

# Genesis of bureaucratic socialism<sup>1</sup>

## Part I

**T**o produce more use values Gosplan oversaw the production of more plan values. Yet through bureaucratic lack of control and workers' negative control, plan values were drained of quality. To make up for waste - the massive gap between actual and potential output and the general lacunas in the plan - the whole system fell into a self-referencing accumulation, which amounted to production for the sake of production. But this compulsive accumulation of plan values presupposes not only endemic shortages. It presupposes the bureaucratic compulsion to accumulate in the first place. The whole movement appears at first sight to be a vicious circle. However, we can logically escape from the paradox by laying hold of, and then unfolding, the *essential* contradictions which existed in the Soviet Union before the five year plans; contradictions which pre-date bureaucratic domination and the alienation of the workers, yet constitute their starting point.

Historical materialism demands a kind of retrogression, or delving back into original content. No object is only itself. In fact to know the object-itself we must know its non-self. For that it is necessary to recognise that the non-self has to be defined (grasped) in terms of opposites that were bound together in a unity and yet were engaged in a dynamic, self-revealing struggle that actually resolves itself into the object-itself. Identity, as Hegel pointed out, is in comparison superficial and, as we might point out, mere nomenclature is downright banal. Bourgeois and anarchist theorists, for example, either directly equate, or at least blame Lenin for the Yezhovshchina, forced collectivisation, etc, because of the narrative continuum between the Bolshevik faction established in 1903 and the CPSU(B) presided over by Stalin in the 1930s. Our method, in contrast, emphasises change as an absolute property of all matter. In the process of being and becoming, things do not and cannot stay the same. Science in consequence requires more than the extraneous designation of cause and effect or the arbitrarily drawn parallel.

The absence of elections for party committees in the period prior to 1905 was not joined by some categorical imperative to the final crushing of opposition and party debate in the late 1920s. Nor was the expulsion of the Menshevik liquidators in 1912 the same phenomenon as Stalin's massacre of the Old Bolsheviks in 1936-8.

To understand why the Soviet Union became locked into a self-devour-

ing form of accumulation under a bureaucracy that could dominate but not control, we must understand the essential conditions that gave birth to it, and to do that we must understand the dialectics of the Russian Revolution itself.

The revolution presented Marxists with a set of circumstances which even in their wildest dreams (or nightmares) they could not have envisaged. It was not that Russia exploded before a general European conflagration - that was expected. No, what was unexpected was that the revolution would occur and then evolve in drawn out and suffocating isolation.

Lenin had, since 1905, proclaimed Russia as the world revolutionary centre: ie, a precursor, a spark that could ignite the tinder in the metropolises (Kautsky, it should be noted, did likewise). Such a lead role had nothing to do with some teleological subordination, equation or conflation of the general interest to Russia.

The world revolutionary centre is an objective question based on uneven development. It is a category quite independent of the subjective factor and simply refers to that country where class antagonisms and struggle are the most acute and advanced. Chartist Britain, France of the Commune, Germany of the mass Marxist SDP had in their turn held up a beacon for the whole of oppressed humanity.

The eastward shift in the world revolutionary centre to Russia resulted from the contradictions wrought by the world capitalist economy on a backward, autocratic superstructure. This was something Marx and Engels themselves noted in their last years. Correct theorising led them to modify their initial, rather vulgar assumption that revolution would proceed in more or less direct correlation to the growth of productive forces and proletarianisation. Violent explosions would occur at the 'extremities' of the bourgeois organism before taking place in its core, because at its core class contradictions could more easily be ameliorated.

This view of the *united* but *uneven* world revolutionary process informed the assessment of Marx and Engels. Therefore instead of putting first hopes on advanced Britain, Germany, the USA and France, in 1882 Marx and Engels suggested the potential of Russia to become the "signal for proletarian revolution in the west". A prognosis based on their joint view that "today ... Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe"<sup>2</sup>. Engels reiterated that assessment after the death of his friend when he wrote to Vera Zasulich in the following terms: "What I know or believe I know about the situation in

Russia makes me think that the Russians are approaching their 1789. The revolution *must* break out there in a limited period of time; it *may* break out any day. In these circumstances the country is like a charged mine which only needs a match to be applied to it."<sup>3</sup>

Hence in 1905, and certainly in the wake of the conquests of 1917, the Bolsheviks were not taken aback by their "vanguard" role, their position as a "charged mine", in relation to Europe. They had no theoretical problem about backward Russia marching in the forefront of the world revolution. The laws of uneven development that made Russia a weak link in the imperialist chain were well known to them. So, within that universal frame, when it came in October 1917 the revolution was not viewed as an end in itself. It was a "signal". The Bolsheviks called upon their comrades in the advanced countries to take over the baton. They had risked all and "applied the match"; the "proletarian revolution in the west" would now quickly follow and *rescue* them. Or so they thought.

In the next couple of years optimism ran high - Europe exploded. Crowns fell, empires disintegrated and newly formed communist parties readied themselves for insurrection. Soviet governments were established in Hungary, the Baltics, Slovakia, Bavaria and Finland. They proved tragically short-lived. Along with the revolutions in Germany, Austria and elsewhere, they were brutally reversed - primarily as a result of social democratic treachery. Reaction eclipsed revolution.

The consequences would be far reaching and decidedly negative. "Our banking on the world revolution, if you can call it that, has on the whole been fully justified," wrote Lenin; but its slowness "has landed us with immeasurable difficulties"<sup>4</sup>. It was not that making proletarian revolution in Russia was 'premature', as dogmatically argued by the Mensheviks. Rather that offensive would have to give way to other, immeasurably more difficult and fraught stratagems of defence.

The possibility of a forcible liberation of Europe from capital was never ruled out. Napoleon Bonaparte's armies had a century before swept through and shattered *ancien* Europe. Some Soviet leaders - Bukharin and Dzerzhinsky in 1918, Lenin and Tukhachevsky in 1920 - positively advocated such a course. Yet it soon became painfully clear that with a primitive and ruined economic base revolutionary war was impractical, both in social and military terms. In particular the Red Army's abortive drive on Warsaw in August 1920 confirmed the world and internal bal-

ance of class forces and put an end to such suggestions.<sup>5</sup>

Revolutionary war became its opposite: peaceful coexistence - a policy Lenin called the peaceful cohabitation of states with different social systems. Peaceful coexistence meant living with capitalism, but for only as long as it took to make revolution and replace world imperialism with world communism. So peaceful coexistence was in these times a tactic subordinate to world revolution and not a form of class collaborationism. Peaceful coexistence provided a breathing space (it was also said to help communists in the capitalist countries because it would strengthen the Soviet state).

Weak links of imperialism make weak redoubts of revolution. Between 1914 and 1921 famine, epidemic and war cut Russia's population by a staggering 13.5 million. The cities were disproportionately affected and further drained by a flight to the countryside. That was not all. Economically things were in a parlous state. National income per capita in 1913 was about eight to ten times less than the United States. After world war, revolution, and civil war Russia fell even further behind. Industry, apart from arms production, virtually ceased to exist. Agricultural production fell by 50% and turned inwards with peasants consuming or hoarding their crops; there were widespread food shortages both in urban and rural areas.

A successful revolution in Germany would have rescued the Russian revolution from itself. Hope and imperative. Germany possessed advanced technique and a highly educated population; Russia vast expanses, immense mineral reserves and huge agricultural potential. A powerful combination. German economic aid and expertise would have dynamised Russia - it in return providing all the raw materials Germany needed. Interlocked, the two countries could stride forward and give the world a glowing example to follow. Living socialism would be characterised by attractive wealth, progress, cooperation and modernism. The birth pangs of the new epoch would in this way have been greatly eased. It was not to be. The German revolution, despite spluttering on fitfully, exhausted its initial impulse by 1923. Russia was *compelled* to go it alone. Socialism appeared in the form of poverty, austerity and famine.

As a "contingent of the world revolutionary army" the communists in Russia were well aware that for anything beyond short-term survival the revolution had to spread to the advanced capitalist countries. Lenin was certainly of that opinion: "While capitalism and socialism exist side by side, they cannot live in peace: one or the other will ultimately triumph - the last obsequies will be observed for either the Soviet Republic or for world capitalism."<sup>6</sup> But while "banking" on world revolution, Lenin recognised that having seized power in an undeveloped country and *temporarily* been left isolated, it was essential to advance it economically: in terms of defending the gain that had been won, an important contribution to the world revolution.

**"Since Soviet power has been established, since the bourgeoisie has been overthrown in one country, the ... task is to wage the struggle on a world scale, on a different plane, the struggle of the proletarian state surrounded by capitalist states.**

**This situation is an entirely novel and difficult one.**

**On the other hand, since the rule of the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, the main task is to organise the development of the country."<sup>7</sup>**

So the "entirely novel" situation confronting communists in Russia was on the one hand isolation, and on the other hand, the necessity of building the foundations of socialism in a backward country without outside assistance. All Marxists had till then only envisaged

socialism starting from the highest level achieved by capitalism. Russian *formal* socialism was faced with the task of catching up with the leading capitalist countries and thereby creating the possibility of *real* socialism, which would, it should be emphasised, require the fully conscious planning of the commanding heights of the world economy. The 'socialist' in the title of the Russian Soviet *Socialist* Republic and then the Union of Soviet *Socialist* Republics expressed intention, not realisation. Reiterating Marx, Lenin insisted the "complete victory of the socialist revolution in one country is inconceivable and demands the most active cooperation of at least several countries"<sup>8</sup>. Russia had begun. The USA, Germany, Britain and France had to complete.

In the meantime though, no matter how difficult, no matter how unpleasant the consequences, the attempt to catch up could not be shirked. Here within the material circumstances the Bolsheviks faced there was predicated a national socialist option which can be inferred even in Lenin's last writings. Yet the immediate alternative was either internal or external counterrevolution. Such an outcome would not help the working class anywhere. Hence Sovnarkom (the Council of People's Commissars) was given the mandate to develop the economy in order to maintain proletarian rule in the Soviet Republic. Whatever was achieved had to be, and was in formal proclamations, considered in the light of the world revolution.

To repeat - though Russia could act as a spark, it had been assumed that socialism would proceed from the base of advanced capitalism. Naturally, therefore, it was always assumed that the socialist regime would have the *active* support and participation of the overwhelming majority of the population. In Russia, backwardness manifested itself not just as an economic question. It was also a cultural and class question.

Culturally, the working class lacked the education and skills required for administration. Emergency expropriation of the expropriators was one thing. Organising what had been taken another. Workers' control within the workplace was not workers' management, let alone the conscious and prearranged regulation of the economy. Planning could not immediately follow on the heels of a barefoot revolution. Economic organisation had to be made a function of the state, rather than the function of society as a whole. Workers' control soon gave way to one-man management and the directives of commissars.<sup>9</sup>

Then there was class. Surrounded by a peasant sea, the proletariat constituted at most 10% of the population in Russia; a figure which shrunk with post-revolutionary economic dislocation, and civil and interventionist wars. Without assistance from advanced countries proletarian power in Russia rested on a strategic alliance with the peasant masses; an alliance first secured through the Bolshevik promise to bring peace to the peasant army and the landlords' land to the peasant classes.<sup>10</sup> "We know," Lenin told the party's 10th Congress, "that so long as there is no revolution in other countries, only agreement with the peasantry can save the revolution in Russia."<sup>11</sup> Only with the *consent* of the peasantry to workers' rule could the regime survive - on that all communists, even in the late 1920s, formally agreed. Constitutionally the workers' leading role was enshrined in a voting system geared five to one in their favour. A stop-gap measure.

Within Russia's national borders the continuation of working class power relied on, first, economic recovery and growth, and secondly, the transition towards the conscious regulation of production. If this did not happen the days of the dictatorship of the proletariat were numbered.

The economy had by 1920-21 reached crisis point. Industrial production continued on a downward slope, in no small measure due to a cumbersome and inexperienced central administration. State-run distribution broke

down and, filling the gap, illicit private trade led to runaway inflation. Peasants refused to sell grain for non-existent goods and worthless currency - hunger gripped the towns. Disaffection was palpable and widespread - the background for the Kronstadt revolt of March 1921.<sup>12</sup> The 'war communism' measures taken to relieve the situation, such as food columns to requisition grain, threatened to rupture the alliance between the workers' state and the peasant mass. Faced with rural disturbances and on top of that strikes - especially widespread in Petrograd - Lenin and his comrades rushed to retrieve the situation with an emergency package of measures later known as the New Economic Policy.

Its basic aim was to revive the economy through the market mechanism. Under the supervision of the workers' state private capitalism would be allowed to grow and dominate trade and agriculture. Lenin also boldly proposed the use of state capitalism - ie, the operation of large-scale capitalist-style industrial production by the workers' state. Russian communists should learn from the west and run their industries with the efficiency German militarism displayed during World War I.

To inform our discussion, it is worth recalling Marx's remarks in his *Critique of the Gotha programme* concerning base and superstructure: "Right," he said, "can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines."<sup>13</sup> Socialist laws and institutions are in the last analysis only sustainable with a high level of civilisation.

The introduction of NEP was a necessary but nonetheless major retreat dictated by Russia's lack of civilisation. The proletarian order and those administering it could not escape unaffected. In fact the dichotomy between Russia's primitive economic base and the socialist state, which had no outside assistance, had to be resolved at the expense of the elevated superstructure. In a sense it was pulled down and modified to more accurately reflect the base. A sort of atavism developed.

Many measures, while fully in line with the transition to socialism, could not be supported by a culturally and economically weakened backward country. Free speech and soviets, intellectual and artistic innovation, the most advanced reforms and even workers' and party democracy fell victim. That inevitably meant the collapse of the proletariat as the mediation between the party and history and the collapse of the party as the mediation between the proletariat and history.

Without democracy and the open exchange of ideas there can be no thinking, no conscious mass action. Isolated, the party as an *institution* was left to substitute for both the proletariat and history. Yet, as the 'object' and the 'subject' become disassociated in reality due to the absence of mediation, narrow sectionalism and dogmatism begins its own process of substitution - in this case for revolutionary universalism.

Let us more fully examine the problem of workers' and party democracy. The Kronstadt revolt was a staggering blow to the prestige and self-confidence of the party. It coincided not only with economic crisis but rumours of a new war of intervention and rumblings of anarchist insurrection in the countryside.

Moreover the counterrevolutionary rot began to affect the head. Besides the antidote of NEP Lenin demanded measures in the Party against what he called "unnecessary discussions".

Factional opposition - let alone the polar opposites Lenin had once positively advocated in correspondence with Gorky - could no longer be contained within the Communist Party. Unless ranks were closed, it would, said Lenin, precipitate civil war. "Either on this side, or on that - with a rifle, not with an opposition," he blood-curdily, warned. Strict centralism was the order of the day.

During a retreat discipline and unity "is a hundred times necessary," Lenin

argued. At the party's 10th Congress Lenin's authority prevailed and a resolution was carried ordering the "complete abolition of all factionalism". Discussion of disputed issues by party members was still tolerated. But the formation of distinct groups with their own organisation and platforms was temporarily forbidden. Showing the gravity of the situation, a *secret* clause was added to the resolution which stipulated that central committee members found guilty of factionalism could be "excluded from the party" by a majority of not less than two-thirds of a plenum of members of the central committee and the control commission.<sup>14</sup>

Brest-Litovsk, the treaty which secured peace with Germany, was synergetic with the dictatorial side of the regime waxing and its democratic side waning. Sensing weakness, the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries (Left and Right) had - in the uncompromising words of YM Svedlov, president of the Soviet's central executive committee - begun "organising armed attacks against the workers and peasants in association with notorious counterrevolutionaries". Hence during the civil war they were not only "excluded" from the soviets. They were banned. Latter the ban was lifted - from the Mensheviks in November 1918 and from the SRs in February 1919.

However, it was re-imposed on the eve of the introduction of NEP. The leadership of both parties found themselves incarcerated, in part due to real counterrevolutionary activities, but also no doubt in part due to fear that they could provide an alternative focal point for "unnecessary discussions", which, it was believed, could only strengthen and encourage the forces of counterrevolution.

Ensuring maximum cohesion of the proletariat necessitated sweeping authoritarian measures. The rule of the working class could no longer be assured except through the dictatorship of the Communist Party<sup>15</sup>. As we know some, both from the bureaucratic left and the pro-capitalist right, such a dictatorship of the party in one form or another is synonymous with socialism.

'Official communism' of course defined itself according to that precept. So did its fellow travellers, including Jean-Paul Sartre, a semi-Marxist of considerable intellectual weight and talent. He considered that the dictatorship of the proletariat "was an optimistic notion, constructed too hastily through misunderstanding the formal laws of dialectical reason". Indeed for Sartre the idea of the working class semi-state was "absurd". Aggregation of bureaucracy, "the terror, and the cult of the individual" were inevitable.<sup>16</sup>

On the contrary what Bertell Ollman has called the Communist Party's role as "regency of the proletariat" has to be approached far more critically. Party rule on behalf of the proletariat could not last long before becoming something else (it did not do so in 1991, as Ollman claims). The substitution of the party for the working class, as with the banning of other parties and internal opposition factions, NEP and state capitalism, was determined neither by principle nor the iron laws of *a priori* history. Such an extreme and inherently problematic measure was forced upon the Bolsheviks by specific, not to say unique, conditions - the retreat of a proletarian regime desperately trying to survive in an exceptionally cruel, isolated and aberrant environment.

### 1.1. Party and class

The civil war decimated the working class. Death by battle or disease and return to peasant life, forced upon huge numbers by economic collapse, emptied the factories and the cities. In the three years following the revolution, Moscow and Petrograd, the brilliant twins of the proletarian movement, experienced a massive haemorrhaging of population - Moscow lost 44.5% and Petrograd 57.5%. Overall the numbers of workers contracted by an even greater degree. There

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were 3.5 million industrial workers in 1913. By 1922 only 1,118,000 remained.

The party's social base was shrinking. Making matters far worse, it was also becoming declassed. The working class declined even more in quality than quantity. Those most committed to the new order were those most prepared to join the Red Army and die for it. But for the vanguard deproletarianisation took other forms besides six foot under the Russian sod. The best workers were syphoned off into full-time positions in the administrative machine and the Communist Party. Another of Hegel's historical ironies. To strengthen the proletarian regime the party of the proletariat saw its proletarian roots wither.

What did this mean? As we have seen, Lenin had already, reluctantly, concluded that the decline in the quality of the working class, its loss of social weight, its demoralisation meant in practice that "the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the Communist Party".<sup>17</sup> But even here there was a pronounced narrowing. The Communist Party had numerically grown in leaps and bounds; from 240,000 in August 1917 to 730,000 by February 1921. Many, of course, joined for reasons of career rather than conviction. Not only did an increasingly small percentage belong to factory cells - 18% in 1923 - but, as the leadership admitted, the mass influx into the party markedly lowered the general understanding of Marxist theory.<sup>18</sup> In a corresponding, but opposite, line of development, within the party authority became highly concentrated. Lenin was, as usual, perfectly candid: "If we do not close our eyes to reality, we must admit that at the present time the proletarian policy of the party is not determined by the character of its membership, but by the enormous prestige enjoyed by the small group which might be called the Old Guard of the party."<sup>19</sup> Only this leading group of "regents" possessed the political consciousness and standing necessary to ensure that the regime remained on course.

Not surprisingly the distinction between party and state became increasingly blurred. With the workers a formless declassed mass, the soviets lost all dynamism. They switched from organs of self-activity into something resembling the parish council of Archer middle England. Inexorably the focus of power shifted: from the congress of soviets to its executive committee, from there to Sovnarkom, then to the party's central committee, and finally to its politburo. Having members of the Communist Party occupy leading positions in the soviets was one thing. Effectively replacing them at all levels with the party itself was another. It was administratively convenient. But fused with the state, the Communist Party had to itself assume some of the features of a state organ.

There can be no question that this transformation conformed with Lenin's wishes. He actively encouraged the merging of party and state functions and bodies. Imperialist intervention, civil war, working class retreat and economic reconstruction demanded it. But there were decidedly negative side effects - most notably overbearing and corrupting bureaucracy. And that deformation was not to Lenin's liking. Thus in 1922 and 1923 - towards the end of his political life - Lenin became "much preoccupied ... with the growth of bureaucracy in the state and party."<sup>20</sup> The result was a series of exasperated articles and impulsive organisational proposals.

Essentially Lenin blamed the growth of bureaucracy on atavism. Communists working in the state administration were being swamped by the old - not least the old Tsarist bureaucracy, the *chinovnichestvo*, employed by the Bolsheviks to make up for their own lack of administrative skills and experience. Why the new should be so affected by the old was for Lenin a matter of culture. Compared with the proletariat, the old order possessed a higher form of culture, which was still in fact the *dominant* culture. Lenin drew from the past in the following manner:

**"Something has happened rather like what we learned in our history lessons when we were children: one people subjugates another. The subjugator is then a conquering people and the subjected a vanquished people. This is true enough, but what happens to the culture of these two peoples? The answer is not simple. If the conquering people is more cultured than the vanquished people, the stronger imposes its culture on the weaker. But in the opposite case, the vanquished country may impose its culture on the conqueror. Is this not what happened in the capital of the RSFSR, and were not 4,700 of the best communists (almost a division) submerged by an alien culture? Is it true that one might have the impression that the culture of the vanquished is of a high level? Not so: it is wretched and insignificant. But it is still superior to ours."<sup>21</sup>**

One might say that Russian backwardness conquered its conqueror (to paraphrase Horace, who said of Rome's conquest of Greece: "Greece conquered her ferocious conqueror"). Such atavism led Lenin to famously define the Soviet Republic as a "workers' state with a bureaucratic twist to it".<sup>22</sup>

It quickly became clear that it was no mere matter of the state bureaucracy being permeated with Tsarist officials. It was the *function* of the Tsarist bureaucracy that was conquering its conquerors, not so much the Tsarist bureaucracy itself. Bribery, red tape, insensitivity and nepotism were not the sole prerogative of former members of the old order. These practices reappeared with a vengeance among the so-called *sovbour*, simply because the "proletarian vanguard" of specialists still monopolised the socially necessary function of administration.

Lenin advocated a cleansing, or purge, of the party. For him getting rid of self-seekers, the petty bourgeois entryists and the downright compromised was crucial. Between the 10th Congress in March 1921 and January 1922 about one-third of the membership - 215,000 in all - lost their cards. Yet despite the purge, not least for Lenin, the social composition of the party remained far from satisfactory. In early 1922 only 45% of the membership were industrial workers, while 26% were peasants and 29% were office workers and intellectuals. And as these figures tended to be based on social *origins*, the statistics for the actual organisation of members is far more significant. While 18% belonged to factory cells, 30% were in peasant cells, 24% in army cells and 19% in office cells. Incidentally Zinoviev also reported that Old Bolsheviks, those who joined the party before February 1917 - ie, the most politically trained and tested - accounted for only two percent of membership.

Given the state-party merger it was inevitable that Lenin would be forced to confront the bureaucratisation of the party. During the Civil War appointment took priority over election. Cadres had to be allocated jobs according to military needs, not the wishes of local branches and cells. However in the process, certainly towards the end of hostilities, a layer of full-timers began to see their promotion prospects, material interests and status as being dependent on those pulling the levers at the top of the *governing* apparatus. Carrying out directives, understanding directives and "putting them into effect" was what counted.<sup>23</sup> Not trust and support amongst comrades. Once state power was consolidated, to be a professional communist was no longer a self-sacrifice, a danger, an act of courage. It was the aim of the ambitious, the unprincipled go-getters, the ladder-climbers. Bureaucracy was being generated internally. "We have bureaucrats in our party institutions as well as Soviet institutions," Lenin admitted with unconcealed disgust.<sup>24</sup>

Since 1920 Uchraspred, the Regis-

tration and Distribution Department of the central committee, had been responsible for the mass mobilisations of party workers. With the end of the Civil War its scope was broadened to include the appointment of party members to specific posts. Indeed at the party's 12th Congress in April 1923 Stalin demanded that Uchraspred "be expanded to the utmost".<sup>25</sup> He got what he wanted. Soon it was responsible for a whole range of appointments, not only within the party, but the state and big industrial enterprises too. Uchraspred thus became a powerful instrument in the hands of Stalin - general secretary of the party since April 1922 - to build his "personal authority in the state as well as the party machine".<sup>26</sup>

When Lenin returned to work after his first stroke, he became concerned by Stalin's evident success in increasing both the power of his office, and his own standing. He was now for the first time a top figure in the party. Though Stalin had an outstanding record, before the revolution as an underground revolutionary and then as a Civil War commander and commissar, he personified the triumph of the old Tsarist culture over the new order. This was first drawn to Lenin's attention by Stalin's autocratic handling of national differences and sensibilities and led to several bitter clashes.<sup>27</sup> But the national question was not the only area of dispute between Lenin and Stalin during the latter's resistible rise, and there can be no doubt that a major showdown was on the cards.<sup>28</sup>

However, towards the end of 1922, Lenin's health began to deteriorate rapidly. Fearing death, he began to frantically dictate notes for the party's 12th Congress. These notes later became known as Lenin's *Testament*. With almost prophetic accuracy Lenin warned of two great dangers he thought could jeopardise the regime. The first danger was the breaking of the worker-peasant alliance; on balance he considered this improbable. The second danger was a split in the party, specifically between its *two leading personalities*, Trotsky and Stalin - such a ranking for Stalin would at the time have surprised most other party leaders.

It is clear that initially, while Lenin sought to curb the power of Stalin, he had no intention of expressing a preference between the two men. Lenin contented himself with highlighting the need to avoid a split between them. Instead of 'crowning' an heir, Lenin advocated by implication a binary leadership. Yet 10 days after writing his *Testament* things changed. He added a postscript. This postscript entirely changed the balance. Lenin proposed that Stalin should be removed as general secretary.

**"Stalin is too rude, and this defect, though quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among communists, becomes intolerable in a general secretary. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way to remove Stalin from his post and appoint in his place another man who in all respects differs from comrade Stalin in his superiority, that is more tolerant, more courteous and more considerate on comrades, less capricious, etc."<sup>29</sup>**

And a short while after dictating these momentous lines, Lenin broke off all "comradely relations" with Stalin, apparently after Stalin had "grossly insulted" his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya. Needless to say, Lenin's struggle against Stalin came to an abrupt end. Tragically, three days after his personal break with Stalin, Lenin suffered his third stroke. It left him completely paralysed. Despite hanging on for nearly another year his political life was finished. He never recovered, dying on January 21 1924 at the age of 54.<sup>30</sup>

## 1.2. Leninism and Stalinism

Some, most notably the Trotskyites,

fondly recall the days when Lenin was leader as a democratic golden age. Their worthy motive is, of course, to draw a sharp, revolutionary-counterrevolutionary line of demarcation from the instant Stalin took effective command. Yet, as will have been gathered, the truth was altogether more complex. Being must develop from the internal contradictions in its not-being. Stalinism and Leninism were at once identical and opposite. Lenin did after all characterise his Soviet Republic as "a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions".<sup>31</sup> The situation under Lenin is accurately summed up by the French Eurocommunist historian, Jean Ellenstein:

**"... in 1923 the Soviet Union was a country where neither freedom of speech, nor freedom to hold meetings and belong to associations nor free elections existed, where power was in the hands of a single party and within that party in the hands of a small group of men (a few thousand at most), and where the political police remained all powerful, where neither democratic traditions nor institutions existed, because of the very conditions under which the revolution triumphed."<sup>32</sup>**

Lenin was painfully aware that the workers exercised neither control over the economy nor any real supervision over the enormous party-state bureaucracy - created due to the inescapable need to fill the vacuum for both direct social control and the expropriated capitalist class. There existed a discrepancy between form and essence. Development proceeded negatively, according to what could be called a dialectic of passivity or absence. Although the Soviet Republic was synonymous in the eyes of the world with the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletariat was now inert. The only guarantee that the working class would in the future exercise power was the political determination and theoretical clarity of the party's elite "old guard".

Ellenstein correctly states that the conditions under which the revolution triumphed - ie, Russian backwardness - were entirely responsible for the retreat and bureaucratisation of formal socialism and the problematic and tenuous nature of working class rule. To blame either Lenin, Stalin, or any other individual, or set of individuals, for this state of affairs shows a failure to understand the ABC of historical materialism. In the last analysis production sets the limits of social superstructure (in other words, production is the first determinant, though of course it is in its turn determined by other determinants). Applied to Russia in a mechanical way, this idea would obviously lead one to falsely conclude that the country possessed none of the prerequisites for socialism: ie, the October Revolution was Blanquist adventurism and its Soviet Republic nothing but lumpen anarchism.<sup>33</sup> A Menshevik conclusion which is now widely fashionable among academic 'Marxists'.<sup>34</sup>

Of course the original Bolshevik perspective was to carry through a 1789-type bourgeois democratic revolution *uninterruptedly* to socialism under a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. Life, in the shape of the 1917 February revolution and dual power, demanded that this elastic formula be concretised. Lenin's renowned *April thesis* did just that. However though the new semi-state of soviets, he envisaged, would be a first step "towards socialism", Lenin was insistent that it was not yet possible to set the aim of "introducing socialism".<sup>35</sup> And it should be emphasised that any further steps Russia took in the direction of socialism were seen as ultimately dependent on proletarian revolution in the west.

Nowhere in the epoch of imperialism can remain for long in national isolation. Imperialism draws everywhere and everything into the vortex of capitalist development and crisis. However, it is precisely this which creates the material

prerequisites for socialism. While only a minority of core countries might be ripe for *the first stage of communism* the existence of a world system creates the possibility for workers in the imperialist periphery to seize state power and, if they receive outside assistance, begin the transition from *formal* to *real* socialism. In that sense imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, means that the world *as a whole* is ripe for socialism. A ripeness that manifested itself even in a peasant country like Russia, through the effects of combined development, which built giant factories and filled them with a modern proletariat. Tsarist Russia was a weak social formation containing within it an explosive accumulation of feudal, autocratic, national and capitalist contradictions. The whole amalgam could though only be positively resolved by the working class, not the cringing bourgeoisie. Russia could liberate itself by fighting for a socialist world.

Capitalism classically came to political dominance after it had achieved economic dominance as a mode of production over feudalism - a system wherein it had long gestated. A reverse pattern presents itself for the future. The struggle for the communist mode of production *begins* after the political seizure of power by the proletariat. Socialism is that beginning, not an end in itself. Socialism is the scientific term for the transition to communism. Primarily what characterises the success of socialism is not the growth of the productive forces - which despite its fetters and irrationalities is the historic task of capitalism. No, the success of socialism is judged by the ability of the producers themselves to collectively and directly plan and control production (itself the key to sustained, balanced and rational economic development). Hence it is in relationship to the struggle for unrestricted and genuine workers' power that the political forces present within the socialist regime must be evaluated. This criteria of progress is particularly important under formal socialism. A workers' state confronted with the necessity of catching up with advanced capitalism, especially in the absence of powerful outside assistance, faces acute and increasing dangers of bureaucratic deformation and counterrevolution.

We may say therefore that parties, factions and platforms consciously seeking, in spite of this or that tactical retreat, to advance the collective strength and long-term interests of the working class, can be designated progressive. On the other hand, those who merge politically with bureaucracy or adapt principles to the pressures of capitalism must be considered reactionary.

Lenin never wavered in his belief in the ultimate victory of world revolution. He was however a supreme realist. With the world revolution driven back to the borders of Russia, he did everything he could to defend and shore up what gains remained. This involved all kinds of manoeuvres and concessions. But it also led him into combat against what he saw as the worst effects of bureaucracy. Admittedly Lenin did not develop a theory of bureaucratic deformation. What he left us is mainly fragmentary. His last articles and notes still concern symptoms rather than the disease itself. Undoubtedly, had he lived, a full diagnosis would have assumed cardinal importance. And Lenin being Lenin, this would have gone hand in hand with a cure: ie, political struggle.

As we know, Lenin wanted to curb Stalin's power by removing him as general secretary. In 1926 his widow put it more strongly. She vowed that Lenin was determined to "crush Stalin politically".<sup>36</sup> That said, showing how pessimistic Krupskaya had become, she also remarked that: "If Ilyich were alive today, he would probably already be in prison."<sup>37</sup> There was surely though an outside chance that with Lenin in good health Stalin *could* have been defeated and the worst manifestations of bureaucracy eliminated (in the medium term, something entirely dependent on progress of the world revolution). Lenin possessed immense personal authority. The majority of the old guard, schooled

as it was under his direction, would in all likelihood have stayed loyal to him and Marxism. Nevertheless with Lenin dead and buried history found another channel. Stalin was able to use his mastery of the bureaucratic apparatus to master the old guard. And not content to crush his opponents politically, he went on to physically annihilate them in an orgy of terror.

Stalin did not emerge as leader of the Soviet state and party simply because of ruthlessness and tactical cunning (qualities the man possessed in full measure). His victory was the victory of the socio-political trend he personified - the Soviet labour bureaucracy. Almost immediately, with its ascendancy, there followed a significant, indeed a qualitative shift within the regime. In the realm of the party the possibility of reform closed. One faction ruled; democratic centralism became bureaucratic centralism. In the realm of the state Lenin's tactical retreats assumed strategic proportions. The bureaucracy cemented an uneasy alliance with the main and still unconsolidated beneficiaries of NEP - the kulaks and nepmen. I have argued elsewhere that this did not amount to a "social counterrevolution".<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless it was undoubtedly the beginning of a counterrevolutionary process.

The Soviet labour bureaucracy as an offshoot of the working class movement can be traced back to the professional revolutionaries of Bolshevism. Yet though its antecedents were pre-revolutionary, its coming into being, its congealing into a distinct social stratum, was purely a post-revolutionary phenomenon. A variety of closely related objective influences caused its development and shaped its eventual physiognomy: eg, merging of party and state institutions, a standing Red Army, working class deactivation and extreme economic backwardness. Factors, which taken together with the origins of the bureaucracy, meant that it displayed a (selfish) determination to hold out against capitalism - unlike the labour bureaucracy in capitalist countries which has material interests in the continuation of wage slavery. It did after all owe its existence and position to changes furnished by the expropriation of landlords and capitalists.

The Soviet bureaucracy was a unique and for some considerable time a rapidly growing social stratum. Leaving aside state and army, evidence of the scale of recruitment can be gleaned from the body of party functionaries. In August 1922 it was 15,325 strong and around 20,000 at the time of the 14th Congress in 1925. A bloated figure completely dwarfed by 1938, when Stalin is reported as "vaguely" saying that their number had reached 150,000 to 190,000.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, as time went by the parasitism of high party and state officials greatly increased, and though even Cold War warriors admit that there were those who "displayed a fanatical austerity and devotion", it cannot be denied that "there were many who were tempted to abuse their privileged position".<sup>40</sup>

It is inconceivable that a young workers' state, especially one with the primitive economic base of Russia, could dispense with a bureaucracy. Given this, the key question is the extent to which the bureaucracy would be allowed to develop and pursue its own sectional interests. That is decided politically, not least in Soviet conditions by the balance of forces within the Communist Party.

The Communist Party by its very nature contains within its ranks many different individuals - not only manual workers but office workers, peasants, artisans, intellectuals and even some from the exploiting classes. Despite the diversity all elements can be joined into a single alloy which embodies the long term interests of the proletariat. What causes the fusion? It is open and continuous struggle to unite the party around the theory and practice of Marxism, something which finds organisational expression in democratic centralism. This was the history of the

Bolsheviks in Russia. Although the largest section were workers, others came from a variety of backgrounds and its leadership almost exclusively from the intelligentsia; it only contained one worker and that in terms of social origin. Despite that, politically, who can think of a more *proletarian* body than the Bolshevik's central committee in 1917?

After the exertions of civil war and economic reconstruction, the retreats of Brest-Litovsk and NEP, the sickening trauma of murdering the revolution's own child in Kronstadt, a definite disillusionment among rank and file communists was to be expected. The string of international defeats culminating in the October 1923 fiasco in Germany could only further cool ardour. Yet at the same time the Communist Party was a pole of attraction. Very many sought entry into its ranks for reasons of self-advancement: ie, because it was the ruling party. Lenin, as shown above, determined to get rid of such elements; between 1921 and the beginning of 1924 membership was reduced from some 650,000 to 350,000. The Bolshevik-Leninists were concerned to maintain and if possible improve the party's quality. However, over February, March and April 1924, immediately after Lenin's death, Stalin oversaw the so-called 'Lenin enrolment'. Dressed up originally as part of a campaign to improve social composition, it became an excuse to flood the party with politically illiterate recruits. The rules of admission were virtually abandoned and 128,000 people were signed up within the three months prior to the pivotal 13th party Congress<sup>41</sup> (the eventual total of new admissions was 203,000).<sup>42</sup> It was also decided in violation of party statutes to give them the same voting rights as existing members in the election of congress delegates. They proved willing fodder against what was becoming the revolutionary minority in the party. A reactionary wing of the regime was coalescing and successfully turning the Communist Party into its opposite. Molotov was spot on when he declared that the "development of the party in the future will undoubtedly be based on this Lenin enrolment".<sup>43</sup>

Here again we refer to the eventual correspondence between base and superstructure. Organisationally the Bolsheviks had their feet firmly planted on Russian ground. Their theory, their values, their perspectives were somewhat different. They were primarily the cosmopolitan product of world socialism. The Bolsheviks took, synthesised and applied what was most advanced, most sophisticated, most internationalist in human thought to Russia. Evidently conditions of merging with a state apparatus burdened with the running of a backward economy set up a profound contradiction within the party between the universal and the particular. Stalin resolved it in the negative by the simple device of opening the gates to Russian barbarism. The Communist Party was transformed. The old guard was splintered. Its principled Leninist wing being manoeuvred to the sidelines and then persecuted. What had been a revolutionary workers' party became a bureaucratic workers' party. What had been implied in nothing had become. Reaction found its Soviet form and expression.

Though still within the vestigial framework of a workers' state the bureaucracy could now govern for itself. Hence the state machine displayed a "relative independence" unheard of under capitalism or any other classic Western European mode of production, where the rulers rule, due to culture and wealth, despite maintaining a bureaucracy for the purposes of administration.<sup>44</sup> With capitalist industry nationalised and the workers politically inert, the Soviet bureaucracy - ie, political power - could break free from its social base and Bonapartistically balance between the workers and the NEP classes and strata. The Soviet labour bureaucracy thus came to be the 'master of society'.

To justify itself a mystifying ideology was needed. By definition that could

not be genuine Marxism nor could it be pro-capitalist reformism. Soviet centrism was invented. It justified adaptation to Russia's backwardness and legitimised the bureaucracy's monopoly of power. Soviet centrism stood between reform and revolution in its own particular way; that made it centrism *sui generis*.

Three features immediately distinguish it from Kautskyite 'classic' centrism. Firstly, it reflected extreme economic and social backwardness - hence the lack of debate, the leadership cult, the crude and cavalier attitude towards truth. Secondly, it served a social stratum which gained its privileges to the detriment of socialism, yet at the same time owed those privileges to a socialist revolution - hence the contradictory ideology that denied the existence of an antagonistic bureaucracy and its privileges and portrayed an imminent realisation of utopia. Thirdly, despite of its "extreme poverty and even dishonesty", it reflected and actively moulded, as Herbert Marcuse pointed out, "in various forms the realities of Soviet developments".<sup>45</sup> This was because it was an ideology which both justified and served a caste, if not a class, that was running a world power - hence though sharing the unstable, transitional features of 'classic' centrism, it was in comparison far more durable and solid ●

Jack Conrad

<sup>1</sup>This and the three supplements which will in due course follow together make up the concluding seventh chapter, of the first part or volume of my study on bureaucratic socialism. It should be emphasised that while I have completed part one, it is still nothing more than an initial rough draft. Completion here merely means that the thing has shape. A great deal more work needs to be done both in terms of theoretical development, researching Soviet source material and responding to the critical remarks of comrades. However, this is by far the most descriptive, least abstract and therefore the most accessible, chapter of the first part. That is why I am glad the editors of the *Weekly Worker* agreed to print it as a contribution to discussion on the Soviet Union phenomenon. While the reader will no doubt find all manner of frustrating gaps, imbalances, semi-digested borrowings, undefined definitions and incomplete explanations, a flavour of the whole can still be gleaned. More, the thing can I believe just about stand in its own right. My work on part two began about a year ago and I still remain unsatisfied in terms of fine tuning with the fundamental categories and stages of product circulation I require for the opening chapter, which is about three-quarters complete. Nevertheless as I (painfully and slowly) proceed my intention is to constantly feed material into and extract material from what stands. I am planning a six-part study. Hence this chapter is intentionally provisional. In a certain sense it will never be completed.

<sup>2</sup>K Marx and F Engels 'Preface to 1882 Russian edition' *Manifesto of the Communist Party* Moscow 1973, pp11,12.

<sup>3</sup>K Marx and F Engels *Selected correspondence* Moscow 1965, p384.

<sup>4</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 30, Moscow 1977, p208.

<sup>5</sup>Few expected a straight military victory. A rising by the Warsaw proletariat led by the Communist Party of Poland had been counted on. Sadly the response to its general strike call turned out to be minimal and was easily dealt with. Workers in Warsaw did not flock to the Red Army. Many joined the national army to defend the capital. There was another factor. The head of the Red Army was proletarian. However, its body, its rank and file mass, was peasant. The peasants would fight obstinately on Russian soil for the survival of the Soviet regime against landlordists like Wrangel. However, in the words of EH Carr, they had no "stomach for the fight to carry the proletarian revolution into other lands" (EH Carr *The Bolshevik revolution* Vol 3, Harmondsworth 1977, p218).

<sup>6</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 31, Moscow 1977, p457.

<sup>7</sup>*ibid* Vol 29, p58.

<sup>8</sup>*ibid* Vol 28, p151.

<sup>9</sup>Marxists, at least those who deserve the name, have never equated socialism with nationalisation. Socialism does not mean placing control of the economy in the hands of the state or a political organ, but of society as a whole - thus rendering the state and politics progressively superfluous. The conscious planning of labour time, production and distribution is what really constitutes socialism.

<sup>10</sup>The peasantry taken as a whole did not constitute a class. In his article, 'On the so-called religious seekings in Russia', Plekhanov described it as a "caste", because the 1861 abolition of serfdom created the conditions for two classes to emerge - "the landed bourgeoisie" and landless "poor peasants", exploiters and exploited (GV Plekhanov *Selected philosophical works* Vol 3, Moscow 1981, pp306-413. Lenin also discussed the peasantry in terms of a petty bourgeois stratum and a semi-proletarian stratum.

<sup>11</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 32, Moscow 1977, p215.

<sup>12</sup>For some the Kronstadt revolt of March 1921 represented the last hope for the revolution. I have to disagree. Say the Kronstadt anarcho-populists had managed to trigger a nationwide rising and Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Bukharin were put up against the wall. Chances are that the politically uneducated and undisciplined Kronstadters would have gone down to Black Hundred counterrevolution along with their good intentions within days of their so-called victory. Trotsky was surely right in his estimation: "In their hands, power would have been only a bridge - and a short one at that - to a bourgeois regime" (L Trotsky *Kronstadt* New York 1971, p82). Russia would then have become an imperialist semi-colony and its population subjected to untold suffering. Landlords, capitalists and white guards would return and exact bloody revenge. Jews and communists would be hunted down in a Nazi-like war of extermination. Even if we put aside such a likely scenario, could a Kronstadt 'third revolution' have turned its wishes into reality? A Kronstadt regime would not have been able to revive the soviets. Nor would it have been able to feed the cities. Material circumstances did not permit it. World war, revolution and civil war had caused extreme economic dislocation. Could Kronstadt maintain an army against imperialist intervention? Could it have organised the economy? Could it have taken the straight road to communism? Improbable, to say the least. Moving forward directly from Russia's primitive economic base towards real socialism and communism would have been possible in the abstract, only after its revolution had sparked simultaneous revolutions in the west. The Kronstadt sailors, like the jaqueries in the countryside, knew what they were against - material hardship, grain requisitions, political repression. But apart from catch-all phrases like "soviets without communists", "free elections", and "free trade" - acceptable to the anarchists, left and right socialist revolutionaries and Mensheviks - Kronstadt had no political programme (See A Berkman *The Bolshevik myth* London nd, pp42-3).

<sup>13</sup>K Marx and F Engels *CW* Vol 24, Moscow 1989, p87.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted in EH Carr *The Bolshevik revolution* Vol 1, Harmondsworth 1975, p207.

<sup>15</sup>The party's 12th Congress actually enshrined the idea of the "dictatorship" of the "leading vanguard: ie, the Communist Party" in a resolution. Becoming the hypocrite a year later, Stalin described the idea as "sheer nonsense" and excused its inclusion in a congress resolution as an "oversight" (JV Stalin *Works* Vol 6, Moscow 1953, p270).

<sup>16</sup>J-P Sartre *Critique of dialectical reason* London 1976, pp661-2.

<sup>17</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 32, Moscow 1977, p199.

<sup>18</sup>Stalin described the party membership in 1924 as 60% politically illiterate. He expressed the view that after the so-called Lenin enrolment this meant that the figure "would be brought up to 80%" (JV Stalin *Works* Vol 6, Moscow 1953, p268).

<sup>19</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 33, Moscow 1977, p257.

<sup>20</sup>EH Carr *The Russian revolution from Lenin to Stalin* London 1990, p62.

<sup>21</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 33, Moscow 1977,

p288.

<sup>22</sup>*ibid* Vol 32, p24.

<sup>23</sup>JV Stalin *Works* Vol 5, Moscow 1953, p213.

<sup>24</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 35, Moscow 1977, p495.

<sup>25</sup>JV Stalin *Works* Vol 5, Moscow 1953, p216.

<sup>26</sup>EH Carr *The Bolshevik Revolution* Vol 1, Harmondsworth 1975, p235.

<sup>27</sup>Nowhere can this triumph of old attitudes and culture be seen more clearly than the question of the interrelationship between the various nationalities under Soviet rule. Stalin might have been a Georgian, but Lenin declared his outlook to be that of a Great Russian chauvinist. As commissar of nationalities, Stalin had proposed the incorporation of the non-Russian Soviet republics into a centralised Russian Soviet Republic. When Lenin opposed this 'autonomisation' plan Stalin accused him of being a "national liberal". But due to Lenin's authority, it was "national liberalism" that won the day and the USSR, a federal state, was formed on the basis of equality of national rights and the freedom to secede.

This was not the end of disputes over the nationalities question. Lenin discovered the brutal Great Russian chauvinist treatment Stalin, Orjonikidze (also a Georgian), and Dzerzhinsky (a Pole) had meted out to the local Georgian communists. In an attempt to force Georgia to merge into a Transcaucasian Soviet Republic they removed the recalcitrant Georgian leadership. Orjonikidze had even struck one of the Georgian leaders, thus in Lenin's words "acting more like an arrogant satrap than a proletarian internationalist". Lenin considered Stalin's "haste, his infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against notorious 'national chauvinism', played a fatal role". Turning the tables on Stalin's attack on the "nationalism" of the Georgian leadership, he made the point that: "The Georgian ... who carelessly flings about accusations of 'nationalist-socialism' (whereas he himself is a real and true 'nationalist-socialist', and even a vulgar Great Russian bully) violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity" (VI Lenin *CW* Vol 36, Moscow 1977, pp606, 608).

<sup>28</sup>For example the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, established under Stalin's leadership, was intended to combat bureaucracy and red-tapism. Grotesquely it mushroomed into a gigantic bureaucratic institution in its own right. In his article, 'Better fewer but better', Lenin attacked it and called for a thorough reorganisation and a new direction. (See VI Lenin *CW* Vol 33, Moscow 1977, pp487-502).

<sup>29</sup>*ibid* Vol 36, p596.

<sup>30</sup>For perhaps the most useful study of Lenin's final years, see M Lewin *Lenin's last struggle* London 1975.

<sup>31</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 32, Moscow 1977, p24.

<sup>32</sup>J Ellenstein *The Stalin phenomenon* London 1976, p50.

<sup>33</sup>See J Martov *The state and the socialist revolution* New York 1938.

<sup>34</sup>See R Blackburn (ed) *After the fall* London 1991.

<sup>35</sup>VI Lenin *CW* Vol 24, Moscow 1977, pp73,74.

<sup>36</sup>Quoted in I Deutscher *The prophet unarmed* Oxford 1982, p90.

<sup>37</sup>*ibid* p90.

<sup>38</sup>J Conrad *From October to August* London 1992, p31.

<sup>39</sup>H Carrere d'Encausse *Stalin* London 1981, p70.

<sup>40</sup>L Shapiro *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* London 1964, pp317-8.

<sup>41</sup>"Counting the Lenin enrolment, taking the figures as on May 1 (by which date 128,000 members had been admitted), our membership total is 600,000. Considering that in about a fortnight from now the Lenin enrolment will have reached at least 200,000, the membership of the party can be estimated at 670,000-680,000" (JV Stalin *Works* Vol 6, Moscow 1953, p210).

<sup>42</sup>Quoted in EH Carr *The interregnum* Harmondsworth 1969, p361.

<sup>43</sup>*ibid* p363.

<sup>44</sup>The term "relative independence" was deployed by Engels, specifically in a letter to Conrad Schmidt of October 27 1890 - see K Marx, F Engels *Selected correspondence* Moscow 1965, p421.

<sup>45</sup>H Marcuse *Soviet Marxism* Harmondsworth 1971, p9.