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Alan Woods' State and Revolution Rewriting History

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This article is a rejoinder to a part of Alan Woods' essay, The Ideas of Karl Marx, published in June 2013. To read the full text of Woods' essay, click <http://www.marxist.com/karl-marx-130-years.htm> [<http://www.marxist.com/karl-marx-130-years.htm>]

We read with considerable interest Alan Wood's article on the ideas of Marx. in [<marx.laboratory@gmail.com>](mailto:marx.laboratory@gmail.com) dated January 16, 2014. It is a good pedagogical exercise. At the same time the piece is thought-provoking. In the following lines we give our reaction to only a part of this paper, the part concerning his discussion of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, which can be read independently of the rest of Woods' paper. We first present the author's position, then we offer our reaction to this position. Here he is out to demonstrate that Stalin is no part of the tradition started by the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky which he directly connects with Marx and the 1871 Paris Commune.

Thus he writes: "Nowadays, the word dicta-torship has connotations that were unknown to Marx. In an age that has become acquainted with the horrific crimes of Hitler and Stalin, it conjures up nightmarish visions of a totalitarian monster, concentration camp and secret police. But such things did not yet exist even in the imagination in Marx's day." He adds thatthe idea of a "totalitarian dictatorship like Stalin's Russia", where the state would oppress the working class in the interests of a privileged caste of bureaucrats, would have horrified Marx. According to this scholar, Marx based his idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Paris Commune of 1871. Under Lenin and Trotsky, the Soviet state was constructed in order to facilitate the drawing of workers into the tasks of control and accounting, to ensure the uninterrupted progress of the reduction of the "special functions" of officialdom and of the power of the state. Strict limitations were placed upon the salaries, power, and privileges of officials in order to prevent the formation of a privileged caste.

The workers' state established by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 was neither bureaucratic nor totalitarian. On the contrary, before the Stalinist bureaucracy usurped control from the masses, it was the most democratic state that ever existed. The basic principles of the Soviet power were not

invented by Marx or Lenin. They were based on the concrete experience of the Paris Commune, and later elaborated upon by Lenin.

It is true, the author continues, that in conditions of appalling backwardness, poverty and illiteracy, the Russian working class was unable to hold onto the power they had conquered. The Revolution suffered a process of bureaucratic degeneration that led to the establishment of Stalinism. Contrary to the lies of bourgeois historians, Stalinism was *not the product of Bolshevism but its bitterest enemy*.

The early Soviet Union was in fact not a state at all in the sense we normally understand it, To use the phrase of Marx, it was a "semi-state", a state so designed that it would eventually wither away and be dissolved into society, giving way to the collective administration of society for the benefit of all, without force or coercion. This is the summing up of the author's argument.



Let us now examine the author's points. First, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat". The way he connects Marx with this idea shows, we are sorry to say, his very superficial reading of Marx (in his rush, it seems, to connect the Commune with the Bolshevik regime). There is no textual evidence that Marx "based his idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Paris Commune". There is no extant text where Marx calls the Commune a "dictatorship of the proletariat" for the simple reason that Marx never thought that the communards' revolution was a socialist revolution in his sense. He makes this very clear in his 1881 letter to Domela-Nieuwenhuis where he stressed that "this was merely the rising of a city under exceptional conditions, (and) the majority of the Commune was in no way socialist..." It was Engels who used this expression for the Commune, though more in a kind of rhetoric against the "Social-Democratic philistines".

The expression in question appears in Marx's work for the first time around 1850 in his *Class Struggles in France* as the "dictatorship of the working class", alternatively, "dictatorship of the proletarian class". Around the same date—exactly 1850—in the "Rules" of the "Universal Society of the Revolutionary Communists", collectively drawn up with revolutionaries of different groups. The expression later became famous through Marx's 1852 letter to Weydemeyer.

Now a few words on Woods' presentation of the Bolshevik regime. Following uncritically the claim of the Bolshevik spokespersons, our scholar calls the regime—before "Stalin usurped its control from the masses"—a "workers' state" which was neither "totalitarian", nor "bureau-cratic", and was the "most democratic state in the world". However, there is no evidence to support these wild claims. First, the so-called October Revolution was neither initiated nor led by the working class. Rather, the fate of over 170 million Russians was decided by a handful of non-proletarian radicalised intelligentsia, unelected, irrevocable and totally unaccountable to the working people (so much for the regime's connection with the Paris Commune!). Through the substitution of a whole class by a single party, power was seized under the slogan "all power to the soviets" not from the Provisional Government but *from the soviets themselves*—over the head and behind the back of the Congress of Soviets—by a pre-emptive strike against the self-governing organs—the soviets and the factory committees—of the labouring masses which had spontaneously arisen from the countryside

uprising of the Russian people in February 1917. The Bolsheviks, even though the biggest political party on the eve of October, had no mandate from the labouring people to seize and monopolise power. We here follow the narrative of the eminent historian, A. Rabinowitch. On the eve of the meeting of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets (October 1917) in Petrograd there assembled 670 delegates—of whom 300 hundred were Bolsheviks. Upon their arrival they were asked to fill up personal questionnaires. Tabulation of these questionnaires reveals strikingly that the overwhelming number of delegates, some 505, had the mandate to support the transfer of ‘all powers to the soviets’, that is, “the creation of a soviet government presumably reflective of the party composition of the congress”. Rabinowitch concludes his book by saying:

“It bears repeating that the Petrograd masses, to the extent that they *supported* the Bolsheviks in the overthrow of the Provisional Government, did so not out of any sympathy for strictly Bolshevik rule, but because they believed that the revolution and the congress to be in imminent danger. Only the creation of a broadly *representative, exclusively socialist government* by the Congress of Soviets, which *they thought the Bolsheviks stood for*, appeared to offer the hope of ensuring that there would not be a return to the hated ways of the old regime.” (A. Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, 2004, p. 314. Our emphasis)

What this historian is saying here—the preference of the great majority of the working people for the Soviets over the Bolshevik party—is confirmed also by Trotsky himself, the most famous leader of the party after Lenin. In his monumental *History of the Russian Revolution* (vol. 3) Trotsky mentioned a report of the party committee which showed that only a few days before the seizure of power “in the Moscow district (of Petrograd) troops will come out at the summons of the Soviet, but not of the party. Nobody is eager to go into the streets, but all will appear at the call of the Soviet. At the Petrograd Garrison Conference on the 18th of October delegates reported that their regiments were awaiting the summons of the Soviet to come out. *Nobody mentioned the party, though the Bolsheviks stood at the head of many units.*” (Our emphasis)

An undisputed authority on the soviet movement in Russia, Oskar Anweiler, wrote that though the Bolsheviks seized power under the slogan ‘all power to the soviets’, “an examination of the historical reality shows that only a fraction of the workers’, soldiers’ and peasants’ deputies themselves wanted the seizure of power. The majority of the soviets and the masses represented by them of course greeted the fall of the Provisional Government, but refused to have a Bolshevik hegemony.” (*The Council Movement in Russia 1905-1921*, 1958)

In the event, far from inaugurating a socialist revolution as a self-emancipatory act of the workers themselves, “conquering democracy” through the “autonomous movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority”, as the 1848 *Manifesto* says. October 1917 saw the seizure and monopolisation of power by a tiny minority. Lenin explicitly declared (without consulting anybody in the party), even before the seizure of power, the aim of monopolising the political power by the Bolsheviks (alone) thereby completely contra-dicting Woods’ assertion. “If 130,000 landowners could rule Russia”, Lenin asserted, “then so could 240,000 Bolsheviks.” In fact Lenin, while publicly mouthing the slogan ‘all power to the soviets’, in his confidential correspondence to the Central Committee of his party towards the end of September (1917), expressed utter distrust, if not disdain, for the soviet power—this vehicle of “formal” democracy. He wrote that “it would be

naïve to wait for a formal majority for the Bolsheviks". "To wait for the Congress of Soviets is idiocy, for the Congress will *give nothing, and can give nothing*; to wait for the Congress will be *utter idiocy or sheer treachery*." (Emphasis in text) The correspondence ended up by Lenin's threat to tender his resignation from the Central Committee in the event of the Committee's non-acceptance of what he was demanding. Needless to add, this part of the correspondence was published after Lenin's death in 1924. (See the piece "The Crisis has Matured".)

Always identifying working class power with the power of his party, Lenin asserted six months after October: "We, the party of the Bolsheviks, have conquered power from the rich for the poor. We must now govern Russia." A few months later Lenin added: "Power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat", and told the 8th Party Congress: "We have not till now reached a stage where the labouring masses could participate in government. The soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government by the working people, are in fact organs of government for the working people by the advanced section of the proletariat, but not by the labouring masses." E.H. Carr remarks that Lenin "described the attempt to distinguish between the dictatorship of the class and the dictatorship by the party as an 'unbelievable confusion of thought'". (*The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 1)

As regards the substitution of the class by the party, Trotsky made the stark statement that the "Bolsheviks saw as their mission to stand at the head of the people. The Bolsheviks were the people." (*History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 3) I. Deutscher cites the young Trotsky (1904): "Lenin's methods lead to this: the party caucus substitutes for the party as a whole, then the central committee substitutes for the caucus, and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the central committee." Then Deutscher comments: "Trotsky could have no inkling that one day he himself would go much further than Lenin in preaching and glorifying that substitution." (*The Prophet Armed*, 1963, p. 96) Trotsky went even further in his 1935 *Diary in Exile*: "Had I not been present in 1917 in Petersburg, the October Revolution would still have happened—on the condition that Lenin was present and in command. If neither Lenin nor I had been present in Petersburg there would have been no October Revolution." Quoting these lines Baruch Knei-Paz comments: here the 'vanguard' was reduced to its absolute extreme—not even the party, but one individual, Lenin. This shows the reality of the 'working class state' under the new regime.

E.H. Carr, in his *History of the Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 1, cites Lenin of 1921; "Can every worker know how to administer the state? Practical people know that this is a fairy tale", and then Carr adds that "this reads like an implicit repudiation of his earlier position". As opposed to the idyllic picture of democracy under the Bolsheviks, Carr wrote: 'Central Soviet organs and the local executive committees both ultimately recognised an authority outside the Soviet system.' A distinguished, Left-leaning American historian wrote: "All power to the soviets' appeared to be a reality on October 26, 1917, but it was mostly power to the Bolsheviks in those soviets. By July 1918, the locus of decision-making shifted from the soviets to the communist party. The whole system of soviets and executive committees was reduced to an administrative and propaganda auxiliary of the party... Deprived of power in the soviets and in factories, the Russian proletariat found that the triumph of the dictatorship in its name was a hollow victory." (Robert V. Daniels, *The Red October*, 1967)

Now the claim that under the Bolsheviks there was no state in the proper sense of the term and that

it was only a "semi-state". The latter expression, our scholar claims, is Marx's. As far as we know, Marx never used this expression. This is more in harmony with Lenin's *revision* of Marx's position on the 1871 Commune. Let us delve into this issue a little further. On the eve of his party's seizure of power in 1917, Lenin wrote: "Marx, basing himself on the experience of the Paris Commune, taught that the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state-machine for its own purposes, that the proletariat must smash this machine and *substitute a new one for it*. This new *state machine* was created by the Paris Commune." (Emphasis ours)

Let us see what Marx had *exactly* said in this respect. In his *Civil War in France* (Section III), Marx wrote: "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes", and in his letter to Kugelmann he wrote: "If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire* you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is the preliminary condition of every real people's revolution on the Continent." These lines were fully cited by Lenin in his *State and Revolution* written little more than a month earlier than his text cited above. In the same year even earlier Lenin had spoken of "our attitude towards the state and our demand for a 'commune state', that is a state of which Paris Commune was the prototype". Referring to this type of state, Lenin asserted that "Marx described (this) as the 'political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour'".

It appears that Lenin correctly reproduced most of the things that Marx had said; however, Lenin added things *attributing to Marx* which Marx had never said or written. And to that extent Lenin *revised* Marx in the specific sense in which he himself had used the term against the 'revisionists'. Let us have a closer look at Marx's texts. In the very first quotation from Lenin, compared with the two texts from Marx given above, the italicised words in the Lenin quotation do not appear in either of the Marx texts quoted above. Secondly, Marx nowhere considers the Commune to be a new form of *state* which replaced the old state. Thus in the first outline of the *Civil War in France*, Marx speaks of "displacing the state machinery, the governmental machinery of the ruling classes by a governmental machinery of their own (that is, of the communards—P.C). So it is the governmental, and not state machinery in the case of the communards.

Remarkably, throughout his work on the Commune, Marx speaks of the *government* or *administration* in regard to the communards, not in terms of *state*. The two terms obviously do not mean the same thing. In the discourse on the Commune as well as in his letter to Kugelmann he insists on the total annihilation of the existing state machine, but nowhere does he speak of the need for a new state. In the very first draft of the *Civil War in France*, Marx calls the Commune revolution as a "Revolution not against this or that form of state power. It was a Revolution against the *State* itself." (Emphasis by Marx) The Communards replaced the existing state by their own *government*.



As to the claim that this regime was the most democratic, the very first decree of the new government was the decree on the press installing censorship on the newspapers and periodicals critical of the regime. It shocked many Bolsheviks since it went against their old party programme

which had demanded complete liberty of the press. The dreaded secret police (Cheka) was created shortly afterwards. On Victor Serge's testimony (in his *Memoirs*) this new body passed judgment on the accused and the simple suspects without hearing or seeing them, giving them no chance to defend themselves, and pronounced the sentence (which Serge, sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, considered to be a 'serious error' of the new regime).

After the abolition of death penalty by the Bolshevik regime soon after its installation, in the face of Lenin's stiff opposition—accusing his comrades of having 'pacifist illusion' (see Banyan and Fisher, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1918*, p. 124), it was Trotsky who revived the death penalty the very next year. The occasion was the bitter relations that developed between Trotsky and the commander of the Baltic Fleet, Aleksei Shchastny, on the question of the movement of the Baltic Fleet for demolition, faced with the German threat. Trotsky charged him for neglect of duty. He submitted his resignation which was rejected by Trotsky who summoned him to Moscow where Trotsky singlehandedly organised the investigation, sham trial (years before Stalin's show trials) and death sentence on the spurious charge of attempting to overthrow the Petrograd Commune with the larger aim of fighting the Republic. The execution symbolised the restitution of judicial capital punishment. (All this is taken from the recent authoritative book, *The Bolsheviks in Power*, by the eminent historian, Alexander Rabinowitch, Indiana University Press, 2007, pp. 242-43, 283) The same book adds: "Trotsky was the sole witness allowed to testify at the commander's trial, possibly the first soviet *show trial*. In 1995 the commander was cleared of all charges and officially rehabilitated." (p. 435, our emphasis) The rest is history.

It must be mentioned that years before the German National Socialists introduced concentration camps it was none other than Trotsky, as two distinguished Russian historians report, who on June 4, 1918, used the term 'concentration camp' and ordered that the Czecho-slovaks who would refuse to surrender their arms be sent to the concentration camps along with the counter-revolutionary officers, saboteurs, speculators, parasites. And on August 9, 1918, Lenin urged the Executive Committee of the region of Penza to employ "mass terror on the kulaks, the white guards, and put the doubtful elements in the concentration camps". (M. Heller and A. Nekrich, *Utopia in Power*, 1982, pp. 55-6. We use the French translation of the Russian original.)

What about the claim that the regime was non-bureaucratic and non-totalitarian? Contrary to all that Lenin said in April 1917 about the election and recall of all functionaries, with the beginning of the regime the body of appointed officials at all levels, organically linked with the new central establishment, and organised hierarchically—lower officials accountable only to their superiors—increased with great strides. E.H. Carr mentions that there was organised introduction of party members at all levels into every branch of the administrative apparatus. "Key positions in the administration were filled by party nominations." (*The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, vol. 1, p. 221) Lenin himself told the Fourth Congress of the Comintern (1922) that instead of destroying the old state machine "we took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune", and in his letter to his Bolshevik comrades towards the end of December, 1922, "we took over the old machinery of state from the tsar and the bourgeoisie.", and "that was our misfortune". Here at least the Bolsheviks followed Marx faithfully by "transferring the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to the other".

In this “workers’ state” Lenin discovered in April 1918, that “the Russian is a bad worker in comparison with the workers of the advanced nations”. Therefore, instead of collectively administering the affairs of the workplace, through their own elected organs—a practice which the Bolsheviks championed earlier but now denounced as “petty bourgeois spontaneity”—the masses must show “unquestioning obedience to the single will of the leaders of the labour process, unquestioning subordination during working time to the one-person of the soviet directors provided with the dictatorial powers”. Later in the 9th party Congress Lenin denounced the “still surviving notorious democratism”, and characterised the “outcry against appointees” as “pernicious trash”. Lenin observed that “the fact that a class is the leading class does not make it at once capable of administration”. Would one be too wrong to conclude that the proletariat (in Russia) was incapable of administering its own state?

Again, as to the alleged non-totalitarian character of the regime, such a character was out of the question by the nature of things from the very beginning. We cited earlier Lenin’s claim of the monopoly of Bolshevik power even when it was a much smaller organisation. Shortly before October, he wrote to his leading comrades that once in power “we will not leave it”. In conformity with this logic “soviet democracy lasted from October 1917 to the summer 1918. Beginning with 1919 Bolshevism started to deny all dissidents of the revolution the right to political existence,” so wrote Serge in his *Memoirs*. In his turn Carr notes “after the summer of 1918 other political parties existed only on sufferance, their status becoming more and more precarious, and from 1921 onwards they virtually disappeared.” (*The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*, vol. 1, p. 186)

There was no free all-Russian election after the dismissal of the Constituent Assembly, the last free general election, on spurious grounds, by the Bolsheviks, who received a minority of the votes of the Russian people.



The feeling of alienation of the working people from power started to grow within a short period after the Bolshevik victory. A distinguished German historian, Richard Lorenz, noted that the Party saw itself “confronted with increasing mass dissatisfaction which included all classes and strata”. [*Social History of the Soviet Union* (in German), vol. 1, 1976, p. 121] He notes that by the beginning of 1921 there was “hardly any government in Russia in which the peasants were not waging armed struggle against the state organs”. (p. 120) Plekhanov, in his “open letter to the Petrograd workers” (October 28, 1917), made a remarkable observation: “In the population of your state the proletariat is a minority. The peasants constituting the greater part of the population are a highly unreliable ally for the workers in organising a socialist mode of production. Having seized the political power prematurely, the Russian proletariat will not carry out a social revolution but will only provoke a civil war which will ultimately force it to retreat far back from the positions which were won in February and March.” (cited in R. Medvedev, *The October Revolution*, 1979, pp. 71-2)

(In what follows we draw on William Rosenberg’s important work on the workers’ situation in the immediate post-October period, “Russian Labour and Bolshevik Power“ in Daniel Keiser, ed., *The Workers’ Revolution in Russia, 1917*, 1987) In the eight months or so after October, nothing seemed to have changed for the better. This realisation and the even more precarious uncertain conditions

that soon emerged disturbed and angered broad groups of workers. By the summer of 1918 there were widespread anti-Bolshevik protests. Thus after the initial weeks of 'triumph' and the period of traumatic demobilisation together with rapid socio-economic decline in winter, a "new stage began to unfold in the Bolshevik labour relations, one that soon led to open conflict, repression, and the consolidation of Bolshevik dictatorship over the proletariat, in place of proletarian dictatorship itself". A major outbreak of worker protest in Petrograd occurred around the closing of the Constituent Assembly when a number of demonstrators were killed and wounded. There were huge protests at the plants in the districts which were traditionally Bolshevik strongholds. "Greatest shock seemed to be over the brutality with which the Bolshevik forces had turned 'on their own'."

It is in this context that there emerged the Conference of the Factory and Plant Representatives as a centre of worker dissidence. In the first 'extraordinary' meeting of the Conference (March 3, 1918) delegates attended from at least fifteen metalworking plants and a number of print shops. In a second 'extraordinary' meeting (April 3, 1918) the Bolsheviks were attacked directly for "assaulting the workers' movement with tsarist methods". By April 7 (1918), there were representatives in more than forty Petrograd enterprises representing around fifty thousand workers. There was a one-day strike of protest on June 25 (1918). June 26 saw another 'extraordinary' meeting. It was estimated that out of 146,000 workers in Petrograd about 100,000 supported the Conference's goals. However, the regime's authorities declared that any sign of sympathy for the strike would be considered a criminal act. Rosenberg adds that for Lenin economic chaos was the result of pre-revolutionary circumstances. The factory committee movement still reflected "dangerous anarchistic and syndicalistic tendencies". The factory administration had to come under the centralising and coordinating control of trade unions which themselves had to be integrated into the Bolsheviks' state and party apparatus. The author quotes one spokesperson of the railroad committee: "Accusation of 'anarcho-syndicalism' had always come from anti-worker and rightwing elements. How very strange that representatives of Bolshevik power now join in similar denunciations."

The separation-alienation of the working people from the "workers' state" reached its limit in the movement against the 'workers' state' by the politically most advanced section of Russia's working people in Kronstadt in 1921 [In the following we draw on A. Wade, (ed.), *Documents of Soviet History*, vol. 2, 1993; A. Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 1976; R. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*, 1960: and the best researched work on the subject by I. Getzler, *Kronstadt 1917-1921*, 1983).]

In continuation of the mass protests and the suppressive acts of the regime, strike proclamations now began to appear in the streets of Petrograd. One significant poster appeared on the walls of the city:

"Workers and peasants need freedom. They do not want to live by the decrees of the Bolsheviks, they want to control their own destinies.

"Liberation of all arrested socialists and non-partisan working people.

"Abolition of martial law; freedom of press, speech and assembly for all who labour.

“Free election of shop and factory committees, labour union and soviet representatives.”

The regime replied to the demands of the strikers by making numerous arrests and suppressing several labour organisations. Petrograd was put under “extraordinary martial law”.



The Kronstadt sailors were greatly disturbed by what they heard was happening in Petrograd. The crews of the *Sevastopol* and of the *Petropavlovsk* elected a fact-finding mission of thirtythree sailors who on February 27 proceeded to Petrograd and made the round of some factories as well as of some the military units. From Professor I. Getzler's authoritative account we learn that the Kronstadt sailors found that the workers, whom they addressed and questioned, were too frightened to speak up in presence of Communist factory guards, trade union officials, party committee men and Chekists. The Kronstadters finally found one dare-devil who, taking his life in his hands, said: “Since you are from Kronstadt with which they frighten us all the time, and you want to know the truth here it is: we are starving. We have no shoes and no clothes. We are physically and morally terrorised. Each and every one of our requests and demands is met by authorities with terror, terror, endless terror. No, comrades, the time has come to tell the Communists openly—you have spoken enough on our behalf. Down with your dictatorship which has landed us in this blind alley. Make way for non-partymen. Long live freely elected Soviets! They alone can take us out of this mess!”

On February 28, the delegation returned from Petrograd and reported to a general meeting of the ships' crew who after a long discussion adopted a 15-point resolution embodying the Kronstadters' understanding of the crisis and their critique of the Bolshevik regime, surmounting the effort of the two Communist leaders of the Kronstadt Soviet to block them. Far from the false characterisation of these demands by the regime, the programme underlying the resolution appears to us to be extremely clear and the demands remarkably self-emancipatory—so foreign to the Bolsheviks. Some of the main points of the resolution were: (1) demand for new elections by secret ballot since the ‘present soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants’, (2) freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants including anarchists and left socialist parties, (3) freedom of assembly for trade unions and peasant organisations, (4) freeing all political prisoners of socialist parties as well as workers, peasants, sailors and soldiers imprisoned for their involvement in popular mass movement. The next day at a mass meeting of about 15,000 people, where the veteran central leader of the Communist Party, Kalinin, together with two other party leaders were present, the 15-point resolution was moved and passed quasi-unanimously—the opposition coming only from a handful of Communist Party members. A considerable number of Communists, on the other hand, voted for the resolution.

A delegation from Kronstadt was sent to Petrograd to inform the Petrograd workers about the resolution. But the delegates were arrested. Kronstadt responded by forming a Provisional Revolutionary Committee consisting entirely of ratings of worker or peasant origin. Denying any legitimacy to these grievances the régime branded these Kronstadters—without a shred of evidence—as counter-revolutionaries led by the White Generals and demanded the surrender of the Committee which was promptly refused. Quite logically the Party-State responded to the Kronstadters' demands with two ultimatums: one by Trotsky and the other by the Petrograd

Defence Committee led by Zinoviev asking for unconditional surrender lacking which the insurgents would be 'shot like partridges'. On March 7 the assault by the 'Red' Army on Kronstadt began. The next day the insurgents replied with a moving appeal to the toiling masses of Russia: 'What we are fighting for' emphasising the need for a 'Third Revolution' with 'all power to the soviets and not to parties', leaving behind 'the Constituent Assembly with its bourgeois régime and the dictatorship of the Communist Party with its secret police and its state capitalism'. 'Here in Kronstadt has been laid the first stone of the third revolution.'

On March 18 the fortress was finally stormed by the 'Red' Army followed by massacre of numerous individuals like the young Anatolii Lamanov, the editor of the insurgents' *Izvestiia* and very probably the author of the slogan 'all power to soviets and not to parties', being specially chosen for execution. It is quite in the fitness of things that the Bolsheviks now particularly chose this young revolutionary—characterised as a 'counter-revolutionary'—for execution. The eminent American historian, Robert Daniels, wrote: "It was essential for the Communist Party to suppress the idea of Kronstadt as a movement which *defended the principles of October Revolution against the communists.*" (Our emphasis) We should add that the utter baselessness of the Bolsheviks' accusation of the Kronstadters as being agents of the Whites was confirmed by no less an authority than Lenin himself when he declared at the party's Tenth Congress that '*they do not want the White Guards and they do not want our power either.*' (Our emphasis) Completely misunderstanding the Kronstadters, Lenin thought, as mentioned by Getzler, that 'the Kronstadt episode pointed to the need for the widest possible concession to the middle peasantry, notably local free trade, in short, the NEP. Getzler adds: "The Kronstadters' immediate and indignant protest of 14th March (that) Kronstadt does not demand 'free trade', but the genuine power of the Soviets, was certainly lost on Lenin. From Getzler we learn that the denunciation of Kronstadt continued unabated for months after its savage repression. The denunciation of Kronstadt became a test of loyalty, if not a party ritual. Even Alexandra Kollontai had boasted at the tenth Party Congress that it was members of her Workers' Opposition faction who had been the 'first' to volunteer 'for Kronstadt' and thus 'fulfill our duty in the name of communism and the international workers revolution.... We have not seen in the international communist movement any finger lifted as a protest against the Kronstadt massacre.'" Getzler mentions the sole exception the Dutch dissident Communist Hermann Gorter who, to his credit, protested, saying that it was the 'proletariat of Kronstadt' which rose against the 'communist party'.

Here is what is arguably the most authoritative view—that of Professor Getzler, no anarchist: "It was in its *commune-like self-government* that Red Kronstadt really came into its own, realising the radical, democratic and equalitarian aspirations of its garrison and working people... Power and democracy were the fundamental questions which bedevilled Russia in the 1917 revolution. The Kronstadters' attempt to solve them produced a bustling, self-governing, and highly politicised Soviet demo-cracy, the like of which had not been seen in Europe since the days of the *Paris Commune.*" (Our italics) (pp. 247, 248 of his book cited earlier)

So much for the Bolsheviks' most democratic, non-bureaucratic, workers' semi-state. We have so long neglected the individual, the contrast between whom (the counter-revolutionary) and Lenin-Trotsky (the revolutionaries) has been the starting point of our author's discussion on post-1917 Russia—Joseph Stalin. There is no evidence that Stalin played any noticeable role in all the

misdeeds perpetrated under the Bolshevik leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. Then how did this person appear as the best known individual of the post-1917 Russia after Lenin and Trotsky? Of course, he was not elected and subject to recall (following Lenin's false promise). He did not 'become' the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the party. It was Lenin who *nominated* Stalin to this most powerful position.

The majority of the party took him as the legitimate heir of Lenin, though after a few months, Lenin, as if he had forgotten, complained that Stalin had accumulated immense power in his hands. As Deutscher writes (*Stalin: A Political Biography*, 1949), Stalin was "voted into all his positions by his rivals. The fight began only after he had firmly gripped all the levers of power." Deutscher continues: "The General Secretary knew how to justify each act of repression against malcontent Bolsheviks in the light of the party statutes as they had, on *Lenin's initiative and Trotsky's support*, been amended by the Tenth and Eleventh congresses. He was careful to explain every step he made as an inevitable consequence of decisions adopted by common consent." (Our emphasis) Voilà the *Bolshevik origin* of the Stalin phenomenon.

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