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SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY: A REASSESSMENT

ABSTRACT. Until 1917 Lenin and Trotsky believed that an isolated revolutionary Russia would have no chance of survival. However, from 1917 to 1923 Lenin's standpoint on this matter underwent a complete reversal. First he came to the conclusion that socialism could be built in an isolated Russia, although it would remain 'incomplete' in the absence of the world revolution. By 1923 he was abandoning that latter qualification too. The standpoint of Stalin and Bukharin in the debate on 'socialism in one country' of 1925–26 was more 'orthodox-Leninist' than the position taken by Trotsky, who had at first also embraced the notion of 'incomplete socialism', but subsequently returned to the old concept, abandoned by Lenin, that the restoration of capitalism was inevitable in the absence of the world revolution.

KEY WORDS: Bukharin, Kautsky, Lenin, Permanent Revolution, Socialism in one country, Stalin, Trotsky, Zinov'ev

In 1925 a debate broke out in the Russian Communist Party (bolsheviks) concerning the question of whether a socialist society could be successfully constructed in a backward and isolated country like Russia. Was a socialist island surrounded by a capitalist sea a viable project? The revolutionary fiasco in Germany of 1923 (and it was not the first such fiasco) made the question one of acute significance. Stalin and Bukharin were pitted against Zinov'ev, who was soon joined by Trotsky in his resistance against the formula of 'socialism in one country.'

There exist two models of interpretation of this debate. According to the first one, the internationalist bolshevik doctrine on this question was formulated by Lenin and Trotsky, and it was securely rooted in Marxism. After Lenin's death Trotsky continued to defend this thesis, which held that to build socialism in one country was not a viable option. Bolshevik Russia needed the world revolution for its very survival. Thus Stalin's project of socialism in isolation was in flagrant contradiction to Marxist and bolshevik orthodoxy, and he could only support his case with out-of-context quotes from Lenin. The second interpretation is rather different. It holds that Lenin did not really

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deny the possibility of socialism in one country. He merely stated that this would be an incomplete kind of socialism. Trotsky agreed with him, holding as he did that the bolsheviks could successfully carry out socialist reconstruction of society to a significant degree, although the completion of the transformation would have to wait for the world revolution. Stalin's only theoretical novelty was then the claim that a *complete* socialist society could be constructed in one country. In this scheme the whole debate is almost reduced to a non-issue, a ghost-like struggle over the word 'complete'.

Although they both contrast Lenin and Trotsky's orthodoxy with Stalin's heresy, these two interpretations are in fact not in agreement with each other. It is one thing to hold that socialism in one country would be imperfect and quite another to deny its possibility altogether. But oddly enough, in discussions of Lenin and Trotsky's doctrines this distinction is often not clearly made. Both interpretations are often presented by one and the same author. For instance, in his *Main Currents of Marxism* Leszek Kolakowski holds that there was "no question of 'socialism in one country' for the first few years after the revolution." The leaders of the October Revolution believed "that the Russian revolution had no hope of permanent success except as the prelude to world revolution." Trotsky in particular believed that, in isolation, the Russian working class would suffer no less than "political destruction." All the same Kolakowski quotes Lenin to the effect that the socialist revolution could be carried out "by our own efforts," although not "completely," and he shows Trotsky to have believed in the possibility of building a good measure of socialism in one country. "Thus," Kolakowski concludes, "there is no question of two 'essentially opposite' theories, one asserting and the other denying that socialism could be built in one country."¹

Likewise, Robert Tucker quotes Trotsky to the effect that, left to its own resources, the Russian working class would be "crushed by the counter-revolution the moment the peasantry turns its back on it." And according to Tucker, this view was "not basically different from the one that Lenin then expounded." Tucker also claims that Trotsky believed that the process of building socialism "could not realistically be conceived of as taking place in isolation from international affairs." But then, he also quotes Lenin to the effect that the "complete victory of the socialist revolution is unthinkable

in one country," which is a much more modest prediction, and he takes pain to stress that Trotsky believed in "progressing toward socialism in Russia."² In the biography of Lenin by Robert Service we find the same duality. He believes that in 1917, Lenin would have sympathised with the thesis that even a "movement towards socialism" in Russia should only be attempted under the condition of a proletarian revolution in the West. At the same time he holds that according to Lenin, the building of socialism could not be "completed" in conditions of capitalist encirclement. The German revolution was a "prerequisite for the full achievement of socialism in Russia." Here again I would say that it is quite a different thing to hold that even a move towards socialism is excluded, than to assert that its full completion would have to wait for the German contribution.³

It might be remarked that I have unfairly quoted these authors – somewhat in Stalin's style: out of context. The bolshevik leaders changed their opinions in the course of the years and this is reflected in what Kolakowski, Tucker and Service have written. It is clearly not the intention of any of these authors to suggest that Lenin and Trotsky's views on the matter were fixed for all time and were simply identical. Service, for one, points out that while Trotsky thought that Russian socialism would be "lost" if the revolution elsewhere in Europe failed to break out, Lenin believed that the project would only be "crippled."⁴ Nevertheless, it is fair to say that neither of these authors has systematically researched the question *in what precise sense* Lenin and Trotsky felt that socialism in one country was impossible. In my opinion we are concerned here with two quite different perspectives. One, which can be more closely identified with Trotsky, I call the 'theory of restoration': isolated socialist Russia was in the long run completely lost, doomed to be crushed. The other 'theory of incomplete socialism,' more closely identifiable with Lenin, held that socialism in one country was indeed possible, but that it would always remain unfinished under such conditions. The only way to get a good grasp of the debate on 'socialism in one country' is to make a sharp distinction between these two perspectives. The conclusion of the present article will be that it was not Trotsky or Zinov'ev but indeed Stalin and Bukharin who were the more orthodox in the debate of 1925–26. Stalin's

'socialism in one country' was more faithful to Lenin's heritage than Trotsky's rejection of it.

WHAT IS 'SOCIALISM'?

It stands to reason that for a discussion of the possibilities and impossibilities of socialism in one country one should first know what we should understand by 'socialism.' This is a discouragingly complex question, but fortunately the problem can be immensely reduced. Since all the major participants of the debate from 1925 onwards claimed to be faithful to Lenin's heritage, we can focus on what Lenin considered 'socialism' to be. The fullest account was given by him in 1917, in his *State and Revolution*, a book largely constructed around a collection of Marx quotations.

First the author quoted Marx to the effect that "between capitalist and communist society" lay a "period of revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter." This period knew its own state structure, called the "*revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*." According to Lenin, communism was established, and the period of transformation had ended, as soon as the means of production were no longer the "private property of separate persons. The means of production belong to the whole of society." Under these conditions "*exploitation of man by man is impossible, for there is no way to take hold of means of production*." Communism was a classless society because there was no longer the duality of social groups owning or not-owning the means of production. As far as ownership was concerned, everyone would have an equal relation to the factories, the land etc. Also under communism there would be no money, and production is according to plan rather than for the market. However according to Marx, communism would still have two stages. The "first stage of communist society" was, according to Lenin, "usually called socialism." It would operate with its own specific form of remuneration: "for an equal amount of labour an equal amount of product," i.e. remuneration according to one's achievements. In contrast to Marx, Lenin concluded from this that under socialism the state could not yet completely die out. It would have to remain in force in order to check up on the just distribution of goods according to performance.

In the second stage of "complete" communism, another principle would be in force: "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," i.e. goods would be distributed freely. Everyone could simply take according to his needs. Consequently the state would have disappeared. But for this "highest stage of communist society" to arrive, there were some serious conditions to be met. Lenin again quoted Marx. First, a psychological change implying that man would have to come to see labour as a need, instead of as a duty, was demanded. Furthermore, full communism would only become a reality once the "subjugation of man to the division of labour" had disappeared, and "the productive forces will grow and all sources of social wealth will flow in a full stream."⁵ This then was the Leninist concept of socialism and communism in a nutshell. And on this abstract level it was in full accordance with Marx's view, with the one major distinction that the latter expected the state to have withered already in the first stage of communism.

This somewhat scholastic and schematic account of Leninist socialism is essential to understanding what could be considered 'complete socialism' in bolshevik terms in 1925 or 1926. *Socialism* as a concept was identical to Marx's first stage of communism. 'Complete socialism' should therefore not be mixed up with 'complete communism', i.e. the second stage. A society should be taken as *fully socialist* in the Leninist sense when one condition was met, from which there would flow only two further, smaller conditions. The one basic condition was simply the nationalisation of all means of production. In Lenin's view this was sufficient to speak of a classless society, for the simple reason that in such a society, there would remain no private property of factories, farms or land. The two additional conditions were the remuneration according to labour and the replacement of the market by the plan. It is particularly essential to recognise that the overcoming of the division of labour (between physical and mental, between agricultural and industrial workers) and the achievement of a very high technological and cultural level was *not* a condition of socialism, but of the higher stage of communism.

The paradox of socialism as a concept was that on the one hand it was an extremely radical, utopian notion of full nationalisation and planification, but on the other hand it had a surprisingly 'empty'

concept, without any specific cultural or technological 'criteria.' In fact no cultural or technological level *whatsoever* was a terminological condition of socialism. At first sight this conclusion seems in obvious and even blatant contradiction to Marx's whole theory of history, which states that socialism can only be achieved on the basis of a certain level of development of the 'productive forces'. But strictly speaking that is another matter. It was indeed the case that, according to Marx, full nationalisation could only be achieved once the 'productive forces', especially industry, had reached a certain level. But in Lenin's scheme one could never claim conversely that, *once nationalisation was achieved*, such a society would not yet be socialist if the 'productive forces' were not advanced beyond a certain level. On the contrary, the fact that nationalisation was achieved would prove in a tautological way that the technological level was sufficiently developed for socialism to have been introduced – simply because it would otherwise not have been there. In sum, for Marx and Lenin a certain level of the productive forces was a historical precondition of socialism, but never an additional, terminological one.

Applied to the question of socialism in a backward or an isolated country, this argument leads to the following conclusions. Within a Marxist or Leninist scheme one might legitimately hold that under such conditions the achievement of nationalisation and planification would be impossible. Therefore, socialism would be impossible to establish under these conditions. But one could not conversely hold that if, despite all pessimistic expectations, the economy of a backward or isolated country was nationalised, this would still not be socialism because that country was still technologically backward or economically autarkic. It would be socialism in the 'empty', Leninist sense. I realise that this whole argument might seem an exercise in futility, an empty play of words, but we will later see that it is upon such 'futility' that the debate in the late 1920's was partly built.

MARX, ENGELS AND THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

Marx and Engels did not believe in the feasibility of a socialist project in an isolated country. On at least two occasions they wrote

about this in very general and unmistakable terms. In *Die deutsche Ideologie*, written in 1845–46, we read: “Empirically communism is only possible as the act of the ruling peoples, ‘at one stroke’ and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of the productive force and the global economy [*Weltverkehr*] which goes along with that.”⁶ A few years later, in 1847, Engels answered as follows to the question whether the communist revolution would be possible in a single country:

No. By the fact alone that it has created the world market, large industry has brought all peoples of the earth, and particularly the civilised, together in such a connectedness, that each separate people is dependent on what happens with another. [...] Therefore the communist revolution will not be a purely national one. It will be a revolution taking place simultaneously in all civilised countries, i.e. at least in England, America, France and Germany. [...] It is a universal revolution and therefore it will also have a universal terrain.⁷

Neither Marx nor Engels gave a real argument why the force of the world market was so pervasive that a communist country, temporarily locking itself up in relative autarky, could not possibly exist. But it remains a fact that this was what they apparently thought. In his *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, Hal Draper documented that in 1848–49 Marx remained convinced that if an isolated country like France should ever establish communism it would soon fall to pieces if other nations like England did not follow. Marx believed that “every social upheaval in France is necessarily wrecked on the rock of the English bourgeoisie.” The workers “thought they would be able to consummate a proletarian revolution within the national walls of France, side by side with the remaining bourgeois nations.” But this was a vain illusion, because “French relations of production are conditioned by the foreign trade of France.” Without breaking the back of “the despot of the world market, England,” there was no French communism.⁸

At this point I should note that the notion of ‘socialism in one country’ in fact contains two separate problems. One is the general question whether any country, industrially backward or well-developed, could exist as an independent communist society in a capitalist environment. This is the question addressed by Marx and Engels in the above texts. The second question is a specific case of the first, namely whether socialism in one *backward* country would be possible. It stands to reason, that having answered the first question

in the negative, the second will be answered likewise. Yet, it is certainly worthwhile to see what Marx and Engels had to say about the case of Russia. This has been the object of a study edited by Teodor Shanin in 1983. The context was the question, put by Russian populists, of whether the quasi-communist village communities in their country could serve as a short-cut to communism, skipping the capitalist stage of development. In 1881 Marx wrote that "if Russia were isolated in the world" the *obshchiny* were "fated to perish with the development of Russian society." However, he suggested that since Russia was not isolated things might take a different turn. In 1882 Marx and Engels wrote in a preface to the *Communist Manifesto* that on condition that a Russian revolution became "the signal for proletarian revolution in the West," then "Russia's peasant communal land-ownership may serve as the point of departure of a communist development."⁹

In 1894 Engels still adhered to this approach to the problem. Under the condition of "the victory of the West European proletariat over the bourgeoisie," the Russian commune could be used as a stepping stone to communism. The "developmental process to a socialist society" could be considerably shortened by "the example and active aid" of a socialist West. But as long as there was no socialist West the further capitalist disintegration of the agrarian commune was inevitable. However, Engels hoped for a quick overthrow of tsarism which could serve

to quicken victory of the modern industrial proletariat [in the West], without which present-day Russia will not be able to arrive at a socialist transformation, either starting from the commune or from capitalism.¹⁰

In sum, if there were no revolution in the West, the Russian commune would inevitably disintegrate, resulting in capitalist development in Russia. But from that point too Russia could only reach socialism under the condition of a simultaneous attempt to introduce socialism in the West. We must conclude that for Marx and Engels 'socialism in one country' was impossible to achieve, both when discussing specific backward countries like Russia or developed nations like France. Underlying these conclusions lay two economic factors which were considered decisive and, in an interesting way, all-embracing. Industrial backwardness prevented socialism in one country, but its opposite did so too, because of the development of

the global market that accompanies industrial development. From this double perspective there was no way out.

However, contrary to what is often thought, these ideas of Marx and Engels were not unchallenged in the Second International. The question of 'socialism in one country' was not an object of acute debate in this conglomerate of social-democratic parties around the turn of the century, because it was a purely hypothetical matter for the time being. But as parliamentary factions of the socialist parties grew, especially in Germany, the perspective of an eventual take-over in one country became a distinct possibility. Some social-democratic leaders dedicated their thoughts to what would happen then. In his attempt to find unsympathetic forerunners of 'socialism in one country', Trotsky pointed at the German right-wing social-democrat G. Vollmar who defended the concept in an article called 'Der isolierte sozialistische Staat' in 1879.¹¹ In fact the standpoint of a nationally organised socialism was not marginal in the Second International at all. In October 1891 the social-democratic party of Germany adopted a new programme at Erfurt. The next year Karl Kautsky wrote an extended comment on the programme. This little book was used for decades in the Second International as an introduction to the political principles of Marxist social-democracy. In the chapter on "socialist production" Kautsky noted that socialism meant turning the means of production into public property. He added that, in view of the large scale of modern production only the "*modern state*" was big enough to serve as the representative of the community.

Kautsky then noted that "so profound [is] the economic connectedness between the various capitalist nations, that one could almost doubt whether the framework of the state is still sufficient to span the socialist co-operative [*Genossenschaft*]." But such doubts were unnecessary, because "the present expansion of international trade is less determined by the existing relations of production than by the existing relations of exploitation." It was capitalist exploitation that led to the excess production that had to be sold abroad. And then came the essential conclusion:

When exploitation stops and production for one's own use replaces production for the market, then the export and also the import of products from one state to another will be strongly reduced. This traffic between the separate states will in fact not disappear completely. [. . .] Therefore a certain degree of exchange

of commodities between the separate co-operatives must, initially at least, continue to exist. But that does not endanger their economic independence [...] In order that every socialist co-operative produces everything it *needs* for its existence, it is for the time being sufficient when it assumes the size of a modern state.¹²

Kautsky is implicitly referring to the situation of various socialist states existing next to each other, and not to one socialist state organising its own economy among capitalist ones. But even with that significant limitation, this German social-democrat could not have been more explicit in his thesis that a socialist economy would have to be organised as a relatively autarkic whole within a national framework. In a socialist world the world market would shrink, making nationally organised economies possible once more. This had the more general implication, that a socialism mainly built on a foundation of nationally confined 'productive forces' was a viable proposition. Thus Kautsky established the concept of a separate socialist economy within 'national walls.' My conclusion is that the idea of socialism in one country, as far as the organisation of its economy was concerned, was not as alien to the Marxists of the Second International as is often assumed. It is rash to conclude that 'socialism in one country' contradicted everything that was orthodox in Marxism. It indeed contradicted Marx and Engels themselves, but Kautsky was the pope of orthodox Marxism after the latter's death. Both viewpoints of the future socialist economy, as an essentially national and as a necessarily international phenomenon, seem to have existed next to each other.

LENIN AND TROTSKY, 1905-16

Before turning now to the Russian social-democrats in the early years of the century I should first note that, for the Russians, as for social-democracy in general, the question of the possibility of socialism in one country was academic. While the question of a socialist *revolution* was debated, the question of what later would be called 'socialist construction' was not under discussion. We must therefore reconstruct the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky on the basis of scarce quotations. And here again we must make a distinction between two problems which are often mixed up: the *general* question of a

socialism in one country, and its *specific* application to the case of backward Russia.

To start with the latter point, the orthodox Marxist view was that in a country with a peasant majority, and in which industrial production for the market did not yet predominate, socialism could not be introduced (that is, unless aid was received from other, developed socialist states). The relatively moderate, menshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party (RSDWP) believed that in the democratic republic that was to be established after the downfall of the tsar, 'bourgeois' parties would inevitably gain the upper hand. Under their rule a capitalist economy would slowly develop until conditions were ripe for a socialist revolution. Lenin, the leader of the radical, bolshevik wing of the party, agreed that in this 'democratic stage' a democratic republic was the first aim, that bourgeois forces would gain the upper hand, and that at first only capitalist reforms were on the agenda. Yet, simultaneously his perspective was different from the mensheviks. First, he thought that the democratic republic could only be established by a provisional government of socialist parties, a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." The RSDWP would be one of the ruling parties. Second, Lenin did not like the idea of the RSDWP subsequently giving up its share in the power, after electoral defeat by the peasant majority. On a few occasions he pondered on the possibility of the RSDWP holding on to power and quickly passing over to socialist reforms.

In September 1905 the bolshevik leader suggested that "from the democratic revolution we'll immediately begin to go over, and precisely to the measure of our strength (of the strength of the conscious and organised proletariat) we'll begin to go over to the socialist revolution. We favour an uninterrupted revolution."¹³ However, Lenin did not believe that without the aid of a victorious proletarian revolution in the West socialism could be constructed in backward Russia. In April 1906 he told the Fourth Party Congress:

[The Russian revolution] can be victorious, for the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry can form an invincible force. It cannot hold on to victory, for in a country with a huge development of small production the small commodity producers (the peasants among them) will inevitably turn against the proletariat, when it moves *from freedom to socialism*. To hold on to victory, to avoid restoration, the Russian

revolution needs a non-Russian *reserve*, it needs aid from that side [...] the socialist proletariat in the West.¹⁴

Leon Trotsky, who generally took a position between the bolsheviks and mensheviks at the time, developed a standpoint that was close to Lenin's. He differed from him only in that he refused to call the provisional revolutionary government a 'proletarian-peasant' dictatorship, insisting as he did on the term 'proletarian dictatorship'. He was more straightforwardly hoping for a dominant position of the RSDWP in this government. Furthermore, while Lenin very seldom discussed the idea of socialist reforms in backward Russia and more typically stressed that this country was still in the 'democratic stage', Trotsky was positively certain that the revolutionary government should quickly carry out the 'democratic' reforms and then go over immediately to a socialist reconstruction of society. In his *Results and Prospects* (1906) he defended his version of "uninterrupted revolution." In his view there was simply no way social-democracy could avoid "overstepping the limits of its democratic programme." But then, he asked, "how far can the socialist policy of the working class be applied in the economic conditions of Russia?" His answer was identical to Lenin's:

it will come up against political obstacles much sooner than it will stumble over the technical backwardness of the country. *Without the direct State support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship.* [...] Left to its own resources, the working class of Russia will inevitably be crushed by the counter-revolution the moment the peasantry turns its back on it.¹⁵

In sum, Lenin and Trotsky agreed that the RSDWP would have to try to put socialism on the agenda as quickly as possible, but also that the socio-economic circumstances were not ripe for it. Therefore the proletariat would come into conflict with the peasantry which stuck to its property. And both men agreed that the socialist side would lose this conflict. Restoration of capitalism would be the result. Only a socialist government in Germany or in another developed nation could turn the scales. I should add that, at this point, both Lenin and Trotsky apparently considered the technological backwardness a lesser problem than the peasantry's resistance to socialism. Here we have what I called the 'theory of restoration' in its classical form. It predicted not an unfinished socialist project in isolated Russia, but

its utter ruin. At this time Lenin was as committed to this idea as Trotsky.

However, what we are dealing with here is *not* the abstract problem of the possibility of socialism in one isolated country, but of socialism in an isolated *Russia*. Once we look at the more general problem the coincidence of Lenin and Trotsky's views falls apart. Ten years after the First Russian Revolution of 1905 there circulated among radical social-democratic opponents of the Great War the slogan of a 'United States of Europe'. Trotsky supported it, as a proletarian dictatorship on an international scale, but Lenin came to reject it. One of his reasons for this was that he believed that the slogan suggested that the revolution in Europe would necessarily take place simultaneously in the various countries. In August 1915 he wrote in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, that the slogan "could give rise to an incorrect interpretation concerning the impossibility of the victory of socialism in one country." Lenin rather believed that,

the victory of socialism initially in some or even in one, separately taken, capitalist country is possible. After having expropriated the capitalists and having organised the socialist production at home, the victorious proletariat of this country would stand *opposed* to the remaining capitalist world [...].¹⁶

In September 1916 Lenin repeated that "socialism cannot win simultaneously *in all* countries." First it would be victorious "in one or several countries," which would then be faced with the imperialists' efforts to destroy that socialist state, resulting in "a war for socialism, for the liberation of other peoples from the bourgeoisie."¹⁷ In 1915 Trotsky wrote a direct reply to Lenin's first article. In this article, called 'The Programme of Peace', he noted that "*Sotsial-Demokrat* drew that conclusion that the victory of socialism in one country is possible." But he considered this an untenable position. Although he admitted that a revolution "must begin on a national basis, [...] under the present condition of economic and military-political mutual dependence of the European states it cannot be completed on [this basis]." He concluded that:

While not waiting for others, we begin and continue the struggle on a national basis in the complete assurance that our initiative will give a push to the struggle in other countries; but if that were not to happen, then it would be hopeless to think [...] that, for instance, revolutionary Russia could survive in the face of conservative Europe, or a socialist Germany could remain isolated in a capitalist world.¹⁸

This small debate has been much commented on. At the Fifteenth Party Conference in 1926 Lev Kamenev argued convincingly that in discussing 'socialism in one country', Lenin had not been referring to Russia, but to those developed countries where the circumstances were ripe for the introduction of socialism. Stalin vigorously denied this on the same occasion, but Kamenev was clearly right in his interpretation.¹⁹ However, although Kamenev was right, that did not make Lenin's articles irrelevant. They clearly stated two points. One, Lenin believed in the possibility of a national, isolated socialism. In 1929 Trotsky wrote that in his 1915 reference to a socialist economy Lenin had "only" referred to "carrying out the work on the factories taken from the capitalists" and not to a "completely independent socialist society."²⁰ But thinking back to what Leninist socialism was, we have seen that it really was no more than operating "factories taken from the capitalists." Once the state had expropriated the means of production and ran them according to a plan we have a socialist society. An often heard further argument, that Lenin simply could not have meant this because a national socialism was too outrageous for a Marxist of that period, falls down too: the bible of social-democracy, Kautsky's *Das Erfurter Programm*, had sketched this option more than twenty years before Lenin. Two, Lenin also believed that there was at least a fair chance that one socialist country could successfully defend itself by arms against its capitalist neighbours.

We have here a real and significant difference in position between Lenin and Trotsky. Lenin believed in the possibility of socialism in one country. A socialist economy could be organised within national walls, and subsequently that power might be able to defend itself militarily. Before 1917 he did *not* believe in socialism in one *backward* country. In an isolated Russia socialism would inevitably collapse. For Trotsky however the inevitable collapse of a revolutionary Russia trying to establish socialism was only a *special case* of the general thesis that socialism in one country was impossible and doomed to collapse. And I should add one more conclusion, namely that it followed from Lenin's position that if he would ever change his mind on the viability of a socialist reconstruction of backward Russia, then Russia would logically also enter the general category of countries where socialism in isolation would be possible. And in fact, this is exactly what happened.

LENIN, 1917–23

It is one of the main theses of the present article that during the period 1917 to 1923 Lenin's standpoint on socialism in an isolated Russia underwent a complete reversal, in two stages. Let's begin with his famous "Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers," written in March 1917, that is, after the overthrow of the tsar. The bolshevik leader admitted that in Russia "socialism cannot win directly and immediately," but the road to socialism lay open nevertheless:

The Russian proletariat cannot *complete* the socialist revolution victoriously when it uses only its own forces. But it can provide the Russian revolution with such scope that the best conditions for it will be created, that it will be *begun* in a certain way. It will make conditions easier for its *main*, most loyal, most reliable partner, the *European* and American *socialist* proletariat, to engage in decisive battles.²¹

Taken literally this remark suggested that the socialist transformation of Russia might begin in the absence of a European revolution, but could not be completed under these conditions. What was lacking in this letter, was the old prediction that in the absence of a world revolution the Russian socialist project would inevitably end in a total fiasco of capitalist restoration. It would be crippled rather than destroyed. I am sure Lenin had not yet reached such explicit conclusions at that time, but his words were representative of a certain shift in his thinking on Russian socialism.

It is well known that around April 1917 Lenin had come to the conclusion that Russia was ripe, perhaps not for socialism, but in any case for a transitional policy aiming for socialism.²² One searches in vain in Lenin's works for a profound and systematic exploration of why the traditional thesis that peasant Russia was unripe for socialism should now apparently be amended. But arguments could be found nevertheless. In his "Letters on Tactics" of 8–13 April Lenin had claimed that the workers and the poor peasants formed together a majority of the people, and that this majority would support the revolution when it went over to its second, i.e. socialist, stage.²³ This almost casual remark was of momentous significance. The 'poor peasants' formed a category containing not only agricultural labourers but also poor owners. Thus Lenin in one stroke created a political majority for socialism in a predominantly petty-bourgeois country. At the so-called April Conference of the bolshevik RSDWP, Aleksei Rykov objected to Lenin that Russia didn't have "the forces, the

objective conditions” for socialism. Lenin answered him: “Comrade Rykov says that socialism must come from other countries with a more developed industry. But that is not true. It is impossible to say who’ll begin and who will end.” Later he explained his case further:

Usually one makes such a conclusion [. . .]: ‘Russia is a backward, peasant, petty bourgeois country, and therefore one should not speak of the social revolution’, but one forgets that the war put us in unusual conditions and that next to the petty bourgeoisie there is big capital. [. . .] Russia will come to stand with one foot in socialism, with one- because the peasant majority leads the other economic side of the country. That the change has ripened economically cannot be denied. In order to realise [the transitional measures] politically one has to have a majority, and the majority is made up of peasants who are understandably interested in these transformations.²⁴

Lenin had come to the conclusion that Russian industry, ‘big capital’, was as ripe for a takeover by the state as its counterpart in Western Europe. Therefore Russia could have ‘one foot’ in socialism quite soon. He still considered the ‘other foot’, the small peasant economy, to be economically unripe for socialism. Yet, Lenin had now come to believe that the poor peasant majority was nevertheless “interested” in a socialising programme. It could be won over politically. This scheme logically blew up the ‘theory of restoration’ as far as the inevitable proletarian-peasant conflict in the socialist stage was concerned. From Lenin’s new scheme there could not be deduced an inevitable and victorious peasant war against socialism.²⁵ On 20 April Lenin said that “further *steps* to socialism in Russia [were] completely possible,” and under the condition of “aid” from the West-European workers “the transition of Russia *really* to socialism will be *inevitable*, and the success of such a transition *guaranteed*.”²⁶ Thus Lenin had now come to think that the international revolution was needed to complete the process towards socialism, rather than to prevent its total collapse. We see here the birth of what I called Lenin’s ‘theory of incomplete socialism’, which was a conditional application to Russia of Lenin’s general notion that a socialism in one country was possible.

After the revolution the question of the perspective of an isolated Russian socialism never left Lenin. To see how his thinking developed it is best to split up the problem in its two aspects, the external, military threats to revolutionary Russia and the internal, economic perspectives of socialism. Let’s begin with the first. When it came to his analysis of the imperialist threat the ‘theory of restoration’

continued to dominate Lenin for some time. At the Seventh Party Congress in March 1918 he said:

it is an absolute truth that we would go under without a German revolution, perhaps not in Piter, not in Moscow, but in Vladivostok, in even more faraway places, where we shall perhaps be forced to move ourselves [...].²⁷

Here Lenin was clearly referring to the dangers of war with the imperialists. In May 1918 he foresaw a possible withdrawal to the Ural in case of a new attack by German or Japanese forces.²⁸ In the summer of 1918 the civil war broke out in full force and in November the Great War ended, freeing the 'imperialist' forces for intervention against bolshevik Russia if they so wished. But now something strange and unexpected happened. The 'imperialist intervention' turned out to be of a very limited scale, and despite the hard times in the summer of 1919, the bolsheviks were victorious in the civil war. Lenin became gradually more optimistic concerning the chances of Soviet military survival even without a socialist Germany. In March 1919 he said that "the existence of the Soviet republic next to the imperialist states for a prolonged period is unthinkable." A series of "terrible collisions" was inevitable. But it was no longer certain that Russia would be the loser: "In the end the one or the other is victorious."²⁹ Slowly Lenin began to reach the conclusion that solidarity of the international workers movement might be enough to keep Soviet Russia afloat. In July 1921 he remarked:

When we began the international revolution, in our time, [...] we] thought: either the international revolution will come to our aid, and then our victories will be fully guaranteed, or we'll do our modest revolutionary work knowing that in case of defeat we'll still serve the cause of the revolution [...]. Even before the revolution, and also after it, we thought: either immediately or at least very soon the revolution will come in other, capitalistically more developed countries, or, in the opposite case, we must go under. [...] But in reality the movement did not go so straightforwardly as we expected.³⁰

In December 1921 Lenin finally drew his definite conclusion. He repeated that initially he had assumed that only a victorious revolution abroad could have saved Soviet Russia from certain doom. But as it turned out Russia received "support of another kind, indirect support, slow coming support" in the form of the "solidarity of the toiling masses for us." The Western workers had prevented the imperialists from organising a large-scale intervention. And Lenin

concluded: "I must say that already now we can rely on it."³¹ Summing up, let me first say that to my knowledge after the summer of 1918 Lenin never repeated the predictions of early 1918 to the effect that in the absence of world revolution Soviet Russia would certainly collapse under the imperialist blows. From then on, it remained a distinct possibility for him, but no more than that. By 1921 he had become convinced that there was a good chance that the combined strength of the Red Army and a solidarity movement in the West were enough to prevent a successful imperialist intervention.

Let us now proceed to the other side of the matter. How did Lenin feel about 'socialist construction' in an isolated Russia? From January 1918 onwards one can collect a string of quotations, often in literally the same words, of Lenin saying that "the final victory of socialism in one country is impossible." To win "completely, definitively on a world scale" it was necessary for the proletariat to be victorious in at least "several of the large, advanced countries." Generally he used the words "complete [*polnaia*]" and "final [*okonchatel'naia*]" to describe the kind of socialist victory that was not achievable in an isolated Russia.³² But what did he intend to convey with this? The last occasion I found which could be interpreted in terms of what I called the 'theory of restoration' was when Lenin said in March 1918 that the banner of socialism in Russia was in "weak hands," and that "the workers of the most backward country will not hold it, if the workers of all advanced countries don't come to their aid."³³ If one drops the banner the whole case is clearly lost. But I found no statement of Lenin after this date that could reasonably be interpreted in the sense of a prediction of total collapse or inevitable capitalist restoration. He was always referring to some crowning event, which was "not possible in one country," the *complete victory of, the final triumph of socialism*.

So to repeat my question: what kind of 'final, complete' victory was he referring to? Stalin always said that such quotes only referred to the fact that as long as the imperialists existed the danger of intervention, and thus of restoration, necessarily existed. However, although Lenin certainly *also* referred to this danger, this was not the only thing he had in mind. The clearest proof is what he said in November 1918:

the complete victory of the socialist revolution is unthinkable in one country, but demands the most active co-operation of, at least, several advanced countries, among which we cannot count Russia.³⁴

Here he was clearly trying to say that to complete the construction of a socialist society the positive help of other countries, and we must logically assume: socialist countries, was needed. As a matter of fact Lenin even believed this to be the case in advanced countries too. In May 1918 he said that "even if [a country] was much less backward than Russia," "one cannot fully complete the socialist revolution in one country with one's own forces."³⁵ This served also as a qualification of his words of 1915–16: socialism in one country is possible, but it will be an unfinished project. But there is no doubt that, unlike in 1915–16, Lenin now also believed in the possibility of building an 'incomplete' socialism in a backward country like Russia. This is really quite easy to prove. One can choose from an innumerable number of remarks. And I will present only a few. As I said, the original essential point of the 'theory of restoration' was that the petty-bourgeois peasantry would not accept socialism. Now on one occasion in 1919 Lenin said that if Russia had 100,000 fine tractors the middle peasant would support the "commune," i.e. socialised agriculture. And he added:

But in order to be able to do that, we first have to vanquish the international bourgeoisie, we have to force it to give us these tractors, or alternatively we have to raise our productivity to such a degree that we can deliver them ourselves.³⁶

On another occasion in April 1921 Lenin asked himself: "Is the realisation of a direct transition from this condition which is dominant in Russia to socialism conceivable? Yes, it is conceivable to a certain degree, but only under one condition [. . .] That condition is electrification." Then he continued:

But we know very well, that this 'one' condition demands at least ten years only for the initial stage, and a shortening of this term is in its turn only conceivable in case of a victory of the proletarian revolution in such countries like England, Germany, America.³⁷

In the last phase of his life Lenin became even more optimistic on the perspectives of socialism in Russia. In a speech of November 1922 he even said: "Already now socialism is not a question of the faraway future, or of some abstract picture, or of some icon. [. . .] We dragged socialism into everyday life." He ended his speech

in an astonishingly bright tone: "together we will carry out this task, not tomorrow, but in several years, together we will carry out this task whatever the cost, so that NEP Russia will turn into socialist Russia."³⁸ Finally in January 1923 he wrote an article "On Co-operation." Here he discussed agricultural co-operatives. Old utopian socialists like Robert Owen had believed that co-operatives provided a means of "a peaceful transformation of modern society by socialism." This had been a reformist dream in Lenin's view. But once the proletariat had taken power everything changed:

state power in the hands of the proletariat, the union of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants [...] isn't that really everything we need in order to build from the co-operative [...] a complete socialist society? [...] In our system as it exists co-operative enterprises [...] do not distinguish themselves from socialist enterprises, if they are founded on land and use means of production that belong to the state, i.e. the working class [...] under our conditions the co-operative is almost always completely identical with socialism.³⁹

What was new here? 'Socialism' had been defined as the negative of private property, which was again identified with property of the community as a whole, i.e. of the state. But then, what would be the status of this intermediary form of property, co-operative enterprise? This could not be capitalist because it is not really private, but it would not be really socialist either, because ownership did not belong to the community as a whole. In his 1923 article Lenin accomplished a shift in definition. He defined co-operative property on land owned by a proletarian state as socialist, and as 'completely socialist' for that matter. Perhaps Lenin had doubted whether complete nationalisation of agriculture would be possible in isolated Russia. But he was apparently convinced that proletarian Russia would manage to reform agriculture completely on a co-operative basis. Now, once this system was defined as a fully socialist one, the creation of a "complete socialist society" in backward Russia was at one stroke deemed possible.

It is this single quotation which was always used by Stalin to defend his version of socialism in one country. Now Trotsky and others could bring into the field an endless number of quotes of Lenin, saying that 'complete socialism' was impossible in one country. Against this Stalin used the debating trick of claiming that Lenin had only been referring to the danger of intervention. But the other party was also using a trick. Unfortunately for them, Stalin's favourite

quote was of a later date than all the innumerable ones of theirs. Lenin had been in a process of changing his mind, and Trotsky and Zinov'ev tried to cover up this fact. In an ironic way they used the same debaters' trick as Stalin and Bukharin. While the latter interpreted Lenin's older remarks in terms of his more recent ones, the former did the opposite. Both presented an illusionary Lenin who had always nurtured the same, unalterable opinion of the problem at hand.

Thus we come to a preliminary conclusion. The problem for all researchers here is that in Lenin's works one does not find (except in 1915–16) either one of the following two statements: 'socialism in one country is possible' or 'socialism in one country is impossible'. Therefore we have to do a job of interpretation. My conclusions are that Lenin believed, as he said explicitly only in 1915–16, that socialism in one country was indeed possible. But he thought it would be an incomplete socialist society until the world revolution enabled the victorious workers to give each other active support in completing socialist construction. This was his 'theory of incomplete socialism', as I have called it. However, until 1917 he did not apply it to the case of backward Russia, where he stuck to the other 'theory of restoration'. But then again, from 1917 onwards, and certainly after the summer of 1918, Lenin believed his general idea of socialism in isolation to be applicable to Russia too. Furthermore, in early 1923 he was even beginning to contemplate the possibility of building a *complete* socialism in Russia, which was a further step in the development of his thinking. But his illness prevented him from continuing this matter.

THE DEBATE: ITS PREHISTORY

After Lenin's death a great debate broke out on 'socialism in one country.' It had its prehistory. All the major participants had formulated their opinion about the prospects of socialism in Russia at one time or other. Let me first make clear that all these party leaders, Stalin and Trotsky, Zinov'ev, Kamenev and Bukharin, were convinced that they were in the process of laying the foundations of a socialist society. Where they differed was merely in their expectations of where this socialist experiment would end if Russia remained

alone: in inevitable restoration of capitalism, in an unfinished form of socialism, or, perhaps, even in a fully developed socialism.

At the Sixth Party Congress in August 1917 Lenin's idea that Russia was ripe for a revolution establishing transitional measures toward socialism was one of the themes dominating the proceedings. Lenin, Zinov'ev and Trotsky were absent. And Stalin and Bukharin were the main leaders defending the socialist character of the coming revolution. They agreed with Lenin's analysis that the industrial sector was ripe for socialist reconstruction.⁴⁰ But they differed among themselves when it came to the peasantry. This was what Bukharin said:

I think of the new wave of revolution in two stages, one developing into the other: the first stage with the participation of the peasantry, which strives to receive the land, the second stage, after the satisfied peasantry has abandoned us, the stage of the proletarian revolution, when only the proletarian elements and the proletariat of Western Europe will support the Russian proletariat. These periods can follow each other in immediate proximity.⁴¹

Bukharin had not yet embraced Lenin's view that the majority of the peasantry could be won over to socialism. He stuck to the old thesis, underlying the 'theory of restoration', that the peasantry would abandon the proletariat in the socialist stage. Stalin, however, did agree with Lenin's approach, and he was aware of the difference with Bukharin:

What is the perspective of comr. Bukharin? His analysis is fundamentally wrong. [...] According to comr. Bukharin, the second stage is a proletarian revolution supported by Western Europe, without the peasants, who received the land and are satisfied. But against whom is this revolution directed? In his playful scheme comr. Bukharin does not answer that question.⁴²

It seems that at this point Stalin was the only major party leader who completely supported and understood Lenin's line of a socialist revolution supported by a majority of the peasants. In a resolution proposed by Stalin it was said that the task of the "revolutionary classes," i.e. the proletariat and "the poor of town and country," was to aim for a "socialist reconstruction of society, in union with the revolutionary proletariat of the advanced countries." This motion led to a famous debate, when E.A. Preobrazhenskii said: "I propose another editing of the end of the resolution: 'to orient [revolutionary state power] to peace and, in case of a proletarian revolution in the West, to socialism.'" Stalin did not agree:

It is not impossible, that precisely Russia will be the country to pave the way to socialism [...] the basis of our revolution is broader than in Western Europe, where the proletariat stands completely alone face to face with the bourgeoisie. With us the poorest layers of the peasantry support the workers. [...] We must reject the obsolete view that only Europe can point us the way. There exists a dogmatic Marxism and a creative Marxism. I stand on the basis of the latter."⁴³

The congress supported Stalin, rejecting as it did Preobrazhenskii's amendment. This latter fact has always been hard to understand. Robert Tucker perceived in Stalin's remark the shadow of "the future party debate over the possibility of building a socialist society in Soviet Russia without revolutions in Europe." In his view, "the notion of socialism in one country was embryonic in Stalin's 'creative Marxism' of 1917."⁴⁴ However, at this time Lenin was already testing the conclusion that an isolated Russia could go forward to socialism, although he thought that the transformation process could not be completed under such conditions. The "creative Marxism" was therefore Lenin's. I have no doubt that had Lenin been present he would have opposed Preobrazhenskii's amendment. The congress' support for Stalin rather than for Preobrazhenskii expressed support for Lenin's new position.

After the revolution Stalin continued to stick to the notion of the possibility of building socialism in one country. In October 1920 he wrote that "some participants of the October revolution" had been convinced that the success of the socialist revolution in Russia "can be solid [*prochnyi*] only in that case when immediately upon the revolution in Russia there begins a revolutionary explosion in the West." This view was proven wrong. Even in isolation, the socialist revolution in backward Russia "might [...] be successful and advance, while serving as an example for capitalistically developed countries." This was especially the case since Russia, a "kind of oasis of socialism," was a huge and very rich country.⁴⁵ As we can now see this view did not contradict Lenin's of that period. If Stalin would have said that socialism could be built 'completely', or something of that nature, he would have been original. But his thesis that *some kind* of socialism could be built in one country was fully shared by Lenin at the time. However, in April–May 1924, soon after Lenin's death, Stalin wrote a series of articles in *Pravda*, collected as "On the Foundations of Leninism," in which he wrote:

But to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to establish the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism is guaranteed. The main task of socialism – the organisation of socialist production – still lies ahead. [...] For the final victory of socialism, for the organisation of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of such a peasant country as Russia, are insufficient; for that the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are necessary.⁴⁶

This is quite an interesting remark, because Stalin did in fact return here to the 'theory of restoration'. If carefully read, he did not say that one country can organise socialist production but only in an incomplete form. As a matter of fact he said that one country simply could not organise socialist production at all, i.e. capitalist restoration in isolated Russia would be inevitable. Now as we saw, Stalin did not believe this from 1917 through 1920, and he certainly did not believe it from late 1924 onwards. My conclusion is that by early 1924 he still had not given the subject proper thought. He was sloppy in his thinking on this matter. Bukharin for his part initially stuck to the idea that in the long run the peasants could not be won over to socialism. In 1919 he and Preobrazhenskii published their famous *ABC of Communism*, one of the most important summaries of bolshevik thought ever to be written. It contained the following passage:

the Russian proletariat must *organise industry in a proletarian way* and keep it firmly in hand, until the Western comrades come to its aid. In agriculture a number of bastions of comradely communality must be organised. But as soon as we can link up with the Western industry, the organised joint industry will enable us to draw in also the small producers and peasants into this large comradely organisational totality. When we had a pan-European industry organised by the working class, this industry could deliver many products from the city to the village.⁴⁷

In 1919 Bukharin still felt that in an isolated Russia the peasantry could not really be drawn into a socialist economy. This was the foundation stone of the old 'theory of restoration'. But slowly his thinking began to change. Around the turn of the years 1922 and 1923 he began to expound a theory of "ingrowing into socialism." This implied, first, that once the proletariat was in power a policy of gradual reform became effective, and more in particular, he now held that the peasant economy could also gradually develop into a socialist one.⁴⁸ In February 1924 he noted in "Lenin as a Marxist," that even in "one isolated country" socialism could be gradually established

“along an evolutionary way.”⁴⁹ Stephen Cohen has suggested on the basis of the articles that Bukharin was the father of the idea of ‘socialism in one country’.⁵⁰ I do not think that is accurate. Already since 1917 Lenin perceived the possibility of an, albeit incomplete, socialism in one country. As we saw, in 1919 he wrote explicitly that the industrial efforts of Russia alone could produce the tractors that would convince the peasants to adopt the “commune.” In fact, Bukharin wrote nothing new compared to earlier utterances of Lenin. He would have, if he had declared that a *complete* socialist society could be built in Russia. But he did not state that. In 1922 Bukharin merely went over, belatedly, to what I called Lenin’s ‘theory of incomplete socialism’.

It would be fair to say that around the time of Lenin’s death, Bukharin and Stalin were adherents of the former’s ‘theory of incomplete socialism’, although Stalin had not yet completely shaken off the old thesis of restoration. Both men had yet failed to absorb the implications of Lenin’s last utterance of January 1923, concerning ‘complete socialism’. Let’s now look finally to Trotsky. In January 1922 he wrote a preface to his book, *The Year 1905*, in which he repeated his old thesis of restoration. He described what he now called his theory of “permanent revolution,” repeating his old thesis of 1906 that the proletarian government could never halt before bourgeois property:

Under these conditions it had to run into hostile actions not only of groups of the bourgeoisie [. . .], but also of the masses of the peasantry, with the co-operation of which it came to power. The contradictions in the position of a workers’ government in a backward country, with a huge majority of peasant population, could find its solution only in the international arena, in the arena of the world revolution of the proletariat.

This was only a summary of his old theory, but he added that this old theory had proven “completely justified.”⁵¹ Thus he restated that a violent conflict with the peasantry was in due course inevitable, and he suggested that the government could not win it on its own. In that same year Trotsky wrote an afterword to a republication of “The Programme of Peace.” In this afterword he asked whether the old thesis that “the proletarian revolution cannot be victoriously completed in national frameworks” was not outdated. Didn’t Soviet Russia already exist for five years in isolation? No, Trotsky answered, we have defended ourselves successfully, “but we have

not yet arrived at the creation of a socialist society and we have not even approached it." And he added:

As long as the bourgeoisie is in power in the other European states, we are forced to look for agreements with the capitalist world, in our struggle with economic isolation; but at the same time we can say with certainty that these agreements can help us at best to heal one or another economic wound, to make one or another step forward, but that a real upsurge of the socialist economy in Russia becomes possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe.⁵²

Here Trotsky pointed not only to the specific problems of Russia's backwardness, but to the very nature of the modern economy. An economy cannot fruitfully exist in isolation. Any state must, so to speak, mix its economy with those of the other states. Now if these other states are socialist, then all is well. But if they are capitalist the unfortunate isolated socialist state has no option but to enter into intense relations with those other, *capitalist* states. And in Trotsky's view this mutual connectedness would be so intense as to prevent any "real upsurge of the socialist economy." In a way Trotsky here gave his own version of a 'theory of incomplete socialism': due to the nature of the modern economy socialism in one country would always remain on a primitive level. In sum, Trotsky's 1922 remarks suggest that he, more or less like Stalin, had gone over to Lenin's perspective of 'incomplete socialism', but at the same time he continued to repeat his old thesis of inevitable collapse as the more faraway perspective in case bolshevik isolation would prove very prolonged.

THE DEBATE: 1924-29

The debate on 'socialism in one country' was touched off, although only indirectly, by Trotsky's *Lessons of October*, which appeared in the fall of 1924. In this brochure Trotsky criticised party leaders like Zinov'ev and Kamenev for their behaviour during the October 1917 days. He also brought up his own old theory of 'permanent revolution', but the aspect of the long term viability of socialism in Russia was not raised. In the last months of 1924 Trotsky's colleagues reacted to the attack on their position that *Lessons of October* contained. And that is when the theme of 'socialism in one country' was more or less artificially injected into the debate. In his 'Bolshevism

or Trotskyism', Zinov'ev fired the opening shot by indignantly quoting Trotsky's 1906 thesis that Russian socialism would be doomed without direct state support from other socialist countries.⁵³ On 12 December 1924 Bukharin followed suit by quoting Trotsky's 1922 foreword to the book *The Year 1905*. Bukharin denied that bolshevik Russia would be destroyed by a proletarian-peasant conflict.⁵⁴

But it was only Stalin who really saw the potential of this theme. On 20 December 1924 several newspapers carried his "October and Comrade Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution." Later an extended version received the new name "The October Revolution and the Tactic of the Russian Communists."⁵⁵ Stalin quoted the remarks by Trotsky from 1906, 1915 and the other two from 1922, which I have discussed already in the present article, and he contrasted them with Lenin's quotation of 1915.⁵⁶ He concluded the following:

under the condition of the preservation of capitalism in the other countries, the victory of socialism in one country is completely possible and probable, even if this country is capitalistically less developed and these [other] countries are capitalistically more developed. [...] It goes without saying that for the *complete* victory of socialism, for a *complete* guarantee against the restoration of the old order the joint efforts of the proletarians of several countries are needed. [...] But what is the support for our revolution by the West-European proletariat? The solidarity of the European workers towards our revolution, their preparedness to disorganise the plans of the imperialists for intervention [...].⁵⁷

The purpose of this article was merely to deny explicitly the 'theory of restoration'. Russian socialism would not collapse of its own weakness in the absence of the European revolution. And as to collapsing from foreign intervention, that eventuality was not ruled out, but international solidarity could well prevent it. In sum, even in prolonged isolation Russia had a very good chance of constructing socialism. Stalin's claim that this had always been Lenin's view since 1915 was totally false, but there is no doubt that in the last years of his life Lenin would have agreed with Stalin's thesis that, although a distinct danger of intervention remained, socialism could be built in isolated Russia. And, incidentally Stalin and Bukharin had said the same in 1920 and 1922–23 respectively. The question of whether a *complete* socialist society could be constructed under such conditions was not answered in this article, and not even raised. The bizarre thing about Stalin's article was that until this moment this whole matter had not played a role in the debate. And for the time

being, Trotsky did not respond to the attack. But then, Stalin's thesis did strike a chord. Although everything he said had been implicit in Lenin's writings, Lenin had never explicitly formulated this thesis of socialism in one country after 1915–16. The significance of Stalin's article was to re-formulate Lenin's conclusions into a simple thesis.

In April 1925 the 14th Party Conference discussed the matter, among many other points. But in the meetings of the Politbureau preceding the conference it appeared that the party leaders who had set out to destroy Trotsky's name did not see completely eye to eye on the matter. As Bukharin said a few months later, everyone had agreed that only the international socialist revolution would provide a guarantee against restoration in the wake of an imperialist intervention. But "comr. Kamenev, and then also comr. Zinov'ev, defended [...] the position that we cannot complete the building of socialism [*stroit' do kontsa*] due to our *technological backwardness*."⁵⁸ In other words, Zinov'ev and Kamenev defended Lenin's point of view of 1917 to 1922, to the effect that socialism could indeed be built in an isolated Russia, but that it would be necessarily an incomplete socialism. It was around this time that Stalin and Bukharin in their struggle against Zinov'ev and Kamenev, took the step to present what I will call the 'theory of complete socialism'. At the 14th Party Conference the thesis of socialism in one country was restated as follows:

the presence of two directly contradictory social systems produces a permanent threat of capitalist blockade, of other forms of economic pressure, of armed intervention, of restoration. The only guarantee of the *final* [*okonchatel'naia*] *victory of socialism*, i.e. guarantees against restoration, is therefore the victorious socialist revolution in several countries. From this it does not follow at all, that the building [*postroika*] of a complete [*polnoe*] socialist society in such a backward country, like Russia, without 'state support' (Trotsky) by technologically and economically more developed countries, is impossible.⁵⁹

Thus a 'theory of complete socialism' became the official party line. On 13 May 1925 *Pravda* carried a piece by Stalin, "Concerning the results of the work of the XIV conference of the RKP(b)," in which he pointed at the presence of "two groups of contradictions." The first group comprised "the internal contradictions existing between the proletariat and the peasantry." These could "be overcome by our own efforts," because the peasantry was interested in the socialist system of production. Therefore, "we can and must

build a complete socialist society together with the peasantry." As to the second, external group of contradictions, Stalin produced a further simplification even compared to the resolution of the conference. While that conference had held open the option that bolshevik Russia might be destroyed by an economic blockade, Stalin simply said: "The final victory of socialism equals the complete guarantee against attempts at intervention." In sum, of all the possible foreign threats only military intervention was a potentially mortal danger.⁶⁰ This was the first text where the theory of 'socialism in one country' in its 'classical' form was fully expounded. Subsequently Stalin added nothing to it. From then on the future of an isolated bolshevik Russia was summarised in two possibilities: either complete socialism or collapse under military intervention, and the first alternative was deemed highly probable.⁶¹ Bukharin also wrote his own summary defending the conclusions of the conference.⁶² I believe that, taking into account Lenin's last utterances of 1923, Stalin and Bukharin provided a schematic but accurate reflection of the views on the subject Lenin was embracing in the last period of his life.

Meanwhile, neither Zinov'ev nor Trotsky did contradict the conclusions of the 14th Party Conference. In 1925 the latter published a brochure called *K sotsializmu ili k kapitalizmu?*. At the 15th Party Conference in late 1926 Trotsky quoted angrily from this text to prove his innocence of an overly pessimistic heresy. The brochure held that in industry the role of the state sector continued to grow. Furthermore,

The transition from the scattered peasant economy to a socialist cultivation of the land can be conceived only through a series of consecutive technological, economical and cultural levels. The main condition of such a transition is the retention of power by the class which strives to lead society to socialism and which is ever more capable of influencing the peasantry through state industry [...] We want to show how to retain and strengthen the power we won and how to fill the form of the proletarian state with an economic content of socialism.⁶³

At the same conference Stalin also quoted a passage from the same brochure of Trotsky to the effect that the Gosplan tables sounded like "the majestic historical music of growing socialism." But according to Stalin, while Trotsky had indeed discussed in this brochure how to "go [*itti*] to socialism," he had not explicitly said that one could "arrive [*pritti*] at socialism."⁶⁴ This sounded disingenuous, but it was not so strange a remark after all. Like all party leaders, Trotsky did

his utmost to lead Soviet Russia on the road to socialism. And the quotation⁶⁴ prove that at this point, like in 1922, Trotsky still believed that at least a good measure of socialism could be 'constructed' in isolated Russia. His general perspective was now of 'incomplete socialism'. But we saw that in 1922 he had also believed that *in the long run* an unwinnable conflict with the peasantry was still inevitable. He had not discarded the 'theory of restoration'. Now the question of what would happen to primitive Russian socialism in the long run should the world revolution not occur, was simply not touched on in the 1925 brochure. As Stalin claimed, the book indeed did not show what Trotsky's views on this matter were at the time.

It was Zinov'ev rather than Trotsky who was the first to attack the thesis of 'socialism in one country'. He did this in his book *Leninism* which appeared in September 1925. It was this book that really opened the public debate on the matter. As we saw, although he foolishly attacked the formula, Zinov'ev in fact believed in socialism in one country. Only it could never be a *complete* socialism. The line of attack he chose was not very forceful. In chapter XIII of his book he explicitly defined "the total and final victory of socialism" as the realisation of communism of the second stage – which he found unrealisable in one country alone. This was a side track in the debate, that had not really been the question under discussion. Moreover, the thesis of the book was incoherent. On the one hand Zinov'ev stressed that "if one asks us whether we can and must establish socialism in one country, we'll reply that we *can* and *must*." It was "certain" that a "large measure of socialism" could be preserved in an isolated Russia. In other words, an incomplete socialism could be built in one country. But he also said that "to prevent our revolution from undergoing a restoration of bourgeois relations, the socialist revolution in several countries is necessary." Thus, without the European revolution there would not be an incomplete socialism but a capitalist restoration.⁶⁵

At the 14th Party Congress in December 1925 the matter was again given some attention, though not much. Zinov'ev did not deny the possibility of "the construction of socialism in one country," but it was impossible "to build [*postroit*'] socialism finally [*okonchatel'no*] and consolidate the socialist structure in one country, and then not in such a country as America but in our peasant one."

Zinov'ev confirmed that "we will [...] build [*stroim*] socialism," but he did not believe that "we will finish building [*postroim*] this socialism" in one country. In sum, the bolsheviks would be able to build a socialism of sorts, but the economic backwardness of Russia would not allow them to finish the project. Socialism would remain necessarily incomplete. But, as in his book, Zinov'ev also flirted with the old restoration thesis, this time in an ironic way, namely by approvingly quoting Stalin's odd 1924 remark to the effect that it would be impossible to organise a socialist economy in Russia.⁶⁶ Zinov'ev could never make up his mind, but it seems reasonable to present him as a hesitating adherent to the 'theory of incomplete socialism'.

The greatest and final debate on socialism in one country took place at the 15th Party Conference in October–November 1926. Here Trotsky at last joined Zinov'ev (and Kamenev) in their critique of the new orthodoxy. Kamenev's position was especially interesting, because he defended precisely the thesis adopted at the 14th Party Conference. He recognised what neither Zinov'ev nor Trotsky recognised, namely that "given a correct policy in relation to the peasantry, the proletariat can and will successfully construct a complete socialist society." His critique concerned only the fact that after the 14th conference the potentially mortal external dangers for Russian socialism had been reduced to military intervention only. Kamenev proposed to stick to the formula of early 1925 and recognise that under the condition of an insufficient tempo of economic growth, imperialist economic pressures might also destroy bolshevik Russia.⁶⁷ Thus Kamenev did in fact defend a concept which was merely a somewhat loose variety of the Stalin-Bukharin position. It is typical for the perverted style of the debate that this was not recognised. Zinov'ev followed Kamenev's lead in claiming that not only military intervention, but also an unfavourable development of the world market might lead to Soviet collapse. However, as to what would happen in the alternative case, he did not take the lead of his friend, not recognising as Kamenev did the possibility of a 'complete' socialist society in one country. *Postroit'* socialism, the magical formula for complete socialism, was only possible "in union with the world revolution," i.e. Zinov'ev deemed victorious socialist upheavals abroad a necessary condition for that.⁶⁸

But most important, and in some respects new, was Trotsky's position. He too followed Kamenev in claiming that the imperialists might strangle Soviet Russia not only through direct military intervention, but also through a superior economic position. But there was a major difference between his approach and that of Zinov'ev and Kamenev. For these latter two, defeat in an economic war had merely represented an unfortunate possibility that could never be ruled out as long as the world revolution had not destroyed capitalist dominance of the world market – more or less like Stalin and Bukharin would not completely rule out the possibility of imperialist occupation. However, Trotsky suggested that in the case of a prolonged isolated existence of Soviet Russia, collapse under economic or military pressure was the most probable scenario, because the international conditions were a much more powerful factor than the internal ones:

Our whole constructive activity is internationally determined. [...] If you ask whether we have sufficient strength and means in our country, independent of what will happen in the world as a whole, to carry the construction of socialism to the end in the course of 30 or 50 years, then I say that the very question is essentially wrong. We have sufficient means to take socialist construction forward and therewith help the revolutionary proletariat of the world, which has certainly no less chance of taking power in the course of 10-20-30 years than we have to build socialism; certainly no less but more chances! [...] if we proceed from the assumption that European capitalism will gain strength in the course of the next 30-50 years, that we would need to build socialism, then we would have to conclude that we would be strangled or shattered [...] Then there remains the second perspective: a decadent and rotting capitalism. [...] Can we imagine that European capitalism will rot for 30-50 years and the proletariat will be unable to accomplish the revolution? [...] [There is] a dark pessimism concerning the European proletariat, and at the same time [...] an uncritical optimism concerning the construction of socialism with the isolated forces of our country [...] I have no theoretical or political reasons at all to think that it's easier for us to build socialism together with the peasantry, than for the European proletariat to take power. [...] Why this demand to recognise theoretically the possibility of a construction [*postroenie*] of socialism in one country? [...] we are preparing the elements of a future socialism [...].⁶⁹

According to Trotsky, the future of bolshevism in backward Russia depended, ultimately, almost entirely on revolution in the West. If capitalism were to remain strong for a prolonged period, bolshevik defeat would be certain, because under the condition of a flourishing capitalism the European proletariat would not manage to take power. If on the other hand, capitalism were to remain weak,

the bolsheviks would be saved, for the opposite reason: the victorious Western proletariat would take power and come to their aid. Now Trotsky could not totally rule out the possibility that under the condition of a weak international capitalism, the Western proletariat would yet fail to take power. So what would then happen to isolated bolshevik Russia, in that unlikely case? Trotsky did not straightforwardly answer that question, but his remark that the chance of successfully building socialism in Russia was smaller than the chance of international revolution, and his warnings against "uncritical

optimism" suggested that he considered the long-term perspective of an isolated bolshevik regime in Russia to be very grim. To put it plainly: although he could not rule out the possibility of its survival with absolute certainty, he simply didn't believe in it. Thus Trotsky had not said farewell to the old idea of the collapse of isolated, revolutionary Russia, implicit in the 'theory of restoration' which he had defended in 1906, 1915 and 1922.

But what did Trotsky think would happen in this extremely unlikely case that, against all odds and expectations, an isolated Russian bolshevik party would manage to remain in power for 30 years? Wouldn't it then after all manage to create an, albeit incomplete, socialist society? Perhaps in 1922 or 1925 Trotsky would indeed have answered, that some kind of primitive socialism might then come about. But from 1926 onwards his thinking on this point was reverting to the old idea that a socialism in one country, backward or developed, was *per se* an economic impossibility. His argument was this: "When we speak of a socialist economy [. . .], this means: the contradictions between town and countryside must have disappeared; this means general prosperity, wealth, culture."⁷⁰ As he saw it by now, an economy might be nationalised and planned, but it would simply not yet be a socialist economy until further, technological and cultural, conditions were met. Much like Zinov'ev had done in his book, Trotsky implicitly suggested that only highly developed communism of the 'second stage' could rightly be called socialism. And he thought that an isolated country could never meet such high conditions on its own.

After his eviction from the USSR, Trotsky continued to write on these matters. Compared to the old days, when the inevitable conflict

between peasants and workers took the center stage in the prediction of collapse, his argument now shifted further to the essential economic impossibility of socialism in one country. It was no longer the specific Russian backwardness that troubled Trotsky most, but the whole idea of a 'national socialism' as such. Thus he returned to the old internationalist standpoint on the socialist economy of Marx and Engels, which he had defended against Lenin in 1915. In 1929 he published *The Communist International after Lenin* and *The Permanent Revolution*. Here he argued that "Marxism takes its point of departure from world economy." Furthermore, "the productive forces of capitalist society have long ago outgrown the national boundaries." Therefore "to aim at building a *nationally isolated* socialist society means [. . .] to pull the productive forces backward even as compared with capitalism." It meant "to pursue a reactionary utopia."⁷¹ What is more, to Trotsky, a national socialism was not only an obscurantist project, he now knew that it *was no socialism*. He wrote for instance:

the epoch of real socialist construction can begin only after the victory of the proletariat in at least several advanced countries [. . .] the working class of the advanced countries [. . .] will take us in tow, in order to drag us into a genuine socialist construction on the basis of the highest world technology and the international division of labour. [. . .] The impossibility of the construction of an isolated socialist society [. . .] is determined for various countries to a different degree, by the insufficient development of some branches, and by the 'extraordinary' development of others. Generally speaking, this means that the modern productive forces are incompatible with national frameworks [. . .] we enter onto the road of a *genuine* socialist construction only after the proletariat of the most advanced countries has taken power.⁷²

Now this was no longer any variety of Lenin's thesis of 'incomplete socialism', to which Trotsky himself had come near in the early 1920s. He now claimed that prior to the victory of the European revolution not even a *beginning* could be made with any "genuine" or "real" socialism. Of course, Trotsky believed as much as Stalin or Bukharin in strengthening the state industry and collective agriculture. But in contrast to them he apparently thought that, in an isolated country this would only result in a sort of etatism that was not truly socialist. His argument was that 'national socialism' would be based on nationally confined productive forces. And in the era of the modern, internationalist economy such productive forces were by definition backward and weakly developed. And that round-

ed off the argument: such a system could never be called socialism, because in Trotsky's concept of 'communist' socialism highly developed forces of production were part of its very definition. In sum, while Trotsky did not predict the restoration of capitalism, he did predict the 'restoration' of a non-socialist system. What we have here was, therefore, a new variety of the old 'theory of restoration'. But then all this was in the last instance only *Spielerei*, because Trotsky did not believe that even such a sham 'national socialism' was a viable project. In *The Permanent Revolution* he finally repeated the complete thesis of restoration in its pure form:

In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries.⁷³

CONCLUSIONS

Before formulating my final conclusions I should discuss two alternative interpretations of the debate offered in the course of the years. In his *Leon Trotsky and the Politics of Economic Isolation* Richard Day argued that Trotsky did recognise the possibility of constructing a socialist society in one country. His difference with Stalin was that while Stalin favoured a policy of economic autarky, Trotsky wanted to build Russian socialism on the basis of a policy of integration in the capitalist world market. I find Day's argument that from 1925 onwards Trotsky favoured an integrationist economic policy convincing.⁷⁴ However his conclusion that "Stalin and Trotsky were at odds not over the question of *whether* socialism could be built in Russia, but over the far more important matter of *how* the task should be conceived," seems unsubstantiated to me.⁷⁵ The two men indeed differed over the wisdom of an integrationist or an autarkic policy. But they *also* differed when it came to the question of ultimate perspectives – whatever policy line was chosen. Trotsky believed that if the world revolution failed to break out, even with his integrationist policy the USSR would in the end most likely collapse, or the whole project would finally result in a socio-economic system that could not be called genuine socialism.⁷⁶ Day's work is representative of

a trend to deny that Trotsky really believed the socialist project in Russia to be hopeless in the case of prolonged isolation. But he did.

Another, much more recent, 'revisionist' interpretation is the one provided by Anthony D'Agostino. This author has argued that "we abandon entirely the Stalin-Trotsky struggle or the antagonism between Permanent Revolution and Socialism in One Country as presumed keys to understanding the events of the 1920s." His thesis is multi-layered, but the relevant parts in the present context are made up by the thesis that Stalin and Bukharin's "socialism in one country" was "ostensibly" aimed at Trotsky but actually more targeted against Zinov'ev. And conversely, Trotsky was not a consistent opponent of "socialism in one country." The "closest thing to a consistent opponent" of this theory was rather Zinov'ev.⁷⁷ This analysis has some semblance of accuracy if we concentrate our attention on the year 1925 only: Zinov'ev was then the first to attack 'socialism in one country' openly, while Trotsky was silent. But as soon as we abandon this limited time perspective, D'Agostino's 'revisionism' falls to pieces. The extremes in the debate were taken by Stalin's belief in 'complete socialism' and Trotsky's thesis of inevitable restoration, while Zinov'ev took shelter in the middle with an uneasy thesis of 'incomplete socialism'. It remains precisely the Stalin-Trotsky contrast which provides the best analytical framework of the debate.

To sum up my conclusions. Classical Marxism knew not one, but two points of view on a socialist economy. Marx and Engels believed such a project in one country to be inherently impossible, but Karl Kautsky thought otherwise. Trotsky and Lenin belonged to these two schools of thought respectively. Their disagreements stemmed from before 1917, when the latter believed 'socialism in one country' to be an economically viable project, although it would be incomplete, while the former denied this option altogether. But the two men agreed that in a backward country like Russia socialism in isolation was doomed to collapse and capitalist restoration was inevitable. Until the summer of 1918 Lenin continued to believe that isolated bolshevism would suffer inevitable defeat due to military intervention. But from 1917 he had begun to apply his general concept of 'incomplete socialism' in one country also to Russia. This perspective dominated his thinking after the summer of 1918. The danger of military defeat still existed, but the Russian bolsheviks

could build a socialist society with their own efforts. It would only necessarily be an unfinished project. This was in fact the first variety of 'socialism in one country'. By 1923 Lenin was even contemplating the possibility that in backward Russia a 'complete socialist society' could be built. Looking at the debate in 1924–26 a striking conclusion should be that Stalin, Zinov'ev, Trotsky and Bukharin all falsified Lenin in essentially the same way, namely by presenting his views as monolithic and unalterable and denying the intense development it had gone through.

Stalin and Bukharin's 1925 theory that a complete socialist society in one country was a viable project indeed signified a momentous change in bolshevik doctrine, but it was Lenin and not they who had prepared this change. What these two men did was merely to formalise it into a fixed formula. As to their opponents, in 1925 and 1926 Zinov'ev more or less stuck to the view Lenin had held between 1918 and 1922, namely that socialism in one country was possible, but it would be an unfinished project. He was in fact rather faithful to Lenin, although he had failed to take note of the latter's last utterances and couldn't resist flirting with the old theses of restoration. But taking a broad view, the standpoints of Kamenev, Zinov'ev, Bukharin and Stalin, i.e. of the 'old bolsheviks', were all only minor variations on the Leninist theme. They all believed in 'socialism in one country', as Lenin had, only some believed socialism could be constructed 'completely' and others believed that completion would have to wait for the world revolution.

The fundamental line of division in the debate lay not where the standard analysis puts it: between the camp of Stalin and Bukharin on the hand, and that of the dead Lenin, Trotsky and Zinov'ev on the other. And it also lay not where Stalin put it: between himself, Bukharin and Lenin on the one hand and Trotsky and Zinov'ev on the other. The real, fundamental line in the debate lay between the whole group of 'old bolsheviks': Stalin, Bukharin, Zinov'ev, Kamenev and their dead master Lenin on the one hand, and the former non-bolshevik Trotsky on the other. Trotsky, who in the early 1920s had come close to the perspective of 'incomplete socialism' in one country, was by 1926 fast returning to the old 'restoration' thesis, and by 1929 he had arrived there. He believed that in the case of long term isolation collapse of the bolshevik regime was almost certain,

and that, though capitalist restoration was not fatally inevitable, socialism as an economic system was inherently impossible in one country. Trotsky was the only one of the major participants in the debate who really opposed 'socialism in one country.' He was the only one faithful to Marx and Engels. All the others followed, to varying degrees, the lead of the Kautskyan V.I. Lenin.

NOTES

Leszek Kolakowski: *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 2, *The Golden Age*, Oxford University Press, Oxford etc., 1981, pp. 476–77; vol. 3, pp. 22–24.

² Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary 1879–1929*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York-London, 1974, pp. 370, 380–82, 384.

³ Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vol. 2, *Worlds in Collision*, MacMillan, Houndmills etc., 1991, p. 209; vol. 3, *The Iron Ring*, 1995, pp. 197, 201.

⁴ Service, *Worlds in Collision*, p. 296.

⁵ V.I., Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij. Izdanie pjatoe*, vol. 33, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, Moscow, pp. 86, 92–95 [PSS].

⁶ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1965–74, vol. 3, p. 35 [MEW].

⁷ Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 374–75.

⁸ cit. in: Hal Draper, *Karl Marx' Theory of Revolution*, vol. 2, *The Politics of Social Classes*, Monthly Review Press, New York-London, 1978, pp. 244–45.

⁹ cit. in: Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Late Marx and the Russian Road. Marx and "the peripheries of capitalism"*, Routledge & Kegan, London-Melbourne-Henley, 1983, pp. 102, 139.

¹⁰ MEW, vol. 22, pp. 427–28, 435.

¹¹ L. Trotskij, *Kommunisticheskij Internatsional posle Leninia. Velikij organizator porazhenij* [The Communist International after Lenin. The great organiser of defeats], Spartakovets-Printima, Moscow, 1993, p. 96; see also: Baruch Knei-Paz, *The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979, p. 339.

¹² Karl Kautsky, *Das Erfurter Programm in seinem grundsätzlichen Teil erläutert*, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. GMBH, Berlin-Bad-Godesberg, 1974, pp. 115–16.

¹³ PSS, vol. 11, p. 222.

¹⁴ Ibid., vol. 13, p. 17.

¹⁵ Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1978, pp. 80, 104–05, 115.

¹⁶ PSS, vol. 26, pp. 353–55.

¹⁷ Ibid. vol. 30, p. 133.

¹⁸ I did not have the original article available. These quotations are from: Trotskij, *Kommunisticheskij Internatsional*, p. 116; I.V. Stalin, *Sochinenija*, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, Moscow, 1946–51, vol. 6, pp. 373–74 [Sochinenija].

¹⁹ See: XV konferentsija vsesojuznoj kommunisticheskoy partii (b). 26 oktjabr' – 3

nojabr' 1926 g. Stenograficheskij otchet, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, pp. 474f; *Sochinenija*, vol. 8, pp. 316f.

²⁰ Trotskij, *Kommunisticheskij Internatsional*, pp. 82–83.

²¹ *PSS*, vol. 31, pp. 91–93.

²² See passages in his April Theses (*PSS*, vol. 31, pp. 114–16) and in his “Letters on tactic” (*Ibid.* pp. 133f).

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

²⁴ *Sed'maia (aprel'skaja) vserossijskaia konferentsija RSDRP (bol'shevikov). Petrogradskaja obshchegorodskaja konferentsija RSDRP (bol'shevikov). April' 1917 goda. Protokoly*, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1958, pp. 76, 107, 112, 235–36.

²⁵ On 24 June Lenin compared 20th century Russia and 18th century France as to their chances of turning socialist. He saw two differences. First, France had been surrounded by “too backward countries,” and second, in France “the material conditions for socialism” had been lacking, while in Russia “the material foundations for the movement towards socialism” were now available. (*PSS*, vol. 32, p. 374). It is interesting to compare this with a similar comparison Lenin made in 1906, which sounded almost identical, except that the remarks concerning the “material” conditions for socialism in France and Russia were lacking. (vol. 13, pp. 17–18).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 31, p. 303.

²⁷ *Sed'moj ekstremnyj s'ezd RKP(b). Mart 1918 goda. Stenograficheskij otchet*, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1962, p. 16.

²⁸ *PSS*, vol. 36, p. 291.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 38, p. 139.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 36.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

³² For a list of such quotes running from January 1918 to February 1922 see: *PSS*, vol. 35, pp. 245, 277; vol. 36, pp. 234, 529; vol. 37, p. 153; vol. 38, p. 42; vol. 40, p. 169; vol. 42, p. 311; vol. 43, p. 58; vol. 44, pp. 417–18.

³³ *Ibid.*, vol. 36, p. 109.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 37, p. 153.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 36, p. 382.

³⁶ *Vos'moj s'ezd RKP(b). Mart 1919 goda. Protokoly*, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1959, p. 354.

³⁷ *PSS*, vol. 43, pp. 228–29.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 45, p. 309.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 370, 375.

⁴⁰ See for Stalin and Bukharin's remarks: *Shestoj s'ezd RSDRP (bol'shevikov). Avgust 1917 goda. Protokoly*, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1958, pp. 14, 103–05, 111–12, 114.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 142–43.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 250, 257.

⁴⁴ Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary*, p. 175.

⁴⁵ *Sochinenija*, vol. 4, pp. 374–76, 378, 380.

⁴⁶ See: *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 61.

⁴⁷ N. Bucharin, E. Preobraschensky, *Das ABC des Kommunismus*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Hamburg, 1921, pp. 153–54.

- ⁴⁸ See: Stiven Koen, *Bukharin. Politicheskaja biografija 1888–1938*, Progress, Moscow, 1988, pp. 181–82.
- ⁴⁹ G.L. Smirnov et al. (eds.), *N.I. Bukharin. Izbrannye proizvedenija*, Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1988, p. 78.
- ⁵⁰ Koen, *Bukharin*, p. 182.
- ⁵¹ L. Trotsky, 1905, Librairie de l'Humanité, Paris, 1923, p. 4; see also: *Sochinenija*, vol. 6, pp. 366–67.
- ⁵² cit. in: *Sochinenija*, vol. 6, p. 376.
- ⁵³ L.D. Trotskij, *Uroki oktjabria (s prilozheniem kriticheskikh materialov 1924 goda)* [The Lessons of October (with an appendix of critical writings of 1924)], Leninizdat, Leningrad, 1991, p. 232.
- ⁵⁴ Smirnov et al., *N.I. Bukharin*, p. 88.
- ⁵⁵ See: Edward Hallett Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, vol. 2, MacMillan & Co Ltd., London, 1959, p. 40; *Sochinenija*, vol. 6, pp. 401, 416.
- ⁵⁶ *Sochinenija*, vol. 6, pp. 366–67, 371–74, 376.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 370, 374.
- ⁵⁸ *XIV S"ezd kommunisticheskoi partii (b). 18–31 dekabnja 1925g. Stenograficheskij otchet*, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, p. 136.
- ⁵⁹ *Kommunisticheskaja partija sovet'skogo sojuza v rezoljutsijakh i reshenijakh s"ezdov, konferentsij i plenimov TsK*, vol. 3, 1924–1927, Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1970, p. 213.
- ⁶⁰ *Sochinenija*, vol. 7, pp. 110–12, 118.
- ⁶¹ Stalin's classical summary, which added nothing to the May 1925 one, was that of January 1926 in "Concerning the Questions of Leninism" (Ibid., vol. 8, pp. 60–75).
- ⁶² N. Bukharin, *Tekushchij moment i osnovy nashej politiki. O reshenijakh TsK RKP(b) i XIV partikonferentsii. Doklad na plenum MK RKP(b)* [The present moment and the foundations of our policy], Moskovskij rabochij, Moscow, 1925: see especially pp. 9–11; see also for his summaries of socialism in one country, his December 1925 "Put' k sotsializmu i raboche-krest'ianskij soiuz" [The road to socialism and the worker-peasant union], in: Smirnov et al., *N.I. Bukharin*, pp. 146–230. And his October 1926 "O kharaktere revoliutsii i o vozmozhnosti pobedonosnogo sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva v SSSR" [On the character of the revolution and on the possibility of victorious socialist construction in the USSR], in: Ibid., pp. 277–314. See also: Koen, *Bukharin*, p. 224.
- ⁶³ *XV konferentsija vsesojuznoj*, pp. 512–13, 515.
- ⁶⁴ *Sochinenija*, vol. 8, p. 275.
- ⁶⁵ G. Zinoviev, *Le Léninisme. Introduction a l'étude du Léninisme*, Bureau d'édition, de diffusion et de publicité, Paris, 1926, pp. 248, 271, 275–76; see also, pp. 286–87.
- ⁶⁶ *XIV S"ezd vsesojuznoj*, pp. 98, 429–30.
- ⁶⁷ *XV konferentsija vsesojuznoj*, pp. 469–72.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 570–71, 576.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 531–33.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 526.
- ⁷¹ Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, p. 146.
- ⁷² Trotskij, *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, pp. 104–08, 113.
- ⁷³ Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, p. 133; see also: p. 129.

⁷⁴ Richard B. Day, *Leon Trotsky and the politics of economic isolation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973, pp. 97f.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 136.

⁷⁶ See for a similar critique of Day's thesis: Knei-Paz, *The Social and Political Thought*, p. 333n.

⁷⁷ Anthony D'Agostino, *Soviet Succession Struggles. Kremlinology and the Russian Question from Lenin to Gorbachev*, Allen & Unwin, London-Sydney-Wellington, 1988, pp. 4, Chapter 5.

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