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'Lenin's Last Struggle' Revisited

ERIK VAN REE

This article argues that 'Lenin's last struggle' against Stalin did not aim at the preservation of such democratic elements as remained in Soviet Russia, even in relative terms, but at the opposite goal of strengthening political centralism. In the last months of his active life the leader was driven by a new leftist radicalism and by hopes of acceleration of the construction of socialism. Concretely, his proposals aimed at strengthening state control over industry and trade, at increased control over the peasantry and at the liquidation of the last remaining elements of democracy in the party. In his first reaction to Stalin's August 1922 proposals for the new structure of the multinational state, Lenin was in fact more centralistic than Stalin. Moshe Lewin's old thesis on 'Lenin's last struggle' was not only an exaggeration. All in all, the leader's last proposals probably did more to prepare the later Stalinism than to hamper it.

Moshe Lewin's book *Lenin's Last Struggle* has been among the most influential studies of Soviet history.¹ It paints a picture of a tragic leader who, in the last period of his life, heroically but unsuccessfully attempted to undo the results of his own work. Motivated by authentic socialist idealism, Lenin had hoped to construct a dynamic revolutionary dictatorship. However, the strategy of centralistic modernisation in a backward country made the degeneration of the system into an oppressive state bureaucracy hard to avoid. Lenin's hopes for a return of moral health to the governmental machinery which he created foundered upon the sabotage of the *apparatchiki*, of whom Joseph Stalin was the main representative. The ailing leader was particularly unsuccessful in defending Georgian national rights against Stalin's Muscovite bureaucracy. Lenin recognised only when it was too late that his ban on factions stifled democratic debate in the party. At the eleventh hour he attempted to unseat the General Secretary, but his own incapacitation made his hopes to this effect

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futile. As a result of Lenin's unfortunate failure, the Soviet Union descended quickly into Stalinism.

The underlying concept of Lewin's analysis, and the standard he implicitly uses to measure the activities of his protagonists, is that of the honest revolutionary dictatorship. It is a kind of socialist enlightened despotism – not democratic to be sure, but well-meaning and, perhaps, historically inevitable. According to Lewin, such an honest dictatorship did in fact come about in Soviet Russia in October 1917. His book is, then, an analysis of how it degenerated and how Lenin's attempt to revive it failed.

Since the 1980s sympathies for socialist dictatorships of whatever kind have markedly decreased. It is of little use to polemicise now against the naive Leninism in Lewin's book, which is obviously outdated. However, though the ideal of the revolutionary dictatorship is obsolete, the general notion that revolutions tend in the beginning to be guided by idealism and subsequently degenerate into power politics and cynicism is still with us. It is an archetypical model for understanding what happens to countries after a revolutionary take-over. The model is grounded in a general notion, which is also for example applied to religions; namely that the founders of great ideological systems – whether they be Jesus Christ, Mohammed or Karl Marx – are typically purer and less self-serving than those who come after them. People tend to spoil the good intentions of the great souls who originally inspired them. This notion need not take the shape of a formulated theory. It is more a widespread and almost self-evident belief.

As we will presently see, many of Lewin's concrete assessments of 'Lenin's last struggle' have by now been challenged. Nevertheless his basic thesis of Lenin who at the very end came to his senses and attempted to stop the fatal process of Russia's Stalinisation is routinely repeated in numerous history handbooks. And the reason is precisely that the thesis corresponds perfectly with the general prejudice that founders are of higher moral standing than successors. One is reluctant to abandon a model which corresponds elegantly to one's expectations of how revolutions originate and degenerate. The analysis acquires an additional semblance of historical accuracy because of the fact that in due course Stalin indeed became responsible for even more violent outrages than Lenin had committed. Finally, Lewin's analysis has a certain dramatic quality. The pictures of an unusually wilful man reduced to an impotent wreck by a consuming illness – and with his last breath struggling against injustices which he

now realised his own naivety helped bring about – is gripping. It is the stuff of tragedy.

But, as I said, many of Lewin's assessments have by now been challenged. It appears from the archival documents collected by Richard Pipes in *The Unknown Lenin*, that before the winter of 1922–23 Lenin's relations with Stalin remained cordial. In contrast, Lenin and Trotskii took conflicting positions on questions of bureaucracy. The former was annoyed by the latter's proposal to keep the party from interfering in the state apparatus. And Trotskii refused to be a part of Lenin's plan to have a team of deputy prime ministers combat state bureaucracy.² Pipes further notes that the troika of Stalin, Zinov'ev and Kamenev, formed after Lenin's May 1922 stroke, was in constant communication with the leader. The four men operated jointly against Trotskii.³

Robert Service also notes that since the trade-union debate Trotskii had been highly suspect to Lenin. In 1922 they were still in conflict over how to combat bureaucracy in the state. Whereas Lenin hoped to use the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, Rabkrin, Trotskii wanted to elevate the State Planning Commission, Gosplan, to increase planning efficiency. Only late in 1922 was a Trotskii–Lenin alliance formed. But even then the conflict between Lenin and Stalin did not affect the fundamentals of the regime's principles. According to Service, Lenin's plan for agricultural co-operatives and for the reorganisation of the party and state apparatus contained little that was really new. He also makes the observation that Lenin's 1922 speeches and writings do not testify to a switch to unconditional evolutionism. 'Quite the contrary' – they demanded increased state economic intervention and repression of dissidents.⁴ Service concludes that Lenin was not advocating a massive reform of the Soviet political system. The foundations of his thought remained in place.⁵ Jeremy Smith's important study of the national question from 1917 to 1923 shows that the differences between Lenin and Stalin on the structure of the multinational Soviet state in August–September 1922 were minor. Lenin was more concerned with the formal wording of proposals than with matters of substance.⁶

In the light of these studies the thesis of a Lenin–Trotskii bloc against Stalinist bureaucracy has become highly questionable. Furthermore, the idea of Lenin as a proto-Bukharinist is now harder to defend. I should add that Lewin's model always contained an odd element with the question of the state monopoly of foreign trade. In this debate Lenin was the centraliser. In my opinion, the model

preserves a limited value when treating the national question. But Smith's work proves that even on this point it should be seriously reconsidered.

Altogether, the idea of Lenin's last desperate struggle against Stalinism has by now been undermined to such a degree that it is time to make a comprehensive reassessment. In the present article, which is exclusively based on published material and makes no claim to a presentation of new facts, I will present an alternative model for understanding the final conflict between Lenin and Stalin. In my opinion, to read opposition against Stalinism into Lenin's last writings represents a distortion of the historical record, a retrospective projection of later developments. In important respects the Lenin of 1922–23 foreshadowed the later 'Stalinism' even more than its author did in those days. Speaking in terms of general models of ideological development and revolution, the idea of the founder as a fanatic and his successors as pragmatists is the more appropriate one to make sense of what happened in that fateful winter.

THE PROBLEM OF BUREAUCRACY

Lenin received his political education in the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party, which was a member of the Second International. Before the Great War he considered himself an 'orthodox Marxist' of the school of Karl Kautsky. This is the context in which to understand his treatment of the problem of bureaucracy. In Karl Marx's original conception, after its take-over the triumphant proletariat should destroy the bureaucratic state machinery and fully absorb the executive branch of the state into the democratic legislature. However, Kautsky soon concluded that direct democracy was unrealisable in a complex modern society, let alone in a socialist one with economic planning. The state could not do without an extensive professional bureaucracy. In his 1917 *State and Revolution* Lenin returned to Marx's utopian concept. But even before the October Revolution he partly retreated to a Kautskyan thesis when he announced that the existing apparatus of the banks and syndicates should *not* be destroyed but merely subjected to the Soviets.⁷ After the revolution Lenin and Trotskii did not hesitate to enlist tsarist specialists, in the army as well as in the state and economic apparatus. As Lenin later admitted, the old state apparatus was to a considerable degree preserved.

But after the Civil War the Bolshevik leader had second thoughts. During the debate on the trade-union question he reproached Trotskii

with not acknowledging that the workers' state suffered from a 'bureaucratic distortion'.⁸ During the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 Lenin pointed to Rabkrin as the apparatus with the aid of which the state bureaucracy might be overcome.⁹ Shortly before the congress Trotskii had resisted the demand of the party faction of Rabkrin to strengthen this institution. In response the Inspectorate accused him of disdain for its tasks.¹⁰ Lenin's reference to Rabkrin, of which Stalin was the people's commissar, as the instrument to take the state in hand expressed his new alliance with Stalin against Trotskii. Recently an incomplete summary of remarks made by Lenin at a factional conference during the congress was published. It sheds further light on his understanding of the problem of bureaucracy.

Well, try to stop Trotsky. How many divisions does one have to send against him? The organisation [*apparat*] is bad. Everyone hates the *glavki* [state organs responsible for administering the various branches of industry, E.v.R.]. But no one agrees to disperse them ... We will come to terms with Trotsky. The apparatus is for politics, not politics for the apparatus. ... But Trotsky is a temperamental man with military experience. He is in love with the organization, but as for politics, he hasn't got a clue.¹¹

Despite the incomplete notation the general drift comes across clearly. Lenin identified Trotskii with the apparatus of the state, the *glavki*, which he now considered bad and which should perhaps be dispersed. In contrast he identified himself with 'politics', which stood for the institution that would have to do the cleaning up of the state. Lenin did not explicitly refer to a particular institution. But he must mainly have had the communist party in mind. That was after all the highest embodiment of politics. His point was, then, to reaffirm political, communist control over the state apparatus, for which he hoped to use the commissariat specifically designed for purging the state, Rabkrin, as the main instrument. This was the general framework within which he treated the question of bureaucracy.

During 1921 and 1922 Lenin came more and more to identify the administrative apparatus which the Soviet state had inherited as an oversized heap of inefficient bunglers. He concluded pessimistically that, due to the predominance of small production, Russia was culturally too backward and economically too fragmented a society to produce the efficient bureaucracy he dreamed of.¹² Lenin's disappointment in the state officials caused a sharp break with Trotskii,

who continued to defend the specialists and to resist intervention from above into the dealings of the apparatus. Trotskii became for Lenin the bureaucrat *par excellence*. However, it soon appeared that Lenin and Stalin did not completely see eye to eye either. In September 1921 the former criticised Rabkrin for concentrating on catching individual perpetrators in the apparatuses it checked up on. To catch crooks was the task of the courts. Rabkrin's job was to produce structural changes in the functioning of the state institutions under its control.¹³

In the light of earlier remarks by Stalin, Rabkrin's mode of operation is not surprising. In October 1920 he told a group of officials of that commissariat that 'at the time of the liquidation of the old apparatuses of state administration bureaucratism was broken, but bureaucrats remained'. The old officials feigned Soviet loyalty and introduced 'bourgeois habits'. In Stalin's opinion the fundamental task of the Inspectorate was to educate new state cadres from among the popular masses.¹⁴ In Stalin's conception, the structure of the executive branch of the state could remain as it had been under the old regime. Only new personnel should be brought in and unreliable officials weeded out. Meanwhile, Lenin became ever more impatient with the state apparatus. In an illuminating letter of February 1922 he wrote:

We inherited the worst from tsarist Russia, bureaucratism and *oblomovshchina* ... one would have to judge every member of the collegium of the [People's Commissariat of Justice ... according to the following questions:] how many bureaucrats did you put in prison for bureaucratism and red tape? How many merchants were executed on your orders for taking advantage of *NEP* ... You can't answer that question? That means that you are a good-for-nothing, who should be chased from the party for 'communist chattering' and '*komchvantsvo* [communist arrogance]'.¹⁵

At the Eleventh Party Congress in March–April 1922 Lenin repeated his worries about the 'miserable, insignificant' level of Russia's administrative culture and the horrible 'stupidity and disorder' that was the result of it. The whole state system was simply not functioning. He interpreted this again as effective state disobedience to the party's orders. The state apparatus had acquired a life and autonomy of its own:

the layer of communists that rules is lacking in culture [*kul'turnost'*]. But if we take Moscow – 4700 responsible

communists – and we take this bureaucratic, bulky heap. Who leads whom? I doubt very much that one could say that the communists lead this heap. In truth, not the former but the latter are leading.

At the congress he also defended Stalin against critique as a man of authority, uniquely capable of leading the nationalities' commissariat and a 'gigantic thing' like the verification of state work by Rabkrin.¹⁶ In March 1922 he proposed to Stalin that henceforth the vice-chairmen of the Council of People's Commissars had to concentrate their attention on 'verifying implementation' of the party decisions and the selection of people in the state apparatus. Rabkrin had to provide them with a team of reliable assistants to carry out this job. Rabkrin's own apparatus had to be reinforced with new workers and peasants.¹⁷ But that same month Trotskii wrote a memorandum to the Politbureau in which he noted that 'without freeing the party as a party from the functions of direct administration and management, it is impossible to cleanse the party of bureaucratism and the economy of indiscipline. This is the fundamental question.'

Direct party control over state institutions expressed a lack of 'respect for specialized knowledge'. Trotskii opposed interference in the economy by the Central Committee. The party should govern only indirectly. Thus while for Lenin bureaucracy meant the inability of the communists to take the apparatus in hand, for Trotskii it meant the *opposite* – excess of communist meddling. Not surprisingly Lenin's comment on the memorandum was: '*Into the Archive*'.¹⁸ In April Lenin decided that henceforth the main job of his deputy prime ministers Tsiurupa and Rykov would be to verify the implementation of decisions taken, to reduce state personnel and to fight 'bureaucratism'. Rabkrin would serve as their main apparatus.¹⁹ Trotskii immediately reacted that the plan to pull up the Soviet apparatus through Rabkrin was 'make-believe'. He pleaded for upgrading the specialist State Planning Commission rather than have the state controlled from above by a 'special department which peeps in from time to time'.²⁰ On 5 May Lenin retorted again that Trotskii's remarks partly renewed their old differences of opinion. Rabkrin was essential to the struggle against bureaucracy. Gosplan suffered from too much 'academism'.²¹

Thus the lines were clearly drawn. Trotskii continued the policy of relative autonomy for the state apparatus, and of banking on the professional specialists. He wanted to upgrade and liberate the state machinery, especially Gosplan. Lenin on the other hand hoped to

reduce and overhaul that state apparatus from above, and make it a more pliant instrument of the party. This operation would be carried out by the deputy prime ministers with Rabkrin placed at their disposal.

Soon Stalin became less directly involved in all this. In April 1922 the Central Committee elected him General Secretary of the party, whereupon he was relieved of his post as Rabkrin commissar. Thereby he was no longer directly responsible for the struggle against bureaucracy in the state. In late May Lenin had his first stroke, to return to work only in early October. But he remained upset by the fact that Rabkrin failed to carry out its real job. In August he wrote a letter to the leaders of the commissariat, complaining that it was still working along the lines of '*inspections*' of state organs instead of really going to business. There was no change for the better in the state apparatus: 'There are no exemplary apparatuses, consisting fully of communists'.²² The stubbornly immobile Rabkrin became part of the problem rather than of the solution. In September Lenin proposed to upgrade the collective of deputy prime ministers by adding Kamenev and Trotskii, whom Lenin apparently hoped to win over for his struggle against the state bureaucracy. Stalin supported the proposal, but Trotskii refused categorically to accept the position.²³

For his part Lenin continued to see the question of bureaucracy in terms of the state as the problem and the party as the solution. In November 1922 he noted that at the top the apparatus functioned more or less properly, because at that level there were several tens of thousands of 'our own people. But at the bottom – hundreds of thousands of old officials, taken over from the Tsar and from bourgeois society, working ... against us'. After the October Revolution the old apparatus had remained in place, the leader noted with regret – though at the time that had been his own policy. In any case, the main thing now was to distribute the available communists properly. They should take control of the state apparatus instead of the other way around.²⁴

Trotskii did not change his mind either. On 13 December he wrote a letter to Lenin, Stalin and others declaring himself in favour of putting the state apparatus on the different footing of a centralised system of accounting. He called Rabkrin 'the most absolute and total rubbish'.²⁵ Soon after Lenin's death Trotskii said in private that at the time Lenin proposed to create a new troika with him and Stalin, to change the party leadership.²⁶ In his autobiography Trotskii wrote that Lenin hoped to enlist him in his fight against bureaucracy. For that

purpose he repeated his proposal that he should become a deputy prime minister. Trotskii might effect a radical reshuffle of personnel. However, the latter had replied that he was concerned

not only with the state bureaucracy but also with that of the party; that the essence of all difficulties lies in the unification of the two apparatuses and in the mutual covering of the influential groups, which gather around the party secretaries. ... Lenin put the direct question: 'So you propose to open the struggle not only against the state bureaucracy, but also against the Orgbureau of the Central Committee?' ... 'Well', Lenin continued ... , 'I propose to you a bloc: against bureaucracy in general and against the Orgbureau in particular.'²⁷

Thus Trotskii had reaffirmed that for him 'bureaucracy' meant the overlapping of party and state. A struggle against bureaucracy would, then, have to aim for a reduction of party control over the state. The question is whether Lenin was indeed won over to this point of view. In a January 1923 letter to the Politbureau Trotskii recalled the same conversation. But in this letter the bloc does not appear. Trotskii wrote that he had once again rejected Lenin's proposal to become deputy prime minister, because he did not believe in the value of a collegium of deputies. Instead he had criticised the leading party organs for interfering too frequently in the work of the military and economic departments. Lenin had replied that he did not want to force the post on him. They did agree however that the 'directing apparatus and selection of officials' was extremely bad, and that a party commission might be formed to look into this matter, and in which Trotskii might take a seat.²⁸ That was all there was to it.

Lewin assumes that in the conversation Lenin did adopt Trotskii's conception of bureaucracy as mainly based on the party. The two men concluded a 'pact against bureaucracy'.²⁹ Lenin's last writings of late December 1922 and early 1923 allegedly testify to this. In some respects Lenin indeed returned to Trotskii's policy of banking on the bourgeois specialists. He admitted that the latter had been right in his assessment of Gosplan as a competent organisation. It should be included in the legislative process. A presidium consisting of communists should prevent the institution's inevitable contamination with bourgeois views and prejudices.³⁰ Stalin did not make a similar turn. In early January he wrote a critical letter against Trotskii's proposals. Not Gosplan but the collegium of deputy chairmen of the Council of People's Commissars – Trotskii among them – should be the centre of

economic policy. The latter answered, once again, that he was against such a collegium and complained about interference by the Central Committee and the deputies in economic policy. Only the specialist Gosplan could provide *real* leadership.³¹

However, Lenin's Gosplan proposal was only a minor point in a broader plan. In his last writings the Bolshevik leader repeated that, except for Foreign Affairs, the state apparatus was a heritage of the old regime. There was need of a 'maximum purge of our apparatus, through its maximum reduction'. The solution he saw was to increase substantially the membership of the party's Central Committee and Central Control Commission with people from the working class and the peasantry. Rabkrin should be attached to the CCC and become its main instrument in purging the state apparatus. Lenin warned comrades not to deny the use and need of Rabkrin, an unmistakable reference to Trotskii. But Rabkrin could only trim the state apparatus providing it became an exemplary commissariat. Lenin acknowledged that it was presently the most horrible of all state institutions. It should first be reduced in size and staffed with the 'best party forces' and new proletarian cadres before anything good could be expected of it. The other source of new staff were the educated specialists. This combination should make for an apparatus at once tempered in the party spirit and highly qualified.³²

Lewin sees the *rapprochement* of Lenin and Trotskii embodied in the former's condemnation of Rabkrin as a 'hopeless affair'. This view he now shared with Trotskii, who had never believed in this commissariat to begin with. Furthermore he characterised Lenin's plan as a "'technocratic revolution" against a bureaucracy that he regarded as too primitive'.³³ Robert Service also interprets Lenin's criticism of the Inspectorate as indicating that he and Trotskii were drawing together. Hadn't the latter persistently derided Rabkrin?³⁴ However, this interpretation is hard to sustain. The difference between Lenin and Trotskii had never been that the former was content with the functioning of Rabkrin. As we have seen, he was constantly complaining that it functioned badly. The difference between him and Trotskii was that Lenin nevertheless hoped for Rabkrin's improvement and for its transformation into an effective purging machine. And that was exactly what he, again, proposed in his last writings.

It cannot be denied that there was some degree of *rapprochement* with Trotskii. Lenin's change of heart on Gosplan and his proposals to include administrative specialists in the new CCC-Rabkrin apparatus was in the 'technocratic' spirit of Trotskii, to speak in Lewin's words.

But in the main the last writings confirmed strikingly what Lenin had proposed earlier, namely that the state apparatus needed overhauling from above by Rabkrin, Trotskii's greatest nightmare. What is more, for the first time he proposed turning it into an assistant, not of the collegium of deputy prime minister, but of the party apparatus. He finally drew the logical conclusion from his own reasoning that the party bureaucracy should be strengthened instead of weakened and take the purge directly in hand. This was the opposite of everything Trotskii stood for. Characteristically in his notes Lenin called the latter a man attracted too much to the 'purely administrative side of matters'.³⁵ He still saw him as a state bureaucrat. Lenin's 'testament' does not testify to a 'bloc' with Trotskii against bureaucracy. In fact, it hardly testifies to a change of mind on the problem at all.

In February 1923 the Central Committee adopted theses for the coming Twelfth Party Congress, elaborated by a commission including Stalin. They contained a watered-down version of Lenin's plan, including an enlarged membership of the Central Committee and Control Commission and Rabkrin's incorporation into the CCC. At the plenum Trotskii made an alternative proposal, which, as was to be expected, did not include the Rabkrin element.³⁶ At the congress in April Stalin noted correctly that Lenin's recent plans were a further development of ideas he expressed at the previous congress. The reorganisation of the CCC and Rabkrin aimed to strengthen the leading role of the party apparatus over the state. Stalin subscribed to his leader's thesis that 'our apparatus is a fake'. The 'car' of state did not move where it had to. Nevertheless, he insisted that only 'parts of the car of state, i.e. some officials in the state apparatus, are bad, they are not our people'. The state apparatus was 'of a correct type, but parts of it are still alien, bureaucratic, half of it is tsarist-bourgeois'. In other words, though he confirmed that the state apparatus should be reduced in staff and simplified, Stalin obviously hoped to confine the purging activity of the new commission mainly to a replacement of personnel.³⁷

To sum up, the positions taken by Lenin, Trotskii and Stalin respectively can be rather sharply delimited. Trotskii's standpoint was most straightforward. Identifying bureaucracy with direct control of the state apparatus by the party, his programme was to reduce the party to an institution defining the general guidelines of state and economic policy uninvolved in their execution. He further attempted to cut off the tentacles with which the party reached out to the state apparatus, in particular the collegium of deputy prime ministers and

Rabkrin. Trotskii opposed Lenin's purging programme. Lenin stood at the opposite extreme of the political spectrum. He was horrified by the inefficiency of the state apparatus, and remembered his 1917 calls for a small state. But it was no longer the Soviets that he hoped to mobilise. His programme was to increase the power of the party over the state through an upgrading of the Central Committee bureaucracy. The plan included a purge of state personnel and a trimming of the size of the apparatus.

In comparison to Trotskii's, Lenin's programme represented an increasing intolerance of the 'rudiments of the old regime'. Lenin was preparing to victimise the old officials. Stalin's position was a centrist one, though closer to Lenin than to Trotskii. He went along with Lenin's general perspective of increasing party control over the state, and accepted Rabkrin as the apparatus to carry out the purge. But he wanted the purge to be confined to a change of personnel. As far as he was concerned the operation did not need to result in a reduction of the size of the apparatus. Stalin was less ambitious than Lenin – and remained closer to Trotskii – in the sense that he was more prepared to preserve the outlines of the old state machinery.

THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY

One important part of the thesis of 'Lenin's last struggle' is the plan of agricultural co-operativisation, as elaborated in his January 1923 'On Cooperation'. But before proceeding to a discussion of its significance we should first treat the general development of Lenin's economic thinking in 1922. Since late 1921 some leading Bolsheviks had been pressing for a loosening of the state monopoly on foreign trade.³⁸ Stalin was among them. In a *Pravda* article of December 1921 he expressed the hope that the Soviet economy would change from closed and self-sufficient into an exchange-oriented economy, carrying on trade with the world beyond. And he wanted the Central Union of Co-operative Societies to get access to foreign trade in some form.³⁹ In May 1922 an angry Lenin demanded to forbid officially all discussions on this matter.⁴⁰ Stalin's reaction was that he did not object to blocking steps towards a loosening of the monopoly at the present stage, but that such a loosening would be inevitable in the long run. The case was closed, however, when the Politbureau accepted Lenin's proposal shortly before his stroke.⁴¹

At the Eleventh Party Congress in March–April 1922 Lenin had said that the party had withdrawn far enough. It was time to take a stand

and regroup forces, apparently in preparation for a new offensive.⁴² His strong defence of the state monopoly of foreign trade was an example of a new intransigence in economic policy. Upon Lenin's return from Gorki in October the matter resurfaced. On 6 October the Central Committee accepted in the leader's absence theses implying a weakening of the monopoly. This upset Lenin severely, and he managed to let the Central Committee postpone the implementation of the decision for two months.⁴³ Stalin took the same position as in May. He wrote on 20 October:

Comrade Lenin's letter did not make me change my mind on the correctness of the decision of the CC plenum of 6/X on foreign trade. ... Nevertheless in view of the insistent proposal of comr. Lenin ... I vote *in favour* of postponing, so that the matter can be discussed again at the next plenum with the participation of comr. Lenin.⁴⁴

In December the matter was up for another Central Committee debate. Lenin asked Trotskii to join him in his defence of the monopoly. The two men reached an agreement. Trotskii also hoped to win over Lenin for his plan of extending Gosplan's administrative rights. But at this point the latter would not go along with that.⁴⁵ Lenin was especially worried about the position taken by Zinov'ev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Sokol'nikov. He tried to bring Stalin in on the co-operation with Trotskii.⁴⁶ On 15 December Stalin announced that he took back his objections against the monopoly. Three days later the Central Committee plenum with general assent revoked the 6 October decision.⁴⁷ However, obviously Trotskii, not the wavering Stalin, had been Lenin's most reliable ally in this conflict. On 21 December Lenin sent a letter to Trotskii with the proposal to 'continue the attack' in order to strengthen the monopoly even further. Krupskaja's passing on this letter threw Stalin into a fit of rage.⁴⁸

These events provide a further context in which to understand Lenin's later reappreciation of Gosplan. It did not only express his relative upgrading of specialist expertise in administration, but also his moving in the direction of economic centralisation. I believe that this is also the context in which to understand Lenin's co-operative plan. It did not express moderation, but a renewed turn to radicalism. According to Lewin, the legacy Lenin left behind in his last writings was that the party's aims should be 'more modest, more realistic and less ambitious'. This was embodied in his hopes for a 'cultural revolution', aimed to teach the peasants to read and write. The so-

called 'co-operative plan' was closely linked with this peaceful notion. Formerly Lenin saw trading co-operatives (according to Lewin he was not speaking about production co-operatives) as capitalist enterprises, but now he realised that they brought the peasants closer to socialism. Lenin called the co-operatives socialist, but what he really meant was only that they brought the peasants *nearer* to socialism. Socialism itself remained a matter of the 'distant future'.⁴⁹

Lewin's interpretation of the co-operative plan is still basically accepted as accurate. Robert Tucker's analysis of Lenin's 'reformist road to socialism' follows the same interpretation of it, as a call for gradualism.⁵⁰ The suggestive power of this analysis rests in part on its contrasting Lenin's proposals with Stalin's activities in 1929–30. But to understand their significance one should locate them in their own times. Then Lewin's analysis appears to be flawed. To begin with, there is the question of what kind of co-operatives Lenin was speaking of. He wrote in 'On Cooperation' that state power in the hands of the proletariat, in union with the peasantry, was a sufficient condition to build a complete socialist society from the co-operative.

In our system as it exists cooperative 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. ... We are now justified in saying that for us the simple growth of the cooperative is identical ... with the growth of socialism, and accordingly we must admit to a fundamental change of our whole point of view regarding socialism.⁵¹

Carr and Davies have pointed out that, though Lenin failed to draw the distinction between trading and producer co-operatives, and mainly talked about trading, the above formulation nevertheless suggests that Lenin thought also of producer co-operatives. There is no other way to interpret his reference to enterprises using 'means of production'.⁵² I should add that Lenin wanted the agricultural means of production to be in the hands of the *state*, not of the co-operatives. This foreshadowed the later MTS system, and, if interpreted strictly, it even suggested that all agricultural means of production should be nationalised.

Furthermore, Lewin's claim that Lenin called the co-operatives socialist only to express their serving as a means to mobilise the peasants *for socialism* ignores the logic in the latter's argument. The Bolshevik leader noted that co-operatives should be considered

socialist enterprises if and because they worked on land and used means of production owned by the proletarian state. There is no reason to assume that he did not mean this literally. After all, proletarian state ownership was also the reason for him to call industrial enterprises socialist. In 1921 Lenin still considered co-operatives, though a step forward, a 'variety of state capitalism' – capitalist enterprises controlled by the proletarian state.⁵³ He believed that outright nationalisation – state farms – were a precondition to speak of socialism in the countryside. But later he realised that there was no good reason not to consider peasant co-operatives, if under state control, as socialist in nature. That was the basic change in his concept of socialism.

And then we have the question of the time frame. Rather than postponing socialist ambitions further into a faraway future, in the last months of his active life Lenin concluded that, against his earlier more pessimistic expectations, socialism could be achieved in a relatively short span of time. In his speech to the Moscow Soviet in November 1922 he noted that 'socialism is no longer a question of the faraway future'. Socialism had become part of everyday life. The task to transform NEP Russia into socialist Russia would be carried out 'not tomorrow but within several years'.⁵⁴ In 'On Cooperation' he said that, to come from NEP to a situation of full co-operativisation, should take 'a complete historical epoch', which he estimated at one or two decades.⁵⁵ Thus he expected the process to be brought to a successful end around, approximately, 1938. Strikingly, this is the time it actually took Stalin to complete it.

There is no denying that Lenin urged for a careful approach to the peasants. The fundamental change in his concept of socialism also included the fact that, whereas formerly the 'centre of gravity' was found in 'political struggle, revolution, the conquest of power etc.', now it changed to 'peaceful organisational "cultural" work', with co-operativisation as its economic goal.⁵⁶ What Lenin had in mind at this time was certainly no campaign to force the peasants to enter co-operatives, but a sustained effort to convince them to do so. However, the most remarkable thing was that Lenin proposed a campaign of general co-operativisation *at all*. Even during the era of War Communism, nothing of the kind had been attempted. In 'On Cooperation' Lenin commented self-critically:

We exaggerated when we adopted NEP not in the sense that we gave too much space to the principle of free industry and trade;

but we did exaggerate when we adopted NEP, in the sense that we forgot to think of the co-operative, that we underestimate the co-operative ... we must begin to develop this 'co-operative' principle right now.⁵⁷

In my opinion this is the single most important passage in the article, which puts all others in perspective. In early 1923 there was no comprehensive movement for co-operativisation. Lenin proposed to organise it. The fact that he advised a careful approach is secondary to the fact that he advised beginning such a movement at all. Compared to Stalin's horrors of the winter of 1929–30 these were modest beginnings, but at the time Lenin's proposal represented a sharp turn to the left. It meant no less than that he proposed to begin, however 'cultural' and 'peaceful' in form, the process that would end in the dismantlement of peasant private property. Lenin's insistence on the state monopoly of foreign trade, his higher view of Gosplan and his proposals for co-operativisation added up to a new direction in Soviet economic policy of increasing state centralisation – with an eye to bringing about a breakthrough to socialism in a relatively short period.

GREAT-RUSSIAN CHAUVINISM

As noted above, Lewin's contrast between Stalin as Great-Russian chauvinist centraliser and Lenin as defender of the rights of minority nationalities has been undermined in the work of Jeremy Smith. However, to get the debate of 1922–23 in proper perspective some further comments are appropriate. In his book, as well as in an earlier article on the subject, Smith maintains that the March 1918 proposal for a Tatar-Bashkir Soviet Republic was the first concrete step towards national territorial autonomy. From there he follows in detail the establishment and development of various other autonomous republics in the Russian Socialist Federative Republic. During the Civil War and after there were also established nominally independent Socialist Republics – Ukraine, Belarus and Transcaucasia. As a result there arose two kinds of republics. Smith concludes that it then seemed natural that a system which appeared to be working in Russia – autonomy – should be extended to the other, nominally independent republics. In other words, Stalin's August 1922 proposal of 'autonomisation' was not so spectacular after all.

Smith further notes that 'the distinction between "autonomy" and "federation" had never been clearly described, as is reflected in the

1918 Constitution ... and in the title of the Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics, which in fact described a system of national autonomy'. As late as September 1922 the two terms were used interchangeably.⁵⁸ In my opinion this aspect of the matter should be further underlined, because it allows us to underscore the lack of originality of Stalin's August 1922 proposals even more.

In fact it was not a matter of the distinction between 'autonomy' and 'federation' never being clearly described. The distinction simply did not exist. The two concepts were used interchangeably because they were identical. In November 1917 the Council of People's Commissars issued a declaration mentioning the 'right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, including secession'.⁵⁹ This declaration was valid for *all* peoples of Russia. No distinction was made between nations having and those not having a right to secession. Correspondingly the various nations were supposed to be treated fundamentally in the same way as far as their state system was concerned. In December 1917 a Soviet government was formed in Kharkov. It went without saying that the new Ukraine was part of Russia. The local Congress of Soviets officially declared the Ukrainian republic 'a federative part of the Russian republic'.⁶⁰ Similarly, the Turkestan Soviet Republic, which claimed a right to govern itself autonomously, described itself as a republic 'of the Russian Soviet Federation'.⁶¹

In April 1918 Stalin, a member of the commission to draft a constitution for Soviet Russia, mentioned Ukraine, the Krim, Poland, Transcaucasia, Turkestan, the Middle Volga, the Kirgiz district, Finland and Siberia as possible national units of the 'Russian Federation'.⁶² In a draft of the text he spoke of 'autonomous regional units' uniting 'on the principles of federation into the Russian Socialist Republic'.⁶³ The July 1918 constitution of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic adopted this formula.⁶⁴ At the time the Bolsheviks had only one model. National republics were expected to become autonomous-federal *parts of* the RSFSR, and all of them had a paper right to secession. A significant point about the constitution was the absence of a separate Great-Russian republic. Only non-Russian republics could enter the RSFSR. The unacknowledged situation was, then, that instead of national republics joining up with Great Russia into a federal state, the respective republics *joined Great Russia* on a federal basis. Lenin often wielded the club of 'Great-Russian chauvinism' to attack those Bolsheviks who were too 'Russian' to his tastes. But his 1918 constitution was a fundamentally Great-Russian construction.

By the summer of 1918 all non-Russian Soviet republics, except

Turkestan, had been overrun by various White forces or German troops. But later that year and in early 1919 the Red Army occupied the Baltic states, Ukraine and White Russia. Moscow decided not to annex these countries as federal parts of the RSFSR but to establish 'independent' Soviet republics. This was done for diplomatic reasons, to avoid provoking the French and the British.⁶⁵ Hereby a situation was created not foreseen in the constitution.

However a process of re-unification was immediately set in motion. In April and May 1919 a fusion of strategic People's Commissariats of Russia and Ukraine was discussed and partly implemented. The idea was to restyle the RSFSR People's Commissars as 'Union [*soiuznye*] *Narkomy*', reducing the Ukrainian People's Commissars to their 'regional plenipotentiaries'. The goal of a 'fusion' of the two states was set. Moreover the Red Army units and railways of Ukraine, White Russia, Latvia and Lithuania were fused with those of the RSFSR.⁶⁶ In June the unification of the armies and the administration of the main economic branches of Russia, Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania, Latvia and the Crimea into 'unified collegia' was announced. The purpose of this operation was a 'military union' of the above-mentioned republics.⁶⁷ These plans diverged from the model of the RSFSR constitution. Moscow began to think of a federative 'union' of the RSFSR *with* other Soviet republics. By the summer of 1919 the new Soviet republics in the West collapsed under the combined force of Poland and the White generals.

In the East the constitutional approach remained in force. In October 1918 Soviet Turkestan adopted a constitution defining itself as the 'Autonomous Turkestan Republic of the Russian Socialist Soviet Federation' and as a 'member' of that federation.⁶⁸ The March 1919 agreement to establish a Bashkir autonomous republic of the RSFSR foresaw the transfer of Bashkir troops, railways, factories and mines to the RSFSR *Sovnarkom*, whereas the other sectors of Bashkiria fell under the autonomy.⁶⁹ The Bashkir republic was still-born. Kolchak's troops prevented its actual establishment. However, the fact remains that in the winter of 1918–19 Soviet national policy lost its monolithic character. In the Muslim East the constitutional model remained in force, but in the West 'independent' republics aimed for a 'union' with the RSFSR.

The process of reunification with the 'independent' republics was of unclear direction. The Ukrainian case makes this abundantly clear. In March 1920 the Ukrainian communist party published a declaration for a 'close union' with Soviet Russia. The main People's

Commissariats, military and economical, were to be unified. The respective RSFSR commissariats turned into 'central unified commissariats' by appointment of Ukrainian representatives to them.⁷⁰ In May the Ukrainian Congress of Soviets oddly proclaimed that the 'independent' Ukrainian SSR considered itself a 'member of the All-Russian Socialist Soviet Federative Republic'.⁷¹ Thus in the spring of 1920 Ukraine seemed to be heading for the status of a republic *within* the RSFSR. Yet, in December the Russian Communist Party (bolsheviks) declared a 'federative link' *between* Ukraine and the RSFSR to be the goal.⁷² That month a treaty between the RSFSR and Ukraine was published, in which the sovereign independence of both states was confirmed. The two republics entered into a 'military and economic union'. Ukrainian People's Commissars were appointed 'plenipotentiaries' of new 'unified people's commissariats of both republics'. But, then again, these 'unified' commissariats remained subordinate to the RSFSR Sovnarkom.⁷³ It seems that the Bolsheviks could not firmly decide to take the new approach of a Union. They also considered returning to the 1918 RSFSR model.

In February 1920 Lenin noted in a speech that the 'autonomy' given to the Bashkir republic should also be extended to a Tatar republic, and 'we are continuing this same policy in relation to all Eastern peoples'. He added that 'it goes without saying that in a much more formalised way this same policy is carried out also in relation to the Ukrainian republic'. The model was provided by the June 1919 treaty, 'which means a close federation of two republics in the struggle against the imperialist countries'. This should result in an 'ever closer union'.⁷⁴ In June Lenin wrote in his draft theses on the national and colonial question for the Second Congress of the Comintern that 'federation' was an effective model both in relations between the RSFSR and other Soviet republics (such as Azerbaidzhan and Ukraine) and in relation to nationalities such as the Bashkir and Tatar, living in 'autonomous republics' in the RSFSR.⁷⁵

These texts show that for Lenin the terms federation and autonomy were still identical. The point was only that two forms of federation-autonomy had developed, one applicable to the 'Eastern peoples' and the other in Europe. Lenin now began to treat the RSFSR, which in the 1918 constitution had been implicitly understood as comprising the territory of the whole Russian empire, as limited to the Great-Russian and Muslim areas (minus Azerbaidzhan). Other former Russian imperial territories would be offered federal ties *with* that Russia, not *within* it.

We do not know whether Stalin at this point agreed with Lenin's

suggestion that the constitutional model should be confined to the Eastern peoples. But we do know that he found the difference between the two models negligible. On 12 June he commented on Lenin's draft that there existed no real difference 'between the Bashkir and Ukrainian types of federative link'.⁷⁶ In an article in October he repeated that 'Soviet autonomy' knew many 'forms and levels of its development'. It ranged from autonomy of the Bashkir type to 'the highest form of autonomy, to treaty relations (Azerbaidzhan)'. But all forms were only varieties of 'that very soviet autonomy that was proclaimed by Soviet power from the first days of its appearance'.⁷⁷

The main conclusions from these two texts are, firstly, that for Stalin too the terms federation and autonomy remained identical; and, secondly, that he did not consider the two models of federation-autonomy to be fundamentally different. According to the original model, strategic matters – defence, foreign affairs and the main outlines of economic policy – were governed centrally from Moscow. The republics decided autonomously only on matters of local significance, mainly cultural, juridical and administrative.⁷⁸ The efforts to subject the main commissariats of the 'independent' republics to those of the RSFSR confirmed this scheme. In that sense Stalin was right that the real difference between the status of Ukraine and Bashkiria was minimal.

Meanwhile, Stalin amended the paper right to secession. In October 1920 he noted in *Pravda* that central Russia could not do without the minerals, fuels and consumption goods of the borderlands. And those lands were unable to defend themselves against imperialism without Russian protection. He concluded that 'the demand for the secession of borderlands from Russia ... must be excluded'. But he added:

Of course, the borderlands of Russia, the nations and tribes that populate these borderlands, as well as all other nations, have the inalienable right of secession from Russia, and if any one of these nations would by majority decide to separate from Russia ... then Russia would probably [*veroiatno*] have to take this for a fact and accept the secession. But we're not speaking here of rights of nations, which are inalienable, but of the interests of the popular masses of the centre as well as of the borderlands. ... Well, and the interests of the popular masses say that the demand for the secession of borderlands at the given stage of the revolution is deeply counter-revolutionary.⁷⁹

At the occasion of the establishment of new autonomous Mountain

and Dagestan republics in November 1920 Stalin repeated that secession was out of the question. 'Autonomy is not independence', the commissar noted bluntly.⁸⁰ But we should be careful how to interpret this. First, we cannot construe a difference with Lenin on this point. In February 1920 the latter noted in a speech on autonomy and federation that only a close union with Russia could save the other nations, in particular the Ukrainians, from imperialism and that, consequently, 'state secession cannot be favourable in the situation of the struggle against imperialism, because it uses every division to suppress Soviet power; such a division is criminal.'⁸¹

Secondly, Stalin's remarks did *not* signify the beginning of a division between socialist republics preserving a paper right to secession and autonomous ones losing such a right. As we have just seen, he explicitly confirmed the right to secession of *all* nations populating Russia. He did not divide them into two groups. The point was only that the right was, as it were, suspended. In this context it is important that, at the founding Soviet Congress of the Kirgiz autonomous republic in October 1920, a declaration was adopted including 'the right of the toiling masses of all nations to self-determination, expressed in the Declaration of the rights of the peoples of Russia, accepted by Sovnarkom on 2 November 1917'.⁸² That latter declaration interpreted the right to self-determination as a right to secession.⁸³ In other words, in late 1920 the right to secession of autonomous republics from the RSFSR was confirmed.⁸⁴ In that respect too there was no fundamental difference between socialist and autonomous republics.

At the Tenth Party Congress in 1921 Stalin presented theses on the national question on behalf of the Central Committee. He hoped for a 'federation of Soviet republics, based on a community of military and economic affairs'. The republics should join in a 'close state union'. This was the new Leninist formula for Europe. But, then, in the context of his discussion of the right to secession, Stalin suggested that the unification of the Soviet states into a voluntary federation took the form of those peoples 'entering the RSFSR'.⁸⁵ Perhaps this is the first explicit statement on his part to the effect that the constitutional model should be restored. But for the time being this did not lead to practical differences between him and Lenin.

Lenin remained as convinced a centralist as Stalin. An interesting case is the matter of the Transcaucasian federation. Against most Georgian party leaders' wishes, the chairman of the Caucasian Bureau of the party Ordzhonikidze wanted to create a unified economic organ

by merging the main people's commissariats of the three Transcaucasian republics. Lenin and Stalin backed him up.⁸⁶ In early November 1921 Ordzhonikidze decided that the time was ripe for a federation of the three republics. Later that month Stalin forwarded the proposal to Lenin.⁸⁷ The latter answered that the federation was 'unconditionally to be realised', but he considered its practical realisation 'premature, i.e. demanding several weeks for discussion, propaganda, and the carrying out from below through the Soviets'. Now something interesting occurred, not noted by Smith. Stalin replied to Lenin that he did not object to his resolution,

provided that you agree to accept the following correction: instead of the words: 'demanding several weeks for discussion' ... say: 'demanding a certain period of time for discussion' and then further according to your resolution. The point is that 'carrying out' the federation in Georgia 'from below' 'through the Soviets' in 'several weeks' is impossible, because they are only beginning to construct Soviets in Georgia.

Stalin thought that no less than two or three months would be needed to realise the federation. Lenin accepted his correction, whereupon the Politbureau adopted the plan unanimously.⁸⁸ Thus it appears that, though Lenin found Ordzhonikidze's tempo too fast, Stalin wanted to proceed *even more slowly than Lenin*. The Transcaucasian Federation was officially established in March 1922.

We do well to keep this instance of Lenin being *more* centralistic than Stalin in mind when discussing the notorious 'autonomisation' debate. In August 1922 a commission was at last formed, with Stalin among its members, to decide on the future relations between the RSFSR and the nominally independent republics. Stalin produced a draft in which the 'formal entry into the RSFSR' of Ukraine, White Russia, Azerbaidzhan, Georgia and Armenia was proposed. The Russian Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom would become the highest authority in the new member states. The People's Commissariats of the republics would be divided into three groups. Some were unified with those of the RSFSR: Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Defence, the Railroads, Finance and Post & Telegraph. The second group (Food, Labour, Economy, and also the GPU) were merely subordinated to the Russian counterparts. The remaining commissariats of Justice, Education, Internal Affairs, Agriculture, Rabkrin, Health and Social Security remained independent.⁸⁹

This proposal reduced Armenia and Ukraine to the same status as

Bashkiria and Turkestan. As we have seen, Smith interprets it, nevertheless, as a natural one. It extended a model which proved its value within Russia to other states with which Russia had close relations. The 'naturalness' of it – from the bolshevik perspective – appears even more clearly if we realise that Stalin's autonomisation was essentially only a confirmation of the 1918 constitution. On 24 September the commission adopted a somewhat amended version of the Stalin proposal.⁹⁰

On 26 September Lenin wrote to Kamenev that Stalin was 'going a bit fast' but had already agreed to make the concession that the republics would not become part of the RSFSR. The new formula would be 'formal unification with the RSFSR' into a 'Union of Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia'. Thus there would be a Great-Russian republic separate from the federal Union as a whole. Lenin insisted on the creation of 'one more *new floor*, a federation of *equal* republics'. Concretely, this meant the establishment of an all-Federal Central Executive Committee, VTsIK, above that of the RSFSR. Thus on the 'parliamentary' level the apparatus of the RSFSR and that of the Union would no longer coincide.

However, when it came to the governmental level, the creation of a federative Union seems to have represented a mere change in name. The '*joint federal* people's commissariats' would be created by providing those of the RSFSR with agents in the other republics – as in Stalin's proposal. What is more, it seems that Lenin wanted the existing situation, that of the central government coinciding with the RSFSR government, to continue. That appears from his remark that the passage in the 24 September resolution concerning the binding nature of RSFSR Sovnarkom decisions for other republics need not be changed. In any case, nothing in Lenin's proposal pointed to the creation of two separate Councils of People's Commissars – a Union one and a Russian one. Even more surprisingly, Lenin wanted Stalin's second group of commissariats to be treated like the first, that is, to be completely 'fused' into those of the RSFSR. Here he was *more* centralist than Stalin. Concerning the third group which the commission resolution considered 'independent', Lenin added that joint conferences should be created with an advisory capacity, presumably consisting of representatives of those commissariats and its RSFSR counterparts. Here too he was the more centralist of the two.⁹¹

On 27 September Stalin agreed in a letter to change the name of the new federation to 'Union of Soviet republics of Europe and Asia'. However he did not accept the establishment of two Central Executive

Committees – a Great-Russian and a federal one. The RSFSR Central Executive Committee would henceforth be known as the 'all-federal TsIK'. Stalin was prepared to go along with Lenin and take the *word* 'Russian' out of the name of the federation, but he rejected the element in the latter's proposal where a genuine distinction between Russian and federal institutions was made. But, interestingly, as far as the administrative structure, that is, the division between central and republican commissariats, was concerned, Stalin found Lenin's proposal too centralistic:

in my opinion comr. Lenin 'went too fast' when he demanded the fusion of the people's commissariats of finance, food, labour and economy into the federal people's commissariats. There can be little doubt that this 'hurry' gives food to the '*nezavisimtsy*' to the disadvantage of comr. Lenin's national liberalism.

He also rejected Lenin's proposal of joint conferences to advise the remaining 'independent' republican commissariats.⁹² Lewin considers it a case of 'glibness and demagoguery' when Stalin counterattacked Lenin for excessive centralism.⁹³ Smith calls the questions of the Central Executive Committees and of the people's commissariats 'two apparently subordinate points in Lenin's proposals'. He sees the main difference between Lenin's and Stalin's proposals in their 'formal wording'. The former was more concerned than the latter with the impact of the plans on the national republics and international public opinion.⁹⁴ However, in my opinion the two subordinate points made up the real essence of the respective plans. On the 'parliamentary' level Stalin remained the more centralistic, but on the governmental level Lenin surpassed him in Russian centralism.

The crucial point in an interpretation of both proposals is that the organisation of the commissariats was in reality the most important matter of all. Therefore, in practical terms Lenin's European-Asian Union was *more* Russian-centralistic than Stalin's autonomisation plan. If there was ever a piece of clever window-dressing, then it was Lenin's plan. At first sight there would be six independent republics, including the RSFSR, jointly forming one Union. But deeper down there were five republics integrating their governmental machinery into the RSFSR government on an even more rigid basis than Stalin wanted.

Probably on the same day of 27 September Stalin and some other members of the commission produced a new model. The RSFSR, Ukraine, White Russia and the Transcaucasian Federation (which was only now integrated into Stalin's proposals) should fuse into a "Union

of Socialist Soviet Republics", leaving each of them the right of free withdrawal from the "Union". The Union had its own Central Executive Committee made up of representatives of the four republican ones, proportional to the population of the member states. So far this was a translation of Lenin's proposal. However, in its elaboration the proposal differed from the latter's. For the first time, any suggestion of the Union and Russian governments coinciding disappeared. The RSFSR and other republics were treated identically, with a separate RSFSR Sovnarkom, which, like those of the other republics, administered only the non-Union commissariats. Except that Rabkrin was moved 'up' to the middle category, the division remained the same.⁹⁵ This was the *first* proposal of a true federation, with a real separation of the RSFSR and Union governments. The plan was not Lenin's, but Stalin's.

Again probably on 27 September Kamenev sent a note to Lenin, with a drawing containing the new plan and claiming that in this model 'formal independence' was preserved to a maximum degree. Almost three quarters of the delegates of the Union Central Executive Committee would be representatives of the RSFSR, guaranteeing RSFSR predominance in the Union.⁹⁶ Now something strange happened. On 28 September Kamenev notified Stalin that Lenin was 'preparing a war in defence of independence. He proposes that I meet the Georgians. He even refuses yesterday's corrections.' Stalin found that they had to be 'firm with Il'ich. If a few Georgian Mensheviks influence the Georgian Communists, and the latter Il'ich, then I'd like to know what kind of "independence" that is?' Kamenev replied that if Lenin insisted, 'it'll be worse to resist.' But Stalin was not impressed: 'I don't know. Let him do as he sees fit.'⁹⁷

What kind of 'war' could Lenin possibly have been planning when Stalin and Kamenev came up with a proposal that guaranteed 'independence' to a greater degree than his own? On 29 September he had a conversation with the Georgian leader Kote Tsintsadze. Lenin asked the latter if he objected to the inclusion of Georgia into the RSFSR, what about a 'Union'? Tsintsadze said he would favour that option, which apparently satisfied Lenin.⁹⁸ On 6 October the RKP(b) Central Committee accepted Stalin's new USSR proposal with one minor change. Lenin was absent due to a tooth problem, but he wrote the following note to Kamenev:

comr. Kamenev! I declare a struggle to the death against Great-Russian chauvinism. As soon as I am delivered from my damned

tooth, I will devour it with all my healthy teeth. We must *absolutely* insist, that a Russian, a Ukrainian, a Georgian *etc.* will take turns *in presiding* over the Union TsIk. *Absolutely!*⁹⁹

In other words, despite his strong language, the only comment Lenin had on the decision was to make chairmanship of the Union CEC alternate with representatives of the republics. Stalin wrote 'Correct!' on the note when he received it.¹⁰⁰ The rotating chairmanship was accepted. That was all there was to Lenin's 'war for independence'. Subsequently he forgot all about it. When the conflict between Ordzhonikidze and the Georgian leaders concerning the Transcaucasian Federation continued, Lenin wrote to Georgia on 21 October: 'I was convinced that all differences of opinion had been removed by the resolutions of the plenum of the CC, in which I participated indirectly and *Mdivani* directly. Therefore I decisively condemn the scolding against *Ordzhonikidze*.'¹⁰¹

In late December 1922 the new Union Treaty was adopted. It was only in his last writings, triggered by the continuing conflict in Georgia, that Lenin changed his mind. According to Pipes, in the winter of 1922–23 he 'went through a reappraisal of Soviet nationality policy which bore all the marks of a true intellectual crisis'.¹⁰² On 30 and 31 December Lenin wrote 'On the question of the nationalities or of "autonomisation"', in which he castigated Stalin for his 'hurriedness and passion for administration', and accused him, Ordzhonikidze and Dzerzhinskii of a 'truly Great-Russian-nationalist campaign'. The notes opened dramatically: 'It seems that I am very guilty towards the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and sharply enough in the notorious question of autonomisation, which, so it seems, is officially called the question of the union of soviet socialist republics.' This sentence conveys two messages. First, the author had only recently seen the light. Lenin had something to say which he had formerly not understood. Secondly, he no longer recognised a basic difference between Stalin's 'autonomisation' and the model of the 'Union', which he, Lenin, had previously agreed with.

Apparently this whole enterprise of 'autonomisation' was fundamentally incorrect and premature. It is said that we needed unity of the apparatus. But from where did these claims come? Didn't they come from this same Russian apparatus, which, as I pointed out already in one of the previous issues of my diary, we

inherited from Tsarism and has only been slightly revised by the Soviet world? I have no doubt that we should wait with this measure until we could say with confidence that this apparatus is ours.

Lenin identified 'autonomisation' with 'unity of the apparatus'. That latter unity – the fusion of commissariats – was embodied in the new Union structure no less than in Stalin's August 1922 proposals. As a matter of fact, with the term 'autonomisation' Lenin did not refer to Stalin's proposals but to the new Union Treaty. He drew the following practical conclusion:

we must leave the union of socialist republics intact in the area of the diplomatic apparatus. ... this apparatus has already gained a name ... as a reliable [*proverennyi*] communist apparatus which has been purified ... of the old Tsarist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois apparatus ... we must leave the union of socialist republics intact only in the military and diplomatic field, and in all other fields we must restore the complete independence of the separate people's commissariats.

Lenin noted finally that the 'fracturing of the *narkomaty*' could be 'paralysed sufficiently by the authority of the party, if it were applied with sufficient care and impartiality'.¹⁰³ These proposals were certainly important. But we should, again, not make a hasty interpretation of them. To begin, Lenin's sympathies for the national republics were not so principled as to extend to the Muslim republics within the RSFSR. Their commissariats remained under RSFSR control to the same degree as before. Furthermore, the fusion of Union commissariats with those of the Socialist republics was for Lenin merely 'premature'. In itself fusion was considered desirable. It was only that under the present conditions of insufficient control of the state bureaucracy by the communist party, the fusion had to be postponed.

Nevertheless, to restrict the unification of commissariats to the diplomatic and military sphere – and especially to restore the independence of the economic apparatuses – was momentous enough. It did not only represent a rescinding of decisions of December 1922, but also the undoing of the programme of unification of the 'independent' and RSFSR commissariats since 1919. Lenin's discontent with the state bureaucracy spilled over to the sphere of national relations. As a result he wanted the USSR for the time being to be reduced to what would in effect be a confederal state. Thus Lenin

unexpectedly took the side of Mdivani and his comrades. But, then again, though he insisted on a fracturing of important branches of the USSR state apparatus, he wanted the communist party to use its centralistic power to preserve state unity indirectly.

Smith observes a change in attitude towards the national question not only on the part of Lenin, but also from Stalin. National policy had previously operated largely in favour of the national minorities, but, with the Politbureau's new irreconcilability towards Mdivani and his comrades, it was turning in the opposite direction. The pivotal figure in this process was Stalin, who in the past had often supported national rights against the Muscovite Left. During 1922 he became so obsessed with his 'pet project' of the formal centralisation of the Soviet republics that he abandoned his previously supportive attitude to the non-Russians.¹⁰⁴ In my opinion this interpretation is weakly founded. As Smith shows eloquently in his book, Stalin had from 1917 on defended certain national rights against central Moscow encroachments. But this concerned only republican control in the cultural, juridical and administrative sphere. In late 1922 he did not retreat from that position. There was then another point at stake: Lenin wanted autonomy to be extended to all spheres except diplomacy and the military. That Stalin resisted his efforts to this effect does not testify to any change of mind.

Only in early 1923 did Stalin indeed take a more limited view of autonomy. In a letter of 4 February to the Central Committee he suggested upgrading the republican commissariats of Education, Internal Affairs, Justice, Health and Social Security to the middle category of 'unified' commissariats.¹⁰⁵ That proposal would have seriously undermined the element of national autonomy in the Soviet Union. But later that month the Central Committee rejected the idea.¹⁰⁶ During the first week of March 1923 Lenin was frantically attempting to link up with Trotskii in support of Mdivani and against Stalin. But his stroke finally put him out of action. This left Stalin with his hands free. His theses for the coming party congress contained the provision that, if the commissariats in Moscow 'were to receive a Great Power orientation in practice', the party would reconsider their fusion 'until the Soviet apparatus was properly re-educated'. But this was only a token step in Lenin's direction. The formation of Union commissariats proceeded as decided on. In effect Lenin's proposals were ignored.¹⁰⁷

The final decisions were taken at the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923. The 'confederalists' Mdivani and others argued in favour of bringing as many commissariats as possible under the republican

governments. And they wanted not only the Transcaucasian Federation to be split up, but also the autonomous republics in the RSFSR to be upgraded to the status of separate Union republics.¹⁰⁸ But in the absence of their new protector they did not stand a chance. It bothered Stalin that the 'confederalists' were operating in line with Lenin's last proposals. But he admitted that his leader hoped to see the republican commissariats of Foreign Affairs only 'unified' instead of 'fused'. He commented with hardly concealed anger:

Excuse me, we won't have a Union at all if every republic has its own *Narkomindel*. Comr. Lenin forgot that, he forgot much lately. He forgot that we accepted the foundations of the Union together with him. ... Comr. Lenin forgot the resolution adopted at the October plenum about the creation of the Union, where it is said that 5 commissariats will fuse, five will be unified and 6 commissariats will remain untouched. Comr. Lenin accepted and confirmed this.¹⁰⁹

In Lenin's absence, Stalin was victorious at the congress. His ideas were subsequently embodied in the constitution of the USSR of January 1924. To conclude, I hope to have shown that Lenin's ideas on the Soviet federation of August–September 1922 were not only, as Smith correctly argues, very similar to Stalin's. Lenin's excitement against 'Great Russian chauvinism' was indeed mainly inspired by the expected reaction of public opinion to Stalin's draft. But on the fundamental point of central and local administrative power – the relations between the commissariats – Lenin was in fact the *more* Russian-centralistic of the two. Had it been adopted, his 26 September proposal would have reduced non-Russian autonomy more than became the case in the USSR. With his about-turn of late December Lenin mitigated Russian centralism seriously, and to Stalin's great dismay. But his insistence that, after fracturing the commissariat structure, he expected the party apparatus to preserve state unity makes even this conclusion a relative one.

PARTY DEMOCRACY

At the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 Lenin argued in an emotional speech that the party was a fighting machine, not a 'debating club'. It could no longer afford debates and oppositions. Though acknowledging that there remained room for the exchange of opinions in special party publications, 'propaganda of ideas' should be

forbidden. The congress did not only ban factions, but also forbade 'unbusiness-like' criticism. Propaganda for the ideas of the Workers' Opposition was made incompatible with membership of the party.¹¹⁰ This entitled the Central Committee not only to punish factionalists but also anyone considered guilty of unnecessarily harsh criticism of the party line. At the next congress in March–April 1922 former oppositionists were again under fire for the sole reason of their adopting an incorrect *tone*. They had radiated an atmosphere of 'we and they' – which was inadmissible.¹¹¹

At its 3 April meeting the newly elected Central Committee nominated Stalin General Secretary, at Kamenev's proposal and with Lenin's apparent agreement.¹¹² In this capacity Stalin became the main person responsible for enforcing Lenin's new regime in the party. On occasion he even lectured Lenin on the need for unity. A few months after the congress the latter suggested in an interview to foreign journalists that the Left Communists still existed as a recognisable tendency. This upset Stalin, who wrote to him in November 1922 that it was a mistake to suggest publicly that Left Communism was still 'a legitimate phenomenon capable of competing with official party communism'; since the congress there was 'complete unity'.¹¹³ During 1922 it became ever more difficult for ordinary party members to express their discontent. At Lenin's insistence this also became a year of increased repression against the Mensheviks, the Socialist Revolutionaries, the academic world and the church.¹¹⁴

But quarrels in the Central Committee continued. During Lenin's stay due to illness in Gorki from May to October he communicated regularly with the 'troika'. Of all party leaders Stalin was his most frequent visitor. Lenin's sister later remembered how the two men often spoke about Trotskii. 'Il'ich sided with Stalin' against the latter. But she also remembered that Lenin had a hard time keeping Stalin's anger against Trotskii in check.¹¹⁵ One occasion was the September 1922 proposal to Trotskii to become one of the new deputy-prime ministers. Trotskii's refusal was the probable cause for Kamenev to suggest to Lenin, on behalf of the troika, that Trotskii be expelled. Lenin was very upset and angry at this proposal.¹¹⁶ Since early 1921 inner-party struggles were Lenin's great fear. The party needed unity of action, and a conflict between the troika and Trotskii carried the threat of a split. This was another major issue to cloud Lenin's relations with Stalin in his last active months.

As discussed above, in his notes of December 1922 Lenin argued for strengthening the Central Committee. Its membership should be

increased to several dozen or even a hundred. The new members should come from among the working class. This raised the committee's authority. Lenin's point was not only that he hoped for a strengthened CC to take the cleaning-up of the state apparatus more effectively in hand. A further reason for him was that a group of fresh workers could hopefully prevent the conflicts among the party leaders from escalating into a split. He wanted to have young men and women outnumber and silence the older ones.

According to Lenin, the main acute danger for party unity lay in the strained relations between Trotskii and Stalin, whom he straightforwardly called the two eminent leaders of the Central Committee. Trotskii was personally the more capable man of the two, but overly self-confident. Stalin on the other hand had concentrated immense power in his hands and Lenin was not convinced that he used that power with sufficient caution. On 4 January 1923 he dictated an addition to his notes, dedicated exclusively to Stalin. The latter was too rude for the sensitive position of General Secretary. One should think of a way to transfer him from that position and nominate a more tolerant and polite person. Lenin explained:

[Stalin's rudeness] may seem a trifling matter. But I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of what I wrote above about the mutual relations between Stalin and Trotskii, this is not a trifle, or it is rather a minor matter of the kind which might acquire decisive significance.¹¹⁷

In his final articles written from January to March 1923 Lenin slightly reformulated his proposals for the reorganisation of the party. He noted that the Central Committee had developed into a strictly centralised and highly authoritative group, but its work did not take place under conditions corresponding to its authority. Current affairs in the party were more and more executed by the Politbureau, Orgbureau and Secretariat instead of by the Central Committee. To give the latter organ new teeth, the so-called Central Control Commission should meet in joint sessions with it. With the new Rabkrin attached to it, and up to a hundred new members from the proletariat and the peasantry, the CCC should acquire more power. With its help the Central Committee obtained an apparatus strong enough to subdue the Politbureau. This was urgently necessary, Lenin explained, to prevent the struggles in the Politbureau from escalating into a fatal 'split'.

The reform I propose must be helpful in this respect, and the

members of the CCC, who are obliged to attend in a certain number every meeting of the Politbureau, must form a cohesive group, which will take care, 'without consideration of anybody', that no authority, the *gensek* nor any other member of the CC, can prevent it from making requests.¹¹⁸

The fact that Lenin's last proposals were directed against Stalin, the *gensek*, has been taken to mean that they expressed a belated understanding on Lenin's part of the threat Stalin presented for party democracy. According to Lewin, who provides no evidence in support of this hypothesis, it was quite possible that Lenin no longer thought factionalism dangerous enough to justify banning it. If the enlargement of the Central Committee had been carried out, the party leaders would have been subject to the control of a 'wider, more representative body'. The Politbureau, Central Committee and Central Control Commission would have established a 'system of reciprocal control' serving a somewhat similar function to the separation of powers in a democratic regime.¹¹⁹ The fact that Lenin's proposals, though naive, incomplete and ineffective, were intended to limit the uncontrolled power of a few leaders – in other words: emerging 'Stalinism' – has not been challenged to my knowledge.

However, in my opinion their significance was, again, precisely the opposite. The first thing to note is that nowhere in Lenin's last writings is there any indication that he wanted the inner-party regime to be put on a more democratic footing. The issue was not even raised. The essential point of his proposals was his fear of a split.¹²⁰ He wanted to prevent the party leaders from going for each other's throats and tearing the Politbureau apart. Stalin was personally the most irreconcilable in his hatred for Trotskii. Lenin believed that he could not be held in check. He would use his position as General Secretary to attack Trotskii and thereby guide the party into the destructive conflict which Lenin wanted to avoid at all costs. Next to his differences about the Georgian affair, that was the reason he wanted Stalin demoted.

Lenin's argument did not represent belated second thoughts, but formed rather an extension of the argument he elaborated at the Tenth and Eleventh Party Congresses. His motive for putting the muzzle on the party in 1921 had been to enforce peace by silencing those who were stirring up a struggle. And this was precisely what he now had in mind. From his perspective, Stalin undermined the peace in the party. Lenin was thinking of ways to extend the enforced unity to the top of the party, to put the muzzle over the last remaining part of his

organisation where free debate was still allowed. Far from defending the last rudiment of democracy, Lenin's last proposals represented the climax of the process of dismantling party democracy begun in 1921.

That he hoped to use the Central Control Commission to subject the Politbureau supports this interpretation. This organ was specifically intended for enforcing discipline in the party ranks. It was a kind of 'party police', one of the main instruments used by the Politbureau against the various oppositional groups. Lenin's proposal to reorganise the top structure of the party meant essentially that from now on not only the ordinary membership, but the highest party leaders as well were put under the control of the disciplinary organs. Had he lived, Lenin would undoubtedly have taken care that he controlled the new CCC-Rabkrin cluster to silence his colleagues.

CONCLUSIONS

Lenin's last plans and proposals formed a more or less coherent whole. In the last months of his active life the leader was driven by hopes of acceleration of the construction of socialism. In 1921 he had been forced into a retreat, but already by the next year he became restive over the temporising. His insistence on strengthening the state monopoly of foreign trade, and then also of Gosplan, were expressive of this new mood. And – perhaps against his better judgement and induced by fears of his own approaching end – he convinced himself that there was light at the end of the tunnel for Soviet Russia. His redefinition of agricultural cooperativisation made full Russian socialism unexpectedly attainable in the foreseeable future. A campaign to convince the peasants of its benefits needed to be started immediately. This was the basis of his new strategy.

But to guarantee successful acceleration, further political centralisation was urgently necessary. The old administrative machinery of the state had been largely taken over from the tsars. The Soviets were new organs, but the structure of the executive branch of the state was not very different from what it had been. Only a few people's commissariats had a new communist staff. And Lenin was under the impression that, through the years, the state sabotaged the party's rulings. The hold of the party over a reduced state apparatus should be strengthened, in order to make that apparatus at last begin to execute the party's orders without fail, and execute them efficiently. The second condition for success was the establishment of complete business-like unity in the party. Lenin's great fear was that of a split,

which could be fatal for the Soviet state and destroy the chances of success of the socialist project. In this field too increased centralisation was his response. He hoped to put the quarrelling party leaders under the control of the same disciplinary machinery that already regulated the life of the ordinary party members. For that purpose the Central Committee and its apparatus had to be strengthened. Thus the upgrading of the party bureaucracy served both purposes – to curb the state *and* Lenin's unruly colleagues.

Only the leader's thinking on the national question took a strange turn, somewhat at odds with his general approach. This was initially not the case. Lenin was always alert to the danger of estranging the non-Russian nations. When the time was ripe to reunite their respective republics with the RSFSR, he insisted on the establishment of a new Union without formal reference to its predominantly Russian character. But his support for the Transcaucasian Federation and his September 1922 proposal to bring the economic commissariats of the republics completely under Muscovite control show that, in this field too, bold centralisation was in fact his first concern. However in late 1922 he changed his mind, because he believed the Moscow state apparatus escaped communist control. This made him decide that the Soviet republics should again be largely liberated from the Union – which remains the one irrefutable point in Lewin's analysis. But, then again, Lenin's confidence that the increased power of the communist party prevented state disintegration shows that he had not forgotten the issue of centralisation.

Lewin argues that, had Lenin lived, the USSR would have remained a dictatorial state, but more rationally and efficiently operating and with men of integrity at its head. Personal despotism could have been avoided. He believes the contrast between the hypothetical Leninist course and the real Stalinist one was acute. The system as it came about was in its basic features 'diametrically opposed to the recommendations of the "Testament"'.¹²¹ It is impossible to say what would have happened in the longer run, had Lenin lived and vanquished Stalin. But on the basis of the positions taken in 1922–23 one can make a reasonable educated guess as to what would have happened in the next few years.

The essential difference would have been that the control of the central party machinery over the party and the country at large was tightened at a much higher tempo. Lenin would most likely not have allowed the debate in the party leadership of the mid-nineteen twenties. He would have exerted all his strength to nip it in the bud

and set the Central Control Commission to work to shut up his colleagues – in the name of party unity and state security. With the help of the inflated party bureaucracy he would further have launched a broad attack on the state apparatus. This would have had some positive effects compared to what really happened in the mid-1920s – namely nothing. Inefficient and corrupt officials would have been dismissed and punished. But the other side to this is that the repressive machinery of the party would have been put into higher gear much earlier than it was in reality. Lenin's campaign to restore 'integrity' would after all have been a purging operation, and he was not afraid to use the execution squad in such cases.

Finally, the Georgian communists would definitely have profited from Lenin's victory. In view of his standpoints in late December 1922, Russian state centralisation would have been slowed down. But his indifference to the status of the Muslim republics, his insistence that the fusion of the commissariats was merely premature, and his hopes that the party apparatus could prevent his plans from having a disintegrative effect on the Soviet state, all suggest that Russian centralism would only have been slowed down. The improvement over the real course Stalin took would have been a temporary and relative one. All in all, Lenin's last proposals probably did more to prepare the later Stalinism than to hamper it.

NOTES

1. Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (London, 1969).
2. Richard Pipes (ed.), *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archives* (New Haven, CT and London, 1996), p.9.
3. Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924* (London, 1994), pp.464-5.
4. Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vol.3, *The Iron Ring* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp.259, 268, 291, 293, 299, 302.
5. Robert Service, *Lenin. A Biography* (London, 2000), p.467.
6. Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp.172-89.
7. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol.34, *Iiul'-oktiabr' 1917* (Moscow, 1962), pp.306-7 [PSS]
8. PSS, vol.42, pp.207-8.
9. *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP(b). Mart 1921 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1963), p.39.
10. See E.A. Rees, *State Control in Soviet Russia: The Rise and Fall of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, 1920-34* (Basingstoke, 1987), p.31.
11. Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p.124.
12. See, for instance, PSS, vol.45, pp.13, 15; vol.43, pp.230-31; see also p.281.
13. *Ibid.*, vol.44, pp.127, 130-31. Stalin reacted to this critique as if bitten. In his opinion Lenin was too hasty. He agreed that his 'miserable' inspectorate still followed the old, easy way of 'catching', but this was only due to lack of personnel. He wanted

51. PSS, vol.45, pp.370, 375–6.
52. E.H. Carr and R.W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy. 1926–1929*, vol. one, part II (London/Basingstoke, 1978), pp.920–21.
53. PSS, vol.43, pp.130, 225.
54. Ibid., vol.45, p.309.
55. Ibid., p.372.
56. Ibid., p.376.
57. Ibid., p.371.
58. Jeremy Smith, 'The Origins of Soviet National Autonomy', *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol.10, No.2, 1997, p.79.
59. S.S. Studenikina (ed.), *Istoriia sovetskoi konstitutsii (v dokumentakh), 1917–1956* (Moscow, 1957), p.58.
60. Ibid., pp.85–7; see also Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917–1923* (Cambridge MA, 1964), p.123.
61. See: Studenikina, op. cit., p.126.
62. *Sochineniia*, vol.4, pp.67, 69.
63. Ibid., pp.79–80.
64. Studenikina, op. cit., pp.143, 145.
65. See: Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917–1923*, vol.1 (London, 1950), pp.308–9; Pipes, *The Formation of ...*, p.152; D.A. Gaidukov et al. (eds.), *Istoriia sovetskoi konstitutsii. Sbornik dokumentov. 1917–1957* (Moscow, 1957), pp.94–106; Service, *The Iron Ring*, pp.92–3.
66. Studenikina, op. cit., pp.205–7; 'Deiatel'nost' Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Partii v dokumentakh (sobytiia i fakty)', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, No.12, p.163; see also Pipes, *The Formation of ...*, pp.252–3; Service, *The Iron Ring*, pp.93–4.
67. Studenikina, op. cit., pp.207–8.
68. M.P. Georgadze et al., *S'ezdy Sovetov Soiuza SSR, Soiuznykh i Avtonomnykh Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik. Sbornik dokumentov v trekh tomakh. 1917–1936 gg.*, vol.1, *S'ezdy Sovetov RSFSR i Avtonomnykh Respublik RSFSR. Sbornik Dokumentov. 1917–1922 gg.* (Moscow, 1959), p.278.
69. See: Stephen Blank, *The Sorcerer as Apprentice: Stalin as Commissar of Nationalities, 1917–1924* (Westport/London, 1994), pp.146–7; 'Deiatel'nost' Tsentral'nogo komiteta ...', 1989, No.7, p.159; 8, pp.165, 183; Trotski, op. cit., p.263; Gaidukov et al., op. cit., p.59.
70. Studenikina, op.cit., pp.229–31.
71. Ibid., p.233.
72. *Vos'maia konferentsiia RKP(b). Dekabr' 1919 goda. Protokoly* (Moscow, 1961), p.189.
73. Gaidukov et al., pp.141–2.
74. PSS, vol.40, pp.98–9.
75. Ibid., vol.41, p.164.
76. V.I. Lenin, *Sochineniia*, vol. XXV, 1920 (Moscow/Leningrad, 1928), pp.287, 624.
77. *Sochineniia*, vol.4, pp.354–5.
78. See ibid., p.70.
79. Ibid., pp.351–4.
80. Ibid., pp.395–6, 402, 404–5.
81. PSS, vol.40, pp.99–100; see also vol.41, p.164.
82. Georgadze et al., op. cit., pp.622, 630.
83. Studenikina, op. cit., p.58.
84. Stalin noted that the Mountain republic had the same status as the Kirgiz. See *Sochineniia*, vol.4, p.404.
85. See *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP(b) ...*, pp.182, 184, 186–7, 701.
86. PSS, vol.52, p.136; *Sochineniia*, vol.5, pp.94–5, 98–100, 113f; see also 'O tak nazyvaemom "natsional-uklonizme"', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, No.9, p.77.
87. See P.N. Pospelov et al. (eds.), *Istoriia Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, vol.4, *Kommunisticheskaia Partia v Bor'be za Postroenie Sotsializma v SSSR. 1921–1937*

- gg. *Kniga Pervaiia* (1921–1929 gg.) (Moscow, 1970), pp.193–4; S.V. Kharmandarian, *Lenin i Stanovlenie Zakavkazskoi Federatsii, 1921–1923* (Erevan, 1969), pp.203–6.
88. *Sochineniia*, vol.5, pp.228–9; PSS, vol.44, pp.255, 566; Kharmandarian, op. cit., p.206. See also Smith, *The Bolsheviks and ...*, p.198. In vol.44 of Lenin's works the matter is falsified by including in Lenin's original letter Stalin's correction about a 'certain period of time' instead of the original demand of 'several weeks'.
 89. 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia SSSR', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, No.9, pp.191–3; see also Tat'iana Korzhikhina, 'Federalizm ili unitarizm? Perepetii rossiiskoi gosudarstvennosti', *Svobodnaia mysl'*, 1995, No.6, pp.99–100.
 90. The main differences were that the Finance commissariat was moved 'down' to the second category, and the introduction of representatives of the republics into the presidium of VTsIK was announced. See 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1989, No.9, pp.200, 203–5.
 91. PSS, vol.45, pp.211–2.
 92. 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1989, No.9, p.208.
 93. Lewin, op. cit., pp.52–3.
 94. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and ...*, pp.186–7.
 95. 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1989, No.9, pp.206–7.
 96. Ibid.
 97. Ibid., pp.208–9.
 98. Kharmandarian, op. cit., pp.344–5.
 99. 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1989, No.9, pp.214–6.
 100. Lenin, *Sochineniia*, vol. XXXIII, p.335.
 101. PSS, vol.54, pp.299–300; see also Kharmandarian, op. cit., pp.353–9; Pipes, *The Formation of ...*, pp.274–5.
 102. Ibid., p.276.
 103. PSS, vol.45, pp.356–61.
 104. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and ...*, pp.202–6.
 105. S.I. Iakubovskaia, *Stroitel'stvo soiuznogo sovetskogo sotsialisticheskogo gosudarstva. 1922–1925 gg.* (Moscow, 1959), pp.197–8; 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1991, No.4, p.170.
 106. Iakubovskaia, op. cit., pp.19–9; 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1991, No.5, pp.164–5.
 107. *Sochineniia*, vol.5, pp.187, 189–91.
 108. 'Iz istorii obrazovaniia ...', 1991, No.3, pp.170–3; 4, pp.161–2.
 109. See ibid., pp.169–72.
 110. See *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP(b) ...*, pp.2–3, 35, 113, 118, 123, 521, 523, 571, 573, 576.
 111. *Odinnadtsatyi s'ezd RKP(b) ...*, p.577.
 112. See Dmitrii Volkogonov, *Triumf i Tragediia. Politicheskii Portret I.V. Stalina v 2-kh Knigakh*, vol.I.1 (Moscow, 1989), pp.133–7; Service, *The Iron Ring*, p.270; Chuev, op. cit., p.181; PSS, vol.45, pp.139, 531; Dmitri Volkogonov, *Lenin, a New Biography* (New York, 1994), p.268.
 113. A.V. Kvashonkin et al. (eds.), *Bol'shevistskoe Rukovodstvo. Perepiska. 1912–1927 gg.* (Moscow, 1996), p.268.
 114. See Marc Jansen, *A Show Trial under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Moscow 1922* (The Hague/Boston/London, 1982).
 115. 'O zhizni i ...', pp.196–8, 200–21; see also Volkogonov, *Lenin, a New ...*, pp.26–9; Amiantov et al., *V.I. Lenin. Neizvestnye ...*, p.544.
 116. Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p.166; Volkogonov, *Lenin, a New ...*, p.257; Pipes, *Russia under the ...*, p.467.
 117. PSS, vol.45, pp.343–7.
 118. Ibid., pp.387–8.
 119. Lewin, op. cit., pp.128, 130, 132.
 120. Compare: Service, *Lenin. A Biography*, p.464.
 121. Lewin, op. cit., p.136.