in prison or were executed during the 'Red Terror'. Another 50,000 died in 'White Terror' (Bullock, 2008, p. 133).

Reds and Whites both shifted to terror in the second half of 1918. Bolsheviks in Ekaterinburg executed Tsar Nicholas II and his family on 16 July 1918 with the approval of Lenin. After an attempt on Lenin's life on 30 August, the Bolsheviks started the Red Terror, intended to eliminate political opponents among the civilians. In December 1917, Cheka (sabotage) and the Extraordinary Commission were set up under Feliks Dzerzhinsky to combat the counter-revolution carried out the terror. Seeking to reverse social revolution, the Whites savagely waged their ideological war that justified the use of terror to avenge those who the revolution had wronged. However, the White terror was not as systematic as the Bolsheviks but was equally terrifying and arbitrary (Raleigh, 2006).

The Civil war was ruthless, and each side took to torture cruelly the captives of the other side. In the novel, Pasternak wrote through the statement of a character, "The whole town is groaning. They boil people alive. They cut strips out of them. ...some they hang, some they shoot, some they question. They beat you to shreds; they put salt on the wounds and pour boiling water on you. Whenever you vomit or relieve yourself, they make you eat it. As for children and women—O God!" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 306). Pasternak observes, "White and Red atrocities rivalled each other in savagery, outrage breeding outrage" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 308). Civil war turned Russia into debris. There were destructions, villages were burned out, and nothing was left but cinders.

Both sides, the Reds and the Whites, used to conscript their armies at gunpoint and executed captured soldiers and commanders. Both sides used to seize property and grain without considering the population they left without food and shelter. And both used to deport entire communities they suspected of disloyalty (Harris, 2016, p. 17).

The Bolsheviks learned from history that the possessing classes would do anything to stifle the revolution. They understood that they had to tackle this threat consistently and ruthlessly to the end. So they not only launched their terror but also encouraged widespread unrest against the ‘counter revolution’. Their intention was not to glorify revolutionary violence, but they didn’t want to shrink from it in defence of the revolution (Harris, 2016, p. 16). Trotsky clearly said, “They thought that we should be passive, but we showed them that we could be merciless when it is a question of defending the conquest of the revolution... We shall not enter the kingdom of socialism in white gloves on a polished floor” (Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, 1950).

James Harris points out that the improvement in Bolshevik fortunes in 1918 seemed to justify terror. In the history of the revolution, terror gradually appears to occupy a glory place. The Cheka earned the reputation of ‘sword and shield of the revolution’ and the Chekists as ‘the best Bolsheviks’ (Harris, 2016, p. 31). Both the Whites and the Reds became so enraged that the whole of Russia became a bloody battlefield.

4. Disruption of Law and Order

Civil war and sudden changes in government after the revolution brought severe interruption in law and order. The pre-revolutionary legal system became null and void. Many new laws and decrees were proclaimed. Due to the frequent changes in government since 1917, laws and orders were changing rapidly, sometimes creating confusion among ordinary people. And after the start of the civil war, the legal system collapsed.

Arbitrary arrest, rape, murder, and abduction were widespread in Russia (Pasternak, 1958, p. 320). During the Civil War, thousands of Soviet citizens were arrested and without any trial or material evidence of a crime, they were imprisoned, exiled, or shot (Harris, 2016, p. 31).

The description of robbery and murder in daylight is often found in this novel. Pasternak describes, “The period confirmed the ancient proverb”, “Man is a wolf to man.” Traveller turned off the road at the sight of a traveller. A stranger meeting stranger was killed for fear of being killed. There were isolated cases of cannibalism. The laws of human civilization were suspended. The jungle law was in force. Man dreamed the prehistoric dreams of the cave dweller” (Pasternak, 1958, p. 313).

Socialism promises people equality, the equal right to land and food and government control of resources. But in Russia, the downfalls during the civil war led the people and supporters of the Bolshevik party to cheat on their beliefs. Sometimes government officials were found to involve in corruption to survive. In *Doctor Zhivago*, some families in Yuratin are seen depending on the extra goods they used to get from Samdeviatov. Yurii’s family also received much undue support from him. According to James Harris, when the revolutionaries resorted to terrorism, the old regime suspended all legal norms (Harris, 2016, p. 30).

Economic crisis: The civil war disrupted the country's economic order by altering all normal conditions in agriculture, industry, trade, and the monetary system. The novel records the severe financial crisis of post-revolution Russia. Pasternak depicts the heart-touching scenario of hunger, death, scarcity of daily necessities like medicine etc.

Famine and Scarcity of necessary commodities: People from every stratum of society suffered due to the famine. Their miseries due to food scarcity can be seen everywhere in this fiction. Rice and flour literally vanished from Russia. People were living on potatoes only. Pasternak said, "For a long time, most people's daily food consisted of thin millet boiled in water and soup made of herring heads; the herring itself was used as a second course. A sort of kasha was also made of unground wheat or rye" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 165). Many people didn't even get this. The horrors of famine devastated the whole of Russia. The death toll was rising every day. E. H. Carr describes it as, "...hunger is more often indirect than a direct cause of death" (Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, 1952, p. 284).

Boris Pasternak depicts a scene of hungry days in Moscow. During those days, Yurii got a duck as a present, and it seemed so lavish that Pasternak wrote about this, "The large duck was an unheard-of luxury in those already hungry days, but there was no bread with it, and because of this its splendour was somehow pointless-it even got on one's nerves.... But the saddest thing was that their party was a kind of betrayal. You could not imagine anyone in the houses across the street eating or drinking in the way at the same time. Beyond the windows lay silent, dark, hungry Moscow. Its shops were empty, and as for game and vodka, people had even forgotten to think about such things" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 147). Yurii Andreievich Zhivago and his in-laws belong to an aristocratic identity. But soon after the revolution, they were found running out of food. Later on, the Zhivago are seen starving. The condition of Zhivago's family had worsened so much that they had to leave Moscow and set off to Varykino for survival, where they tried to get a share of land and produce food for themselves.

Food crises reached their peak after the civil war. The name of bread had vanished from the earth. The food supplies were like a drop in the ocean (Pasternak, 1958, pp. 316, 327).

As a result of the civil war, agriculture and industry were destroyed. Agricultural production fell by one-third in 1921 as compared to 1913. Industrial production plummeted in 1921 in coal, oil, iron, engineering, sugar and textile industries by 30.6; 42.7; 1.6; 9.7; 6.7 and 7.5 per cent compared to 1913. Soon after the civil war, 8 million people died in the famine, 3 million more in the epidemic (Rono, H. A., 2014, pp. 350-51).

There was also an acute scarcity of other consumer goods like firewood, fuel, medicine, and vodka. In *Doctor Zhivago*, people are seen to mix alcohol with

water and use it as an alternative to Vodka. People's suffering knew no bounds during winter because of the shortage of firewood. Once a gentleman like Yurii is seen stealing a beam of wood from a government institution (Pasternak, 1958, p. 163).

Epidemic: Besides war and hunger, people were dying from epidemics. Russia was outraged by typhus, scurvy, influenza and many other diseases. Because of the medical system mismanagement, the death rate in epidemics was exceedingly high. The novel mentions epidemics and the crisis in the medical system several times. The outbreak of Typhus was very acute. Hospitals were unable to give medical support to a vast number of people. So they started to take refuge in railway stations and die miserable death (Pasternak, 1958, p. 176). According to David Bullock, 5 million people died in the ensuing famines of 1921-22, directly resulting from the economic disruption of revolution and civil war. The number of civilians surrendered to typhus, typhoid and cholera epidemics in 1918-21 and the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-19 totalled-14 million (Bullock, 2008, p. 133).

Inflation: Along with other crises, the rapid devaluation of money made life more difficult. The Russian economy went through the fatal inflation of all time. The scarcity of money and inflation went so extreme that people started to exchange products. In *Doctor Zhivago*, Tonia is found to exchange her favourite wooden wardrobe for only a few pieces of firewood and later on, she is seen to exchange a towel with roasted hare meat (Pasternak, 1958, pp. 166, 183). One thousand rubbles were worth a kopeck after the introduction of NEP (New Economic Policy). Money was called 'lemons' (Pasternak, 1958, p. 425).

E. H. Carr points out that this exchange of goods was not only 'the chief method of collecting foodstuffs' but also 'the test of a correct mutual relation between industry and agriculture (Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, 1952, p. 332).

The revolutionary government made some attempts to resolve the monetary problem. A commission was appointed to advise the government on currency policy. In November 1921, it was decided to inaugurate a new currency issue of which one ruble would be equivalent to ten thousand rubles of the previous issue (Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, 1952, p. 348).

Inflation, a fall in industrial and agricultural production, and the government's failure to maintain the market led to a severe famine. E. H. Carr opined that a catastrophic decline in industrial production and breakdown in the state-controlled distribution of commodities at fixed prices led to the rapid growth of illegal private trade at runaway prices and severe inflations. All of this caused a famine which led to the refusal of the peasants to supply necessary grains to the towns (Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, 1952, p. 272).

When 'War Communism' was not working to recover the economic order, the Bolshevik government introduced NEP (New Economic Policy). Under NEP, strict control over trade was slightly relaxed, and markets were made open to some extent. But the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie also reinforce their position. Haider Akbar Khan Rono opined that there was also the risk of a rise in capitalism because of the policies taken in NEP (SSS p. 351).

The tyranny of the speculators was apparent. According to Pasternak, speculators had made fortunes from the beginning of the introduction of NEP. Artists and scholars close to the government set up houses on a comfortable scale (Pasternak, 1958, p. 397).

After the ban on private enterprise was withdrawn, trade within narrow limits started. Unfortunately, speculation and profit-mongering were outraging the economy. It only benefitted a few people, and they did nothing to relieve the squalor of the town. It could hardly lessen the miseries of ordinary people (Pasternak, 1958, p. 391).

According to Peter Gatrell, money as a medium of exchange literally lost its function between 1918 and 1920. Established economic links were broken, and production collapsed. In 1921 industrial production was merely 12 per cent compared to 1913. It was an economy of absolute shortage. Workers who were on their jobs used to receive payment in kind and exchanged goods to survive. Many returned to the village. Russia faced a demographic haemorrhage (Gatrell, 2008, p. 390).

Communication: The communication system was damaged in warfare. In the novel, we can see the wretched condition of rail communication. Trains became very rare at that time. Getting a train was a question of luck (Pasternak, 1958, p. 176). And in this situation, if someone got trains, there were hardly any passenger coach. After the civil war, most railways were out of use, being neglected and covered with snow. Because of the lack of fuel, the trains stood idle. Transportation had been stopped. Yurii is found being forced to walk all the way back to Varykino.

Forced Labor and Concentration Camp: The most horrible nightmare in post-revolution Russia was forcefully taking people for labour or sending them to the concentration camp. Pasternak records many such incidents in his novel. During their train journey, the Zhivago family met several labour conscripts who had been taken without their will at gunpoint. These people didn't even commit any crimes (Pasternak, 1958, p. 184). Even doctor Yurii Zhivago was suddenly conscripted from a road and couldn't even inform his family at gunpoint. He was taken to a Partisan's camp in a forest in Siberia. There he was forced to serve as a medical officer. Pasternak depicts the tremendous sorrows Yurii went through in the camp,

being separated from his friends and family. Later on, Yurii escaped from the camp.

The novel sporadically records the terrifying condition of the concentration camp or the Gulag. Yurii's one friend Gordon described the concentration camp as worse than frontline fighting in the war. He said, "It was a bliss compared to the horrors of the concentration camp..." . He described, "We got sent to just about the worst of the penal camps. There were very few survivors. Our arrival, to begin with. We got off the train. A wilderness of snow. Forest in the distance. Guards with rifles, muzzles pointing at us, wolfhounds. At about the same time, other groups were brought up. We were spread out and formed into a big polygon all over the field, facing outward so we wouldn't see each other. Then we were ordered down on our knees and told to keep looking straight ahead in pain of death. Then the roll call, an endless, humiliating business going on for hours and hours. And all the time, we were on our knees. Then we got up, and the other groups were marched off, and ours was told: 'This is your camp. Make the best of it!' An open snow field with a post in the middle and a notice saying: 'GULAG 92 YN 90'—that's all there was" (Pasternak, 1958, pp. 418-19).

Millions of innocent people were incarcerated in the concentration camp or Gulag, serving sentences of hard labour. In the camps, prisoners worked outdoors and in mines, in arid regions without adequate food, clothing, tools, shelter, water, etc. Many prisoners suffered from starvation, diseases, violence, and cold, and many people died (David Hosford).

Gulag stands for *Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei* (Main Camp Administration). It was formally created in 1929, but the origin of the Soviet system of penal labour can be traced earlier to the 1920s. It was not only vast networks of prisons or labour camps but also places of exile for forced labour (Applebaum, 2003, p. 50). During the Great Terror of 1937–1938, the Gulag further expanded. The secret police arrested 1.6 million people during those years. Most were arrested as the "enemies of the people" and "counter-revolutionaries" (Gheith, 2011, p. 2). Anne Applebaum opined that people were not detained for anything they had done but for who they were (Applebaum, 2003, p. xxxiv).

A Gulag survivor Sira Stepanovna Balashina who was exiled in 1930, tells the horrible story of how she and her whole village were deported. She said, "They dekulakized us initially, but our holding wasn't huge. There were a lot of people in the village who were dekulakized. Fifteen families, maybe. It was a big village. In 1930. Sometime in February. Well, we were already condemned to exile...I don't even really know anymore. They said, "Get ready." Get ready; how? The carts drew up and sat down. And they took us away." According to her, they were taken to Lebiazhevskii Station, where she had seen a lot of people being conscripted. The hall in the station was jam-packed. Lots and lots of people from all over the district were brought in. And then they were loaded in trains and sent to the concentration camp. Her sister and parents died because there wasn't enough to eat. They got sick and died" (Gheith, 2011, pp. 20-22). The number of camps'

inhabitants rose gradually from about 179,000 in 1930 to half a million by 1934. Due to the massive influx of prisoners during the Great Purges in 1937 and 1938, the camp populations grew to 1.5 million by 1940. Besides, during the 1930s, the number of people in police-run prisons and colonies reached 254,354 in 1935 and 887,635 by 1938 (Shearer, 2006).

This scenario of deporting and ultimately death because of hard labour and food scarcity was prevalent then. According to Jehanne M Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck, in the Gulag, millions of people died, and millions more were drastically disrupted by exile, arrest or hard labour in camps or the labour army. The effects have been evident in people's memories, fiction or other art forms, and many social phenomena (Gheith, 2011, p. 01).

5. Displacement and Deporting

Many people were displaced from the place they had been living since birth, and further settlement was impossible due to the anarchic situation. Many of the former empire's intellectuals, scientists, artists, doctors, actors, administrators, etc., migrated from Russia during and after the civil war. The diaspora has been estimated from 2-3.5 million (Bullock, 2008, p. 133).

At the peak of the civil war, when Moscow was burning, Doctor Yurii Zhivago and his family moved to Siberia. Many people kept moving from one place to another, and many people were deported. Doctor Zhivago's 1st wife, Tonia and her children were deported to Paris after the end of the civil war. This also caused break in familial ties. Yurii lost his family forever. Lara also could never reunite with her husband. This was the story of a large number of families in Russia.

6. Despair and Alienation

In the aftermath of the revolution and civil war, the crisis was accompanied by the breakdown of familial ties and moral values in society. Yurii belonged to an aristocratic family and was seen to steal wood from the roadside. He is seen to tell his wife, "Remember, there aren't any honest people left, or any friends" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 165). Revolution and consequent turbulences had a tremendous impact on people's family life. The novel's protagonist, Yurii Zhivago, could barely maintain a happy family life. Again and again, he had been taken away from his family. Ultimately he couldn't reunite with his family because they were deported to Paris. Lara Antipova's school teacher husband is seen to leave family and became a renowned officer in White Army. But they could never find peace again in life. Once, they had a happy family life which they never got back.

Revolution drew a dividing line among the people. It has 'declassified' (Lyric, 2020) many of the aristocrats. However, two opposing sides were formed, the Mensheviks-who believed in capitalism, and the Bolsheviks, who wanted socialism immediately. And the civil war began. Citizens of Russia found themselves on opposite sides who once were the same. In Yurii's hospital, the doctors were divided.

Even families became divided on this issue. Pasternak wrote, “This class war has run between us like the black cat of discord, and just took at what it’s doing” (Pasternak, 1958). During Civil War, Strelnikov is seen fighting against Galiullin, his childhood friend and his comrade in arms in World War I (Pasternak, 1958).

The upper-class and middle-class people were in a dire identity crisis. Revolution bred hatred for the middle class, and it became unsafe to acknowledge that one is educated. After the revolution, Yurii had to hide that he was a doctor in public for a long time. It was also risky to admit family ties to the old wealthy families of Russia. Zhivagos are seen to live in fear as once they belonged to wealthy families. People were unable to bear this situation anymore. All they wanted were freedom from this chaos. They wanted to see a definite outcome. Mr Yurii Zhivago was found to say with regret that those who cherished the revolution aren’t at home in anything except change and turmoil. According to him, man is born to live, not prepare for life. All these factors and the violence of the civil war disheartened people from the revolution. People were sinking in extreme distress. Their aspirations and high hope for revolution were falling apart. Pasternak expressed the despair of peasants and workers, “When the revolution woke him up, he decided that his century-old dream was coming true—his dream of living on his own land by the work of his hands, in complete independence and with no obligations to anyone. Instead, he found he had only exchanged the oppression of the former state for the new, much harsher yoke of the revolutionary super state. (Pasternak, 1958, p. 248).

C J Polychroniou expressed his view regarding the hope and reality of revolution. He said, “Dreams are surely renewable, and a new world is waiting to be born, but the possibilities available to create an equalitarian, socially just, ecologically friendly, and decent society lie outside October’s ideas, practices, and policies evolution” (Polychroniou).

7. Mental Trauma

High aspirations of revolution and ultimate disappointment, destruction of civil war, bloodshed etc., created a traumatic situation. People are gradually losing their normal mental health. Yurii’s friend Dudorov had been drafted into the army by mistake, and later on, his behaviour became erratic due to mental trauma. Strelnikov, once a mighty officer, committed suicide out of frustration. In addition, Pamphil Palykh, a soldier and devoted revolutionary, fought in World War I and the Russian Civil War and later became mentally unstable. He was always anxious about his family falling into the hands of the White Army and being brutally killed. Pamphil became insane and grew insomnia and hallucinations. Yurii tried to help him. In the end, he killed all the family members with his axe so they wouldn’t have to face the atrocities of the Whites.

But once upon a time, Pumphil had an everyday life. He is seen to tell Yurii, “My wife and I, we were young. She looked after the house. I worked in the field.

It wasn't a bad life. We had children. They drafted me into the army. They sent me to the war.....Then the revolution. I saw the light. Not the Germans, the Fritzers, were the enemies, but some of our own people...Then came to the civil war...After all that, what do I see now, at the present moment?" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 290). People couldn't bear the distressing conditions. The romanticism of revolution ended up with the violence of civil war.

Conditions of Women and Children: Women and children suffer most in violent situations. Pasternak writes about the sufferings of female hordes during the civil war, "Trudging on foot, loaded with sacks, bundles, and babies, a young mother who had lost their milk, driven out of their minds by the horrors of the journey, abandoned their children, shook the corn out of their sacks onto the ground, and turned back. A quick death, they had decided, was preferable to slow death by starvation. Better to fall into the enemy's clutches than to be torn to pieces by some beast in the forest" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 298).

At that time, most women were housewives, farm labourers, mothers, and industrial workers, who chose the path of easy virtue to stay alive or find enough food to eat. Some women were forced down that road because of hostile environments. According to Bolshevik statistics, the number of women involved in prostitution had increased over the 3 per cent mark in 1917. During the increasing adversities of the civil war, this number must have gone higher. Women were also engaged in the camps, cooking, nursing, and occasional prostitution, sometimes the same woman in all these roles. The first-hand military memoirs, both Red and White, recorded general acceptance and appreciation of these women (Bullock, 2008, p. 107).

Boris Pasternak portrays women who were actively participating in the revolution. They participate in processions and speeches regularly. Socialist revolutionaries were surprised by the women's role in the revolution. During the revolution, the Bolshevik newspaper, *The Pravda*, praised women for being in the demonstration and encouraging men to come out to the streets (Steinberg, 2017, p. 28).

In the Novel, Pasternak portrays a very dedicated women soldier Christina, who later died in World War II. The Reds had many women soldiers, thousands were in the support services, and hundreds also took up arms. The 22-year-old beautiful Larissa Reissner was a wonderful example. According to literary critics, she served as the physical prototype for 'Lara' in Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* (Bullock, 2008, p. 112).

After the revolution and the Civil War, many orphans were seen in Russia, called *bezprizornaia*. Most of their parents died during the civil war or in the purge. They used to roam around the country, which later created a severe problem for the state. In this novel, Doctor Yurii Zhivago and Lara's lost daughter, Tania, was portrayed as a *bezprizornaia*, who later became a laundry girl in the army (Pasternak, 1958, p. 425). These orphan children were the direct outcome of the revolution and civil war. In revolutionary Russia, the regime faced the daunting

task of getting hordes of abandoned and homeless children (*besprizorniki*) off the streets (Kirschenbaum, 2001, p. 01). World War I, Revolution, civil war, famine, and violence left tens of thousands of orphans. In 1945 there were 680 thousand orphans in Russia (Valeeva & Aidar, 2015, p. 2123).

8. Conclusion

The Bolshevik revolution has undoubtedly been an incident of celebration within and beyond Russia. But the miseries, trauma, and strains its subsequent civil war brought have questioned the glory and outcome of the great event. The politics of revolution has been the root of the persistent enthrallment with Russia's twentieth-century economic history. The events of 1917-18 foreshadowed a more equitable and humane, well-equipped modern social and economic order, which seems to hold out hope for millions of impoverished, suppressed and oppressed people in and outside Russia—as believed by the Bolshevik leadership. On the contrary, to the opponents of Bolshevik, the revolution has reversed the economy by half a century, even the economic progress achieved before the tsarist regime under the façade of so-called social and economic goals. It is considered barbaric and destructive because of the totalitarian nature of the state. In this connection, Marot responds, “The seminal event of the twentieth century was not the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 but its final destruction between 1929–33” (Marot, 2012, p. 01). These stands of the two opposite poles have primarily contributed to shaping the lens of assessment, for the next generations, of the aspiration and performance of the revolution at boosting the Russian economy during the twentieth century (Gatrell, 2008). The myth and romanticism revolution possesses, the lofty aspirations the leadership delivers, and the reality the common mass comes across show a paradox to the later generations who look back to history through their own approach and understanding. In his *Doctor Zhivago*, Pasternak has portrayed strains and trauma, myth and broken dreams, sufferings and deaths a revolution may cause against the hope and aspiration of the activists and leaders of revolution—the other side of the coin.

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