

## Editors' welcome

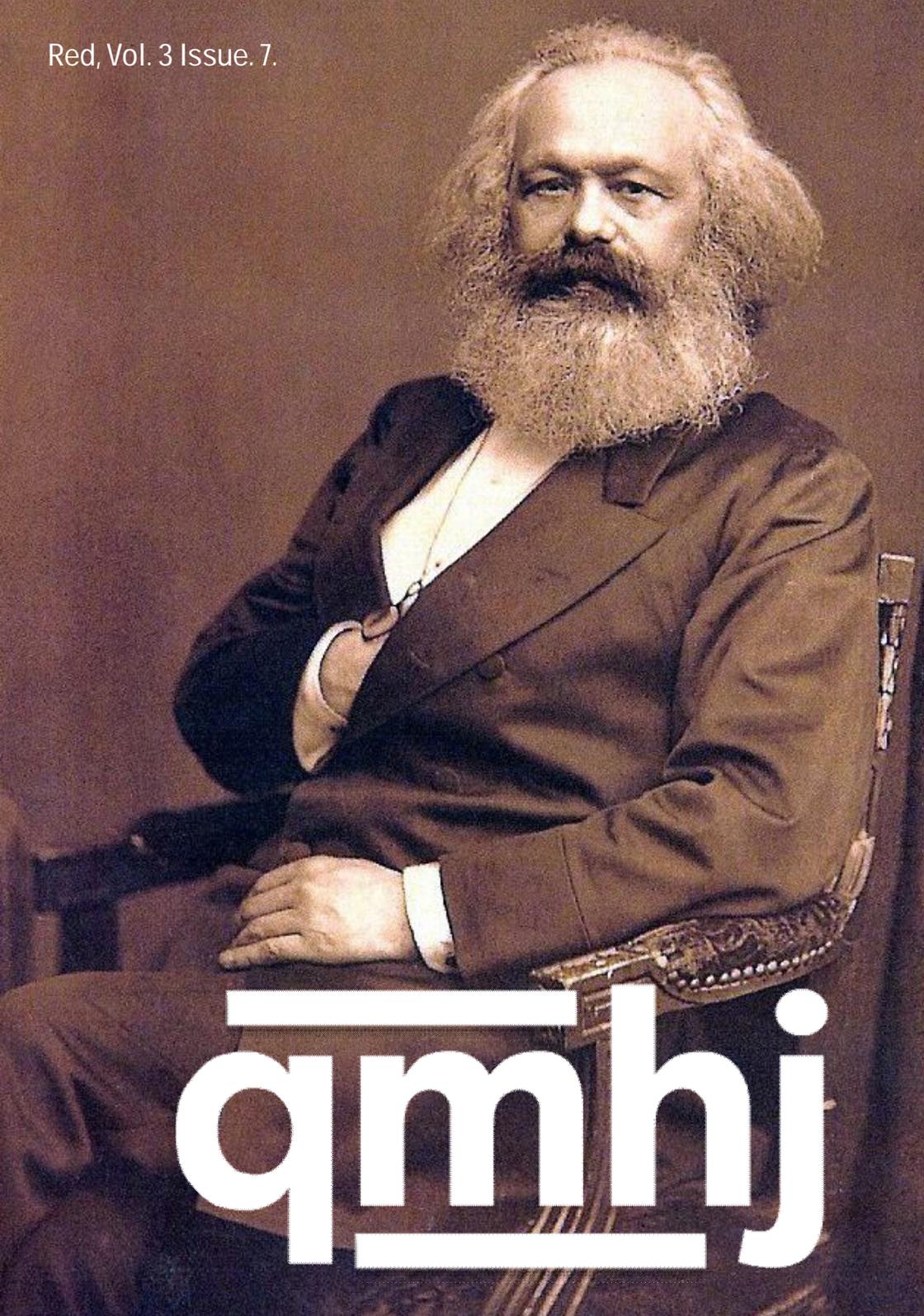
Hello everyone, and welcome to February's 'Red' edition of the QMHJ. As always we had a large number of excellent submissions, and it was a difficult task selecting the final cut; congratulations to those whose essays were selected. Thanks to everyone who sent their essays in, and please continue to submit in the future if you were not successful this time around. March's theme is 'Boom and Bust', and the deadline is Wednesday 5 March. The address to send your work to is [qmulhistoryjournal@outlook.com](mailto:qmulhistoryjournal@outlook.com).

We hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as we relished putting it together, and we look forward to seeing you all at the launch of our New Year print edition at the end of March.

All the best,

Sam and Ruth

Editor-in-Chief and Commissioning-Editor



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## How radical was Hegel's vision of history?

*Tyler Hanley*

*"Where some states possess an army,  
the Prussian army possesses a state."*

*Voltaire*

As Napoleon Bonaparte rode into the city of Jena, Hegel remarked 'I saw the Emperor – this world-soul – riding out of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual, who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it.'<sup>1</sup> In 1806 the French armies had defeated the 800 year old Holy Roman Empire, and recast Prussia as a new state with a humiliated government. A new 'enlightened' bureaucracy would seek a different relationship between people and government, one where the people would help govern themselves.<sup>2</sup> Along with social reforms, the new spirit nurtured philosophical enquiry. Wilhelm Von Humboldt was charged by the Kaiser to craft an enlightened citizenry at the Friederich-Wilhelms-Universitat; its pantheon of lecturers included Barthold Niebuhr, Carl von Savigny, and Hegel himself would replace Johann von Fichte as head of philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Hegel believed Germany would complete in thought what the French revolution had completed in practise.<sup>4</sup>

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Yet Hegel's new philosophy and vision of history, created a gaping chasm between Prussian conservatives and the new, young radicals. His pages would be selectively torn by each side, using his work to justify their own assertions. The true radicalism of Hegel, however, would betray his conservative adherents through his theory of the development of human freedom, the Dialectic, culminating in a legacy to the Young Hegelians and Karl Marx.

The distinction between conservative and radical interpretations of Hegel, Engels argued, lay in the philosopher's conceptions of the state and the march of history.<sup>5</sup> The Hegelian interpretation of the role of the state was essentially taken on by the Prussian government during its liberal years after 1806. In *The Wurttemberg Estates* Hegel wrote: 'There surely cannot be a greater secular spectacle on earth than that of a monarch's adding to the public authority, which *ab initio* is entirely in his hands, another foundation, indeed *the* foundation, by bringing his people into it as an essentially effective ingredient.'<sup>6</sup> Although Hegel was commenting on the province of Baden-Wurttemberg, the inclusion of the Prussian people into public authority was certainly, if not briefly, attempted by the new regime. The crux of Hegelianism, however, is that the liberalisation initiated by the state was used in turn to accept its legitimacy. This formed part of the Hegelian system; the duty-bound link between the state and its people. A bond that Hegel argued achieved freedom through duty.

Tyler Hanley

*Hegel's vision of history*

Whilst the Hegelian system was a process of legitimisation of the state, or at least a certain type of state, the Dialectical method sought to revolutionise the process of history. Karl Marx developed the Hegelian historical theory as 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis'.<sup>7</sup> As one epoch dawns another seeks to take its place and from this a synthesis is created out of the conflict of the opposing forces. This was the progress of history; the Dialectical Method. In *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx quoted Hegel: '[the dialectical] method is the absolute, unique, supreme, infinite force, which no object can resist; it is the tendency of reason to find itself again, to recognise itself in every object.'<sup>8</sup> The process was one of destruction and rebirth, and was emphasised by the radical Young Hegelians.

However the Hegelian System was not as openly revolutionary as his Dialectic. Hegel argued throughout history there have been three stages which pertained to man's process of freedom:

'The *Oriental* peoples do not know that the spirit, or man as such, is free in himself... They only know that *one* is free... This *one* is therefore only a despot, not a free man.'

'Only in the *Greeks* did the consciousness of freedom arise... but they, as well as the Romans, knew only that *some* are free.'

'Only the *Germanic* nations attained the consciousness, in Christianity, that man as man is free'<sup>9</sup>

Hegel's radicalism lay in his view that history followed the path towards human freedom. Although Prussia may not be the first state to come to mind when discussing freedom, Hegel saw in the German people a characteristic that he

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believed was synonymous with freedom. He would write in *The German Constitution*;  
'In the German character one feature, if not a rational one, at least to some extent a noble one, is that it regards law as such, whatever its basis or consequences, as something sacrosanct.'<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, obedience to the law was a process of autonomous liberation. Man does not have to obey the law, but should he choose to he places himself into the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the time. As laws come from the state he is therefore bound to the state should he desire to be free. The reason for Hegel's elevation of the state was that all human activity revolves around it, for all men who do not live in barbarity live in a state; 'only on this soil, i.e., in the state, can art and religion exist... Indeed, all great men have formed themselves in solitude, but only by working for themselves upon what the state has already created... Thus the state is the more precisely defined object of world history in which freedom gains objective existence.'<sup>11</sup> The state provides the opportunity to spiritually choose to submit to the *collective*, rather than live under despotic or semi despotic systems. The *collective* may take on the form of a Rousseauian 'general will', a democratically orientated state that is governed by the great mass of people for its own welfare.

Although theoretically radical, the Hegelian System of freedom was taken by many Prussian conservatives as a justification for their own state. An emphasis was taken away from the march of history and placed on the obedience to the law. Prussia after the 1806 defeat was the agency of history - the zenith of reason.

Tyler Hanley

*Hegel's vision of history*

The reformers celebrated Hegel's seemingly declared 'end of history' and packed the lecture halls of Berlin with conservative Hegelians espousing the virtues of law and the 'enlightened' Prussian state of education and participation.<sup>12</sup>

The final stage of history however would not prevail in Prussia. Marx wrote in the New York *Tribune* that by 1856 'the landocracy, or *Krautjunktors*, as they are called in Prussia, so far from deeming themselves happy in serving as a medieval ornament to the bureaucracy, are striving with all their might to degrade the bureaucracy and make it the simple executor of their class-interests.'<sup>13</sup> The state could not be the historic vehicle to deliver humanity to freedom. Marx believed that whilst history is indeed a process of human freedom, Hegel's assertion that 'duty to the state' is the realisation of freedom was a religious fantasy. Marx wrote in *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*: 'just as the nations of the ancient world lived their pre-history in the imagination, in mythology, so we Germans have lived our post-history in thought, in *philosophy*. We are the *philosophical* contemporaries of the present day without being its *historical* contemporaries.'<sup>14</sup> Marx argued that the driving force in history must have a material basis;

'Where, then, is the positive possibility of a German emancipation?

*Answer:* In the formation of a class with radical chains, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, an estate which is the dissolution of all estates, a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no particular right because no particular wrong but wrong generally is perpetrated against it.'<sup>15</sup>

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A lack of radical sentiment was outlined (although later overturned, as shall be discussed) when Engel remarked in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*: 'the French were in open combat against all official science, against the Church and often also against the state... On the other hand, the Germans were professors, state-appointed instructors of youth; their writings were recognised textbooks, and the terminating system of the whole development – the Hegelian System – was even raised, as it were, to the rank of a royal Prussian philosophy of state!'<sup>16</sup> Both Marx and Engels criticised Hegel for his *practical* impotence. Marx criticised Hegel's mover in history the *Zeitgeist* as an unearthly basis for history which therefore could not be history. He would write in *The German Ideology*; 'men must be in a position to live in order to be able to make history. But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing, and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself.'<sup>17</sup> Hegel's vision of history therefore overlooked the true driving force in history – materialism.

Hegel's process of history the Dialectical Method was where the true radicalism of his philosophy lay. Marx revealed the consequences of Hegelian Dialectics in *The German Ideology*:

Tyler Hanley

*Hegel's vision of history*

'As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution. The decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy, which began with Strauss, has developed into a universal ferment into which all the powers of the past are swept. In the general chaos mighty empires have arisen only to meet with immediate doom, heroes have emerged momentarily only to be hurled back into obscurity by bolder and stronger rivals. It was a revolution beside which the French revolution was child's play, a world struggle beside which the struggles of the Diadochi appear insignificant. Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of rapidity, and in the three years 1842-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries.'<sup>18</sup>

According to Marx the Hegelian Dialectic and its legacy had completely revolutionised the process of history, destroying the credibility and durability of the strongest empires and epochs. The Dialectic was utterly destructive, critical and merciless. The concept was used against the Prussian state by the radical adherents of Hegel's philosophy the Young Hegelians. In their early life Marx and Engels would adhere to a radical interpretation of Hegelianism whilst the Dialectic would become an intrinsic part of Marxian philosophy. Engels criticised the *practical* impotence of Hegelian philosophy but he found the *theoretical* vision of history monumental. At the *End of Classical German Ideology* he wrote: 'The Roman Republic was real, but so was the Roman Empire, which superseded it. In 1789 the French monarchy had become so unreal, that is to say, so robbed of all necessity, so irrational, that it had to be destroyed by the Great revolution... And so, in the course of development, all that was previously real becomes unreal, loses its necessity, its right of existence, its

Hence the reality of anything depends upon its necessity within the course of development; reality is necessity and necessity is reality. However, when something becomes unnecessary to human development its reality is diminished. This proves the radicalism of Hegelian Dialectics. Feudalism, the Russian monarchy of 1917 and the Soviet Union were all at some point necessary in the march of history, but became so 'unreal' that they were destroyed by the very thing that had required their existence - human development. Engels explained the consequences of this theory: 'In accordance with all the rules of the Hegelian method of thought, the proposition of the rationality of everything which is real resolves itself into the other proposition: All that exists deserves to perish.'<sup>20</sup>

The Dialectical Method became the flip side of Hegel's belief in adherence to the state. It is true that Hegelian philosophy dictated that to become free, to be included in the development of mankind, man must submit to the situation of the day. However, no ultimate submission could ever be given to an epoch because of its mortality. Truth was no longer a component of dogmatic *finality*. Truth was now part of the process itself. Marx declared that this process of history developing into many forms must die because of its own obvious unnecessary in a state of ridicule; 'why does history proceed in this way? So that mankind will separate itself happily from its past.'<sup>21</sup> The radicalism of Hegel's vision of history lay in its constant revolutionary destruction; the process of history was ultimately anti-conservative and thrived on

intellectual enterprise.

The strength of Hegel's Dialectical Method led to a relentless critique of religion and the Prussian state by the Young Hegelians. In response to the government's repression, Hegelianism was used to attack the two foundations of the status quo: the state and religion. The leading Young Hegelian, Bruno Bauer, attempted to reconcile Hegel with atheism:

'If one looks into what Hegel means by the reconciliation of reason and religion, it is that there is no God and the Ego has only to deal with itself in religion, whereas in religion it means to deal with a living personal God. Realised self-consciousness is that play in which the Ego is doubled as in a mirror, and which after holding its image for thousands of years to be God, discovers the picture in the mirror to be itself... Religion takes that mirror image for God, philosophy casts off the illusion and shows Man that no one stands behind the mirror.'<sup>22</sup>

Bauer applied the Hegelian Dialectic to religion itself, and concluded that it was a mere projection of mankind onto an illusory 'other'. Hegel's own writings showed a tendency to see religion as a mere stage in history that came before the dawn of *philosophy*. He wrote that 'God is only God insofar as he knows himself; his knowing himself is a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God that goes on to man's knowing himself in God.'<sup>23</sup> Hegel argued here that God can only come into being when man *truly* knows him. It would be fair to say that Hegel's own dialectic, when applied to religion, would place him as more of a humanist than a theist.

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True to the Dialectic Bauer gave religion an antithesis. In order to further mankind's development not only would God have to die but also along with it the whole of Christian anti-human dogma of incapacity and original sin. In the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* Marx acknowledged the work of the Young Hegelians in attacking the myth of religion. He declared that the critique of religion is complete in Germany, concluding that man makes religion; religion does not make man.<sup>24</sup> The revolutionary nature of the Dialectical Method had therefore been used not only against epochs but against theology.

Finally, the other radical aspect of Hegel's philosophy of history was *criticism*. As human history is the path toward human freedom, criticism becomes a way of attacking the obstacles. As the Dialectical Method was a process of thesis-antithesis-synthesis the only way to move from the original thesis is to criticise it. This had been so with religion and with the state, and would also be so with Hegelianism itself. Regarding the state, Hegel's own belief was an unhappy compromise between a state based on 'free subjectivity' and the tutelage represented by absolutism.<sup>25</sup> Bauer had criticised Hegel's conclusion, deducing himself that the only way to secure a state that supports the development of human freedom would be to make it a republic.<sup>26</sup> Another contemporary Young Hegelian Arnold Ruge equally criticised the *Philosophy of Right* for a complete lack of public discussion.<sup>27</sup>

Marx's own *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* was perhaps the most truthful implementation of the Hegelian Dialect.

Tyler Hanley

*Hegel's vision of history*

His obsession with criticism was clear: 'criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain, not so that man shall bear the chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall cast off the chain and gather the living flower. The critique of religion disillusioned man so that he will think, act, and fashion his reality as a man who has lost his illusion and regained his reason, so that he will revolve about himself as his own true sun.'<sup>28</sup> The ultimate use of criticism here marked a transition from Hegelian transcendence to Marxian materialism; criticism is no longer the end but the means to the perfect state; 'indignation is its essential pathos, denunciation its principle task.'<sup>29</sup> What remained from the writings of Bauer, Marx and Ruge was the legacy that Hegelianism will eat itself. By its very nature, the Dialectic criticises and consumes all.

The apparent practical ineptitude of Hegel's philosophy would suggest that his vision was not very radical; the Hegelian emphasis on *ideas* rather than the *material* placed it on a weak footing for enacting actual change. This immaterial basis also missed the point of historical development. In *The German Ideology* Marx wrote 'the Young Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly world-shattering statements, are the staunchest conservatives. The most recent of them have found the correct expression for their activity when they declare they are only fighting against *phrases*.'<sup>30</sup> Yet the most potent and truly radical element of Hegel's philosophy was the Dialectic, the march of history. It is perhaps the biggest intellectual revolution in history.

The 'Dragon Seed' of Marxism the Dialectical Method truly discovered a system that directed human history onto a process of liberation refuting any theory of permanence and conservatism, despite the assertions of Hegel's contemporary Prussian bureaucrats. From this the radicalism of Hegel's philosophy is clear. As the beginning of Marxian thought it had created a new definition of human history; it was the process toward enlightened freedom. This process refuted perpetuation; it was one of criticism, conflict and change. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis – *pure dynamism*.

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## To what extent were policies under Stalin truly aimed at creating a 'new Soviet person'?

*Catriona Tassell*

Stalin aimed to create a new utopian model through the ideological regime of communism, a political theory derived from Karl Marx that advocated the abolition of private ownership in favour of collectivism in a classless society. Aided by the brutalization of humanity in the post-World War One milieu, Stalinism was provided with a malleable society immune to shocking experiences. Therefore, Stalin's policies, aimed at creating a 'new Soviet person', ranged from the manipulation of education to excessive violence under the secret police. Stalin dictatorially endeavoured to control every aspect of people's lives within the Soviet Union, removing resistant elements of society to comply with his conception the 'new Soviet person'. The Soviet cultural project 'involved more than producing clean, efficient and literate citizens.'<sup>1</sup> Both socially and economically, Stalin's policies moulded a new type of person, drastically altering the way people lived whilst eliminating capitalism. Through altering the class system, Stalin's policies needed to permeate all levels of society with new values that were 'qualitatively different from those who lived under capitalism', enabling the transfer of his conceptual model into reality.<sup>2</sup>

By 1929, having beaten his critics on the left and right, communism would be

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imposed on the countryside and, in opposition to Lenin's previous stance, 'farming would be collectivized and mechanized'.<sup>3</sup> Collectivization, alongside education and industrialization, constituted the 'triple revolution' instigated by the first five-year plan, transforming the economy and society.<sup>4</sup> The organization of collective and state farms formed the basis of Stalin's plan to extract greater surpluses in the face of the grain crisis during the winters of 1927 and 1928. However, the scheme also promoted a more sinister cardinal principle, the elimination of the *Kulaks*, who, in Stalin's eyes, by their very nature constituted a "class-alien" element.<sup>5</sup> Coercive measures such as the threat of exile were utilized to win over middle-peasants who oscillated between supporting and opposing state initiatives.<sup>6</sup> Gradually, as Stalin declared, a "ground-breaking" transformation of society was taking place and Stalin's policies were "winning the vast masses of the peasantry to the side of the working class".<sup>7</sup> The peasants became a singular proletariat body of collectivized labourers rather than landowners, shedding their 'petty bourgeois mentality for socialist consciousness'.<sup>8</sup> Hoffmann further emphasizes this altered identity through the notion that 'peasants who joined collective farms lived "a collectivist life" which altered their individualist way of thinking'.<sup>9</sup> Collectivization appears to be truly aimed at creating a 'new Soviet person', reinforced by Anton Makarenko, a Russian and Soviet educator and writer, who believed the "interests of the collective" to be "superior to the individual", promoting a new-found respect and interest for the life of comrades alongside the abolition of greed, egotism and selfishness.<sup>10</sup>

The creation of a singular body of people relied heavily on the violent and oppressive instruction to "liquidate the *Kulaks* as a class".<sup>11</sup> A vast number of *Kulaks* were deported to isolated lands in Siberia and their houses and farms turned into collectives.<sup>12</sup> *Kulaks* were also deported to labour camps and re-educated through forced labour. Throughout the 1930s, Stalin promoted a similar policy to cleanse his communist proletarian party, favouring members with factory worker and poor peasant background over professionals. In 1933, the first in a series of party "cleansings" was carried out to review party membership whilst weeding out undesirables.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis shifted to promote members who constituted "the best people" in Soviet society with a strong emphasis on Stalin's ideal individual.<sup>14</sup> Stalin endeavoured to create a party who could be relied on to promote his dictatorial ideas regarding the 'new Soviet person' and the interrogative procedures which extensively examined potential party members character and background reflected his desire to promote a single identity. The politburo, the chief political and executive committee of the Communist party, shared such a similar ideological stance to Stalin that they were often referred to collectively as "our leaders".<sup>15</sup> Not only did Stalin begin to alter the identities of the masses, he also carefully selected and created a Communist party with members who became indistinguishable from one another, unable to form organized opposition or instigate open debate. Furthermore, Stalin oppressed free speech, thus heavily influencing the creation of a 'new Soviet person'.

Many of Stalin's dismissals were formed on the basis of religious affiliation

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and one of the 'touchstones of a good communist' was having 'rid oneself of the superstition of religion'.<sup>16</sup> One of the most common ideological offenses of a party member was to have 'allowed his wife or any other female relative to remain a believer, to baptize their children, attend church or keep religious icons in the house'.<sup>17</sup> Stalin endorsed 'intensive assault on religion, harassment of believers, and destruction of houses of worship'.<sup>18</sup> Although Lenin had also attacked religion, Stalin greatly altered the country through a sudden change to widespread atheism and a newfound reliance on scientific explanations. The belief that further perspectives of science and technical progress depended, primarily, on achievements in 'the key branches of natural science' such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology spurred Stalin's desire to fight against religion in order to aid technical, medical and agricultural improvement.<sup>19</sup> The worship of religion was also discouraged in relation to Stalin's autocratic rule and 'worship of Stalin' was promoted instead.<sup>20</sup> Nearly 40,000 Christian churches and 25,000 mosques were closed and church bells were melted into scrap metal.<sup>21</sup> Church leaders were arrested, imprisoned and forbidden to organize any religiously based events in public, providing the 'new Soviet person' with a transforming ideology. Religion was one of the many aspects of "backwardness" related to the old Russia, and needed to be changed 'in the name of progress and culture'.<sup>22</sup> Propaganda depicted elderly people attempting to drag children to church instead of school alongside slogans such as 'Religion is bad. Protect your children'.<sup>23</sup> Stalin's anti-religious policies drastically influenced the

creation of a 'new Soviet person', providing people with a new set of beliefs and targeting children to alter the future. Furthermore, if people did not comply and abandon religion the League of Militant Atheists, who had 5.5 million members by 1933, would 'utilize every method available to them' to 'stimulate people to criticize religion'.<sup>24</sup>

Other organizations, such as the Komsomol, who spread communist teachings, accelerated the transition from the old life to the new and children were often targeted. One of the most effective organizations engaged in educating youths in new Communist principles was the Young Pioneers.<sup>25</sup> The Young Pioneers extended the values taught by worldwide organizations such as the Scouts, opposing religion, promoting collectivism and helping 'ones comrades over self-sufficiency'.<sup>26</sup> The young generation in the Soviet Union of the 1930s was 'taught to be truthful, uncompromising about shortcomings, and prepared to expose and fight the enemies of socialism'.<sup>27</sup> Zalkind believed children to be malleable, comprised of an "extraordinary plastic material", yielding to educational pressure "much more flexibly than the adult part of the population" and, therefore, the "richest soil for growth".<sup>28</sup> Through educative measures, children were consequently targeted as the quickest route to reforming the population. In 1936, a special congress on children's literature 'encouraged writers to act as "engineers of the human soul" by writing books "to help form the consciousness and character of the future citizens of a classless socialist society".<sup>29</sup> V. Bubenkin, a speaker at the congress, went as far as to say that

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children's literature was a "state matter", giving "birth to a new Soviet Person with healthy ideas, tastes and habits" and designed to imbue children with "new noble communist qualities".<sup>30</sup> Most levels and areas of education were affected, and in subjects such as history, Stalin indoctrinated students through a syllabus that the central committee believed would firmly fix important events, personalities and dates in pupils' minds.<sup>31</sup> Stalin's educational policies enabled students to become vessels of knowledge, omitting information that he deemed to be obstructive in influencing a positive outlook on his communist regime, thus aimed at creating a change in the next generation.

On a less successful level, Soviet thinkers promoted the concept of refashioning living arrangements to inculcate collectivist awareness. Although Stalin acknowledged the potential of urban planning to enable social transformation, instead he gave priority to industrial production allowing 'economic planners to violate the urban plans that were in place'.<sup>32</sup> On a more 'micro level', communes and collectives were recognized as an environmental vehicle to 'reorganize people's lives and thinking'.<sup>33</sup> Zalkind believed communal housing had the capacity to "emancipate the family from the petty details of everyday life and direct the freed energy to social activism".<sup>34</sup> Alongside the process of collectivizing farms, in some regions peasants were forced into outright communes.<sup>35</sup> However, the ability of Stalin to create a 'new Soviet person' is evident through the free choice of many students to form communal housing in the 1920s and 1930s. Some merely pooled

wages whilst others required all belongings be held and used in common.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the willingness of many Soviet citizens to conform to Stalin's life changing policies, in many cases Stalin had to resort to coercive violent measures in order to force compliance. Stalin believed that his work was being undermined by a conspiracy inside and outside the Soviet Union, prompting him to resort to violence in order to prevent the contamination of his attempt to create a new society through the concept of a 'new Soviet person'.<sup>37</sup> The most famous phase of Stalin's violence, later named the Great Terror, occurred in 1937 to 1938, involving the mass scale execution of national minorities who were conceived to be 'class or ethnic enemies'. Stalin's suppression of ethnic minorities would have instilled racist and nationalist sentiments amongst the Russian population and would have illustrated Stalin's power, compelling others to abide by his new policies.

Although there were some forms of resistance to Stalin's implementation of policies that were gradually creating a 'new Soviet person', it was safer for people to alter their lifestyles when the consequence of resistance could be execution. The communists' sense of mission and intellectual superiority facilitated their dedication to enforce Stalin's policies. Stalin gained an image as 'father of the people', reflecting the states protective function over the 'weaker and less developed citizens: women, children, peasants and members of "backwards" ethnic groups'. He therefore had the paternalistic ability to mould his subjects who became obedient citizens. Nikita Khrushchev later criticized Stalin and the "cult of personality" he had developed,

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reflecting Stalin's control over the masses. Stalin's policies regarding collectivization, purges, religion, education and ethnic minorities reflect his desire and on-going attempt to create a 'new Soviet person' whilst ridding society of those who did not fit the mould or had the potential to obstruct his vision.

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5. *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*, "1921 Collectivization: Liquidation of the *Kulaks* as a Class", [online] <http://bit.ly/1poBPig> [accessed on 27 March 2013].
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Donna Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values*, p. 49.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 48 and p. 49.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 46 and p. 47.
11. Isaac Deutscher, 'Absence and Presence: The 'Great Change' in The Stalinist Dictatorship, ed. by Chris Ward (London: The Hodder Headline Group, 1998), p. 102.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
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31. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
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36. Evan Mawdsley, *The Stalin Years*, pp. 100 - 101.
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## How do Marx and Engels envisage the demise of Capitalism in the Manifesto of the Communist Party?

*Nirah Knight*

In his introduction, Peter Osborne comments that 'Marx and Engel's *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is probably the most influential text ever written, outside of the great world religions'.<sup>1</sup> Although this may be perceived as a strong comment, it can be argued that his opinion is somewhat justified. The manifesto was translated into 35 languages and 544 separate editions prior to 1918.<sup>2</sup> This could provide insight into the popularity of the manifesto. One of the key themes Marx and Engels address is the demise of capitalism, which is outlined in the first section of the manifesto. Mirroring this, Osborne writes that 'its first section lives on as a political text' 'as an image of Capitalism'.<sup>3</sup> Because of constraints on the word limit, it is this section that I will focus on in answering this question.

It was in 1847 that the Communist League assembled in London and commissioned Marx and Engels to produce the manifesto, whereby Marx was the principle writer and Engels edited and annotated the text.

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However, having known each other before, they mirrored similar view-points (both agreeing with Hegelian theory) and both influencing each other in regards to communism and capitalism. Furthermore, after the *Manifesto of the Communist Party's* production, Marxist theory developed and became globally acknowledged, within which capitalism is criticised and man's self-consciousness is realised. This is particularly present in the first part of the manifesto. The bourgeoisie represents the capitalists in the manifesto, and so the demise of capitalism works in tandem with the demise of the bourgeoisie. Osborne makes an interesting point that 'the bourgeoisie is a nationally politically organised social class, while capital is an impersonal, transitional, ideally objective [...] with which the bourgeoisie cannot be considered simply identical'.<sup>4</sup> However, for the purposes of addressing the issue of capitalism, they are the class who represent its demise. When discussing the demise of capitalism, it can be summarised as the growing rift between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, eventually leading to revolution. This in turn is down to several reasons, mainly the loss of individuality, exploitation of the proletariat and new markets and industrialisation.

When studying Marx, a reader must be aware of why he was a revolutionary thinker. Born in 1818 in the wake of French Revolutions, he had the mindset that strains in society could only be overcome by revolution, allowing a rebuild of societal structures. However, in the manifesto, it is argued that capitalism is a necessary step in society, but something that was fundamentally flawed and bound

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for failure. This is represented by the fall of the bourgeoisie who were the controllers of capital. Furthermore, Osborne mirrors this opinion, calling capitalism 'a passing historical phase'.<sup>5</sup> Overall, it can be argued that Marx was 'a critical analyst of Capitalism, a theorist of its social dynamics and the conditions needed to overcome it', and similarly with Engels.<sup>6</sup> This is shown in the first part of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the main conditions are bred from expansion and imperialism, both of which will be the continued underlying themes throughout this discussion.

The class divisions and conflicts that Marx and Engels explain are the main reasons for the start of the demise of Capitalism. The once 'complicated arrangement of society into various orders' eventually became 'two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat', with the class distinctions becoming evident.<sup>7</sup> This was mainly because, whereas the feudal petty bourgeois could develop into a bourgeois, the modern labourer just sank deeper. Marx and Engels make the conclusion that 'pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth' and so, while the rich get richer, the poor get poorer.<sup>8</sup> This then led to obvious animosity between the two classes, which exacerbated the class distinctions already in place. From this, these questions must be asked: why were there these class divisions and why were the two groups growing further and further apart? And in answering them, the fall in bourgeois power and the growth in numbers and strength of the proletariat must be assessed in tandem because neither is mutually exclusive.

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The manifesto explains the controlling nature of the bourgeoisie and their constant need for change. As the business owners, the bourgeoisie are the capitalists in society and the controllers of the working class (here, the proletariat). The feudal system as a whole became too archaic to support modern expansionism and trade, and so these institutions were taken over by the bourgeoisie. In turn, the bourgeoisie 'creates a world after it's own image', whereby they are the overlords of its functions.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, this distinctive group of capitalists represented a powerful body, alienating themselves from the population. As employers of the proletariat, it put them in an uncomfortable predicament of both wanting to be in control, but also not creating enough animosity to lead to revolution.

Because of industrialisation, the emergence of new worlds and economic advances like transport links, the bourgeoisie was able to constantly develop and improve. Marx and Engels suggest that 'as industry, commerce, navigation and railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages'.<sup>10</sup>

The bourgeois ability to take advantage of an oncoming world market meant that their power could climb at a rapid rate, whereby they could expand businesses and markets. However, the extent of industrialisation and the bourgeoisie involvement in it added to the conflicts between them and the proletariat. The manifesto creates an image of a bourgeois parasite, stating that they 'cannot exist without constantly

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revolutionising the instruments of production' as a means of increasing capital.<sup>11</sup> However, revolutions in machinery had a detrimental impact on the pride of the proletariat. The bourgeois became 'the leaders of whole industrial armies'<sup>12</sup> as the need for manufacture decreased because it was no longer fast enough to keep up with growing demand. This industrialisation therefore brought with it the division of labour.

In order to understand Marxist theory in particular, Marx's interest in Adam Smith's ideology must be recognised. Not only Smith's example of division of labour in a pin factory to show effective working, but also his four stages theory in relation to the divisions in history (hunter gatherers, pastoralists, agriculturalists and commerce). With this in mind, it provides more reason for Marx and Engels' inclusion of the change from feudal to modern bourgeois society. In regards to division of labour, admittedly, it was a useful structure to introduce in order to achieve maximum efficiency (exemplified in Smith's pin factory in 1759). However, from the point of view of the proletariat, there was a mass loss of individuality and workman's pride because of the simplification of their trade. The manifesto states that 'it has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into [society's] paid wage labourers'; work lost its craft.<sup>13</sup> Jobs were no longer acknowledged for their skill and even converted a 'family relation to a mere money relation'<sup>14</sup> whereby there was 'no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, callous "cash payment"'.<sup>15</sup>

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This emphasises the extent at which the 'spectre'<sup>16</sup> of capitalism was taking over the old values of pride and self-fulfilment, and replacing them with the need of production to fulfil a greater power (the bourgeoisie).

Interestingly, Eric Hobsbawm contradicts this idea, mentioning that 'before the 1960s the Manifesto's announcement that capitalism brought about the destruction of the family seemed not to have been verified'.<sup>17</sup> Having said that, this can still therefore be argued as the beginning of the faltering relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Suddenly, workers were not being hired for their skills, but rather for how cheaply they could be hired. The manifesto goes on to suggest that 'differences of age and sex [no longer had] any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to age and sex'.<sup>18</sup> Marx and Engels describe the crux of this situation, whereby 'modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist' where the proletariat are used as pawns in the bourgeois aim to dominate the economy.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, as Marx and Engels state, this exploitation would leave embitterment and thought of revolution in the hearts of most proletarians.

The bourgeoisie need to globalise to increase capital then led to their exploitation of more proletariats and their economies. Marx and Engels comment that they 'find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant

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lands and climes', further highlighting the bourgeois drive for profit.<sup>20</sup> This parallel colonisation of new lands was predominantly to open up free trade, largely because of problems with 'the epidemic of overproduction'. The reason it was a problem is because an excess of assets led to mass debt and because the wealth was put into the hands of a collective few, the system soon spiralled out of control. The choice therefore would either be to destroy assets or to expand into new territories in order to open up the market and have a larger clientele, or both destroy and conquer in order to maintain their dominance.<sup>21</sup>

The now international proletariat, who were concerned that their old industries were being 'destroyed', did not welcome this.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, there was suddenly a 'world literature' whereby nations' individual creations became 'common property'.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, the bourgeoisie can be viewed as being revolutionary, by overriding economies with their own and imposing modern economics on a global market. This "one size fits all" attitude that 'lumped together [loosely connected colonies] into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest' dissatisfied the inhabitants because these non-identical colonies needed different policies depending on their geography, economy and customs.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, particularly with overproduction, the bourgeoisie used these new linked colonies to buy each other's excess stock. An example would be tea and opiates trading between China and India, where both addictive substances were exchanged between the two, balancing out trade and restoring power to the

bourgeoisie.

Up to now, Marx and Engel's account of the demise of capitalism doesn't seem much of a demise at all. Contrastingly, they show the initial strength of capitalism, and how the bourgeois capitalists could manipulate economies in order to remain in control of their capital. However, the pitfalls with the bourgeoisie properly ensue with their globalisation. With more territories come many more proletariat than bourgeoisie. Therefore, a positive relationship can be seen between the increase in capital and the increase in the proletariat. Although insinuated to be a good thing, the increase of workers actually was a problem; there were now a lot more people to oppose the small group of bourgeoisie. Colonisation meant that 'all, even the most barbarian, nations [were drawn] into civilization'<sup>25</sup> creating massive forces which almost seemed to have been 'conjured out of the ground'<sup>26</sup>. These uncontrolled forces could overcome capitalism if and when they can be an organised crowd, focussed on bringing down the bourgeoisie.

As well as the bourgeois failure to assess fully the extent of their exploitations and the growing reactions against them, the proletariat were growing in number and in strength. The railways and communication improvements created 'one national struggle between classes' which took years when before it took centuries.<sup>27</sup> This therefore saw the swift development of the proletariat. Whereas before the bourgeoisie rallied the proletariat together to fight united against the 'enemies of their enemies' (i.e. the remaining aristocracy), when the lower wages were imposed

and the number of the proletariat was greater, they realised that the bourgeoisie was exploiting them.<sup>28</sup> From this came the birth of Trade Unions, which were actively against bourgeoisie control and essentially, their capitalism.

Parallel to the increase of the proletariat from the working class, many of the lower middle class were pushed out of the bourgeoisie and into the proletariat. Furthermore, often some of the ruling class would move away from the bourgeoisie when class struggles materialised, and instead join the proletariat (especially some bourgeois ideologists).<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, urbanisation in major towns meant that there was further population growth in the proletariat. The agriculturalists in the countryside were needed in cities to first help with labour, and later to help deal with overproduction. In a sense which Marx and Engels argue, this saved the population from the monotonous and archaic and idiotic lifestyles of the country. However, it also created a reliance of the country folk in the townspeople, as well as an increased strain on resources, space and jobs.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, this could have caused tensions in cities, which would have further strained the proletariat-bourgeoisie relationship. This can therefore justify the view that the 'proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population'<sup>31</sup> (apart from perhaps the pauper class who were often open to bribery for their support and so their loyalties were dubious), outlining the diminishing support for the bourgeoisie and so the growth of the proletariat.

With the growth of the proletariat and their underlying dissatisfaction with the bourgeoisie, they only needed slight provocation to make them revolutionary, as

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the subtext of Marx and Engels' discussion throughout the first section.

Their qualm with the bourgeoisie was the constant wage cuts that they had to deal with. This happened because of the machinery eradicating the distinctions of labour, which in turn reduced wages because there was no apparent skill to be paid for. However, this problem occurred early on, and so reaction against wage reductions was taken out on the aristocracy. It was only when the proletariat became aware of bourgeoisie motives that their attentions turned. Those being, they all wanted to be the most successful private capitalists, and so 'the growing competition among' them resulted in a commercial crisis and so wages fluctuated even more.<sup>32</sup> What the manifesto is pointing out is that often, economic change (especially focussed on wages of the proletariat) will spark historical change through the means of revolution. And by this point in events, the bourgeoisie would have been wise to feel a sense of foreboding from the reactions of the proletariat, instead of arming them with more weapons.

Here arises the eventual fall of the bourgeoisie, and so, capitalism. The bourgeoisie help create 'a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells'.<sup>33</sup> First, by referring to a sorcerer, the underlying suggestion is that, like a sorcerer, capitalism should not and cannot exist. Here, Marx and Engels highlight the main flaw with the bourgeoisie system of control; they created a capitalist economy that they could not control.

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Yes, it may have coincided with their own wants and needs, but capitalism as an institution was not good or beneficial to the whole populace. Furthermore, the more they expanded into new colonies, the less capitalism as a lifestyle matched the people who had to live by it.

It should have been clear from the outset that capitalism was fundamentally flawed and bound for failure. This is mirrored in the conclusion to the first section, where the manifesto states that the bourgeoisie's 'fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable'.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the ways in which the bourgeoisie secured political advantage and that it 'conquered for itself [...] exclusive political sway' by overpowering the feudal hierarchies, left the bourgeoisie in a precarious position. If they exercised their position of power too much (which they eventually did), then it would most probably end in revolution against them. This is particularly shown, not only through their exploitation of the people in work, but also by using their position to manufacture friction between the proletariat and the aristocracy. Marx and Engels comment that 'the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie'.<sup>35</sup> It is inevitable that a small group with this much power who exercise it inefficiently are bound to fail eventually.

The bourgeoisie also made the error of subconsciously weaponising the proletariat against them, partly by dragging them into the political arena to have the

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their support. Often, the bourgeoisie would face opposition from aristocracy and the bourgeoisie who did not agree with production and labour qualities, including the foreign bourgeoisie. In order to combat this, the proletariat were often drawn upon for support, because the bourgeoisie were their employers and so were easily influenced by them. However, by giving them political education and experience, it made it harder to fight against them when they began revolting. Furthermore, the methods the bourgeoisie used in order to overcome feudalism are the same ones the proletariat used against the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, not only did they create these political weapons, but also they 'called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons'.<sup>36</sup> They created a class of proletariats who felt downtrodden very near to the beginning of their existence because of the ways they were exploited, and so the bourgeoisie brought about their own, and capitalism's, end. The section later concludes that 'what the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave diggers'.<sup>37</sup> Although here it can be argued that a satirical view is made of capitalism in general, whereby the intention is to produce in order to advance economically, instead it creates a group that does the exact opposite; it destroys the whole institution. This view is mirrored by Osborne, who argues that 'the progressive character of Capitalism's revolutionizing of all social relations is seen to lie primarily in its destructiveness' and that 'it extends to a destructiveness of Capitalism towards itself'.<sup>38</sup>

The proletariat were treated too much like a commodity for the bourgeoisie-proletariat relationship to remain amicable. They were subjected to too many economic and social fluctuations, and being constantly downtrodden, they would eventually rise up against their employers. Marx and Engels present a relationship between the developments of capital coinciding with the development of the proletariat, and seeing as the proletariat were deemed as being revolutionary and so the biggest threat to the societal superstructure, offending them would be ill advised. However, inevitably, they grew offended by becoming 'an appendage of the machine' and their embittering resemblance to 'slaves'.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, it got to a point where the proletariat were paid so little, that they got their wages in cash, and then soon after had to give it straight to the other bourgeoisie overlords (such as landlords and in taxation).

Capitalism helped create a very poor, revolutionary class of people and only enabled the rich to get richer. Ultimately, they fought back against their oppressors. The crux of the matter was that, had they been managed with a little more tact and less force, they may never have fought against bourgeois constraints. Eric Hobsbawm comments that rather than capitalism being doomed to fail, 'On the contrary. As we now know, capitalism was poised for its first era of triumphant global advance' following the revolutions of 1848.<sup>40</sup> However, Marx's view was that the collapse of capitalism was inevitable and so could not be avoided. Therefore perhaps reasonable treatment would just delay proletariat opposition, not completely stop it.

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Opposition against the bourgeoisie generally began with the destruction of capital by the proletariat (an example being the Luddite movement in England and Europe prior to, and during, the 1848 revolutions), who sought to 'restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages'.<sup>41</sup> However, it was not that extensive because they were so scattered. Therefore, it was only with improved transport links as well as a later concentration in numbers of proletariat that eventually led to the demise of Capitalism.

To conclude, the demise of capitalism in Marx and Engels' view is outlined in great detail throughout the first section of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. They fully describe the short rise and the very long fall that the bourgeoisie had to endure because of their overt mercantilism and later, fully fledged capitalism. Overall, the most simplistic way at looking at the manifesto's demise of capitalism is to view the capitalists of society (here, the bourgeoisie) as the controllers of the other classes (including the proletariat and the aristocracy), they control the political inner workings of society because of the extent of their capital and ability to exploit the lower classes. They form a capitalist economy under the illusion that it is perfect. However, the impact of industrialisation is that the proletariat no longer are able to serve the bourgeoisie (as was their initial role) because the machines do the work for them. Instead, the proletariat need the bourgeoisie for employment. As the capitalists are not gaining anything from their assets apart from hostility, their institution is flawed, and is therefore a failure.

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This offers itself to Walter Benjamin's comment that 'construction presupposes destruction'; it was doomed from the start.<sup>42</sup>

Furthermore, it can be argued that capitalism had failed as soon as it expanded into other colonies, but similarly would have failed if it did not. With the latter, overproduction would mean a huge breakdown of society very quickly. On the other hand, expansion brought with it many more people to add to the proletariat army. By making them a majority, the bourgeoisie were creating a bigger problem for themselves than what they were starting with. Eventually, numbers got out of hand and civil war followed by full-blown revolution broke out, ending with the overthrowing of the bourgeoisie.

It can be argued that one of the main failures of capitalism in the manifesto is the fact that the proletariat couldn't take over the institution that the bourgeoisie left behind. The foundation of capitalism was bred for bourgeois interests and so was not tangible for the proletariat. Therefore, it can be argued that the demise of capitalism was because its function was put into the hands of too few, who could not control the vast numbers of opposition who disapproved of the fundamental aspects of the institution. This is contradicted by Osborne, who comments that the 'striking depiction of capitalism as a progressive (indeed, 'revolutionary') and globalising world – historical force – progressive in fact, in its very globalising function', suggesting that capitalism's globalisation is progressive rather than regressive.<sup>43</sup>

I would only agree with this in the short-term. The long-term results of globalisation spelled trouble for the capitalists in society. Osborne goes on to suggest that Marx 'celebrates the destructiveness of Capitalism', which I think is a strong assessment of the manifesto.<sup>44</sup> Rather than presenting a celebration of its failure, rather, I think Marx and Engels present an appreciation for its existence as it is only through acknowledging its failure that its benefit on society can be seen. For example, because of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat were educated both socially and politically, as well as being granted suffrage. That taken into account, although the proletariat did gain from the bourgeoisie capitalism, through their suppression, the bourgeoisie ultimately brought conflict on themselves and by assuming the controlling position in society, revolution was made inevitable.

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## Were the minorities the main losers in the modernization of the Soviet Union between 1928 and 1939?

*Jemimah Hudson*

Modernization under Stalin included forced, rapid collectivisation and industrialisation, and a cultural revolution, affecting the entire population. National and ethnic minorities within the Soviet Union benefited and suffered from this modernization. Minorities were given an almost privileged status in the 1920s due to Affirmative Action and Nativization policies. Yet, by the 1930s, they began to lose out considerably. However, it is necessary to examine whether they lost out more than other groups or individuals within society; this will be the aim of this essay.

It can be argued that the minorities were the main losers in the modernization of the Soviet Union 1928-1939. This can firstly be seen in the treatment they received at the hands of non-minority Russians, particularly Russian Proletariat. The repercussions of the Government's attempts to forge a Kazakh working class were met with hostility from the Russian working class. There was resistance from the very proletariat that the Kazakhs were supposed to join.<sup>1</sup> An example of this is the construction of the 'Turksib' Railroad, where Kazakhs were hired to work alongside the ordinary Russian workers. This project was linked to the idea of 'building socialism': creating a modern society free of ethnic or class conflict, bringing culture

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and soviet power into new areas.<sup>2</sup> However, this project was marked by acts of violence by the ordinary Russian workers. 'Given all the hostility, the mockery, the discrimination, and the beatings, who could blame the Kazakhs for resisting plans to proletarianize them?'<sup>3</sup>

The success of Soviet nation building became tied to the industrialisation drive of the Five Year Plans.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the national minorities were seen as integral to achieving modernization through industrialisation. The Russian workers resented this, and minorities were subject to violence, resentment, aggression and suspicion. There was also Russian proletarian resentment towards Ukrainians and Ukrainian Culture, and Ukrainian intellectuals resented Russian culture.<sup>5</sup> It clearly seemed strange to the Russian proletariat that the Soviet Government was so hostile to individual rights yet deliberately promoted group rights that did not necessarily coincide with those of the proletariat.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of Stalin's Affirmative Action policies had the opposite effect in some ways. Nativization included the promotion of national territories, elites, languages and cultures for all Soviet nationalities, whilst overcoming cultural backwardness.<sup>7</sup> However, this policy had a detrimental effect on many long standing cultural, social and economic practises. In reality, Soviet national culture did not include patterns of belief or social practises. Important aspects such as religion, economic organisation, and gender relations were either to be abolished or homogenized into the 'socialist content'.<sup>8</sup> What Stalin really meant by 'national culture' referred more to 'national

identity', undermining national beliefs and social practises.<sup>9</sup> The forced, rapid industrialisation resulted in the disruption of traditional authority and culture.<sup>10</sup> For example, Kazakh identity was linked to their 'nomadic pastoral economy'.<sup>11</sup> This was disrupted with the attempt to make them part of the new industrial society. There was a deep contradiction: Stalin attempted to create strong nationalist pressures whilst trying to create a Soviet culture through the creation of an industrial urban society.<sup>12</sup> Thus ethnicity may have been strengthened in some ways, but was limited and undermined in others.<sup>13</sup>

The most obvious way in which the minorities suffered was due to the reversal in policy, implemented from the 1930s onwards. Ethnic interests in the thirties were placed behind economic efficiency.<sup>14</sup> Stalin had sent out 'contradictory signals' when it came to language.<sup>15</sup> The regime promoted the use of Russian as the common language for unity, but insisted on a policy of native language education.<sup>16</sup> This reveals that the government themselves were unsure where they stood on the concept of the multinational state. These policies were carried out by a People's Commissariat for Nationalities' Affairs, who encouraged the development of national languages and cultures.<sup>17</sup>

However, in the 1930's, the policy of promoting forced assimilation appeared. One of the first steps was discarding the Arabic alphabet for the Latin one, which was then replaced by the Cyrillic (Russian). Yet there were minority languages that had certain sounds which couldn't be conveyed by the Cyrillic.<sup>18</sup> Russian language study

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was compulsory in all schools by the end of thirties, and other languages were seen as inferior.<sup>19</sup> The Russian language was claimed to be dominant because 'Lenin and Stalin wrote their incomparable works in Russian', and it was necessary to 'be acquainted with Russian language in order to share its civilization'.<sup>20</sup>

Along with this reversal in policy came the inclusion of national minorities in the Terror. In the national regions, including Ukraine, Belorussia, Crimea and Uzbekistan, the principal target of the Terror was the nationalist intellectuals.<sup>21</sup> Show Trials were integral to the Cultural Revolution, and this remained the case in the national republics, helping to show that the government were serious about its industrialisation agenda. There were a series of purges of the leaderships of the national republics and territories between 1933 and 1938.<sup>22</sup> Terror was mobilised to the largest extent against the Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>23</sup> The charge against the nationals was that they had instigated national strife and oppressed other minorities.<sup>24</sup> The Terror was directed towards any minorities who did not fit into the emerging Stalinist system.<sup>25</sup> When targets were not met, it became essential to find a scapegoat and the minorities suffered accordingly.<sup>26</sup> For example, it has been debated that the famine in Ukraine was deliberately engineered due to Stalin's belief that Ukrainian peasants were hiding grain and preventing agricultural development.

Collectivisation was also accompanied by mass population transfers of national minorities. The 1932 December 14 Decree ordered the deportation of the entire Cossack population of Poltava.<sup>27</sup> This continued, with more Cossacks being

suspected of the sabotage of grain delivery.<sup>28</sup> The total number of deported Kuban Cossacks exceeded 60,000. Kuban Cossacks were also labelled Ukrainian nationalists.<sup>29</sup> Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian peasants were also deported in the drive for modernization.<sup>30</sup> It is evident that the minorities did lose out in many ways, but it is important to remember that others in society were also harmed by the effects of modernization. Russian peasants suspected of sabotage were also deported and exiled.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine to what extent other groups or individuals within society lost out, and whether they were the main losers rather than the minorities. Additionally, it can be argued that the minorities were not the main losers due to the benefits or privileges they received as a result of Affirmative Action and Nativization.

Affirmative Action policies operated in favour of national minorities and workers, promoting hiring preferences and political intervention.<sup>31</sup> Soviet government took pains to recruit, promote and train the national minorities as industrial workers.<sup>32</sup> Kazakh nomads were given hiring privileges on a par with Red Army veterans, and these privileges were fully taken advantage of.<sup>33</sup> In 1920 Stalin, then People's Commissar of Nationality Affairs, explained that to make Soviet power 'near and dear' to the minorities would require that 'all Soviet organs in the border regions . . . should be recruited from the local people acquainted with the manner of life, habits, customs, and language of the native population'.<sup>34</sup> Opponents of

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affirmative action were disciplined; it seems like the Government were protecting the rights of an oppressed minority. The 1936 Constitution stated that 'Equality of rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race...is an infeasible law'.<sup>35</sup> However, the policies of forced settlement and collectivisation had a 'near genocidal effect' on the Kazakhs.<sup>36</sup>

This questions whether the Soviet Union were indeed the 'Maker of Nations' or in fact the 'Breaker of Nations'. Furthermore, the Affirmative Action policies were not implemented for altruistic reasons; the Soviet government wished to prevent the growth of nationalist sentiment and absorb these nations into Socialism. Therefore, when they no longer suited Stalin's aims they could be, and were, simply reversed. These policies were not intended to truly strengthen national culture and identity, but to serve a Soviet leadership purpose. Thus, the minorities were perhaps not benefiting as much as it ostensibly appeared, and it was not certain that these benefits would last in the long term.

However, benefits were gained and enjoyed, despite the possibility of transience. Political benefits, for example, point to the minorities gaining power and influence. Opportunities were provided for nationalities, representing over 93 percent of the non-Russian population, to create ethnically distinct political elites within formally autonomous homelands.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Cadres of national minorities were allowed to define the ethnic markers that distinguished nationality, central to communicating the socialist message in national cultural forms.<sup>38</sup> Through

this, new ethnic groups were defined, such as the Tadjiks, that had not previously been identified communities.<sup>39</sup> The Cadre were also able to determine when the ethnic group would be mobilized politically.<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, it can be argued that the minorities were not the main losers in modernization, as other groups or individuals within society lost out more. For example, the indigenous Russian peasants lost out through forced collectivisation and Terror in the countryside. The food shortage led Stalin to wage war on the countryside. In order to get what he wanted, millions of peasants were forced off the land and from their natural environment and homes to seek work in towns.<sup>41</sup>

The 'Kulaks' were put through forced mass relocation until 1953. From the late 1920s, they were excluded from collectivisation and marked for 'liquidization as a class' and imprisonment in labour camps.<sup>42</sup> Anyone unpopular in the village was branded a Kulak, an additional fear for ordinary peasants. Deportation came with collectivisation in 1930; some 400,000 households were deported from villages, stripped of their land, animals and equipment.<sup>43</sup> Approximately 1.8 million 'Kulak' individuals were deported from 1930 to 1931.<sup>44</sup> However, Kulaks were deported as individuals, whereas the national minorities, such as the Cossacks, were deported as entire settlements.<sup>45</sup> Therefore it could be said that the national minorities, particularly in the 1930s, were the main losers in regard to deportation, as they were deported on a mass scale.

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The indigenous Russian Proletariat also largely lost out in the push for modernization. Purges in the industrial sector were frequent. Workers found themselves in a difficult position: the regime's obsession with statistics led to pressure which, in turn, led to petty officialdom. Thus, the amount of produce was exaggerated, which led to diminished quality or lack of produce. This spurred accusations of treachery which spurred further purges. Industrial capacity doubled between 1928 and 1933, at the cost of enormous human hardship.

It was not just the lower classes that lost out in Stalin's modernization drive. Former or current elites were purged and 'bourgeois' elements were removed with ferocity, including Kulaks, old specialists and Nepmen.<sup>46</sup> The Terror at its highest point, which included Purges and Show Trials 1936-1938, affected millions. The entire leadership of Red Army were purged, as well as NKVD leadership.

Having analysed Affirmative Action and Nativization and the repercussions of modernization for indigenous Russians, I believe that the minorities were not the main losers in the modernization of the Soviet Union. The Affirmative Action policies largely ensured benefits and a protected status for national minorities, due to the government's desire not to provoke defensive nationalism. National minorities did see a reversal in policy and in some cases became victims of the Terror, but not to such a large extent as other areas of society. Those who seemed to pose the biggest threat to modernisation lost out the most. Russian peasants accused of hiding grain or resisting collectivisation, and the proletariat who did not meet the unrealistically

high targets, were the most persecuted. Similarly, anyone in a leadership position with the ability to affect Stalin's plans was also ruthlessly persecuted, such as Party members or army leadership.

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## Did the Bolsheviks attempt to seize power during the July Days?

*Hannah Wilkinson*

In the early days of July 1917 thousands of people - workers, sailors and soldiers - flocked to the streets of Petrograd in a demonstration against the temporary Provisional Government of Russia. During this period, from the 3rd to the 5th, known as the July Days, contemporaries put the number of people protesting at something close to half a million, including an estimated 275,000 strikers from local factories<sup>1</sup> and over 10,000 sailors from the Kronstadt naval base.<sup>2</sup> Although the majority of the demonstrators advanced on the Tauride Palace rather than where members of the Provisional Government resided, their call for the Soviets to take power posed a serious threat to the government. The Bolshevik slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' was extremely popular and was repeated among the workers and soldiers. However, the question of whether the Bolshevik Party actually attempted to seize power and the extent to which they were involved in organising the armed uprising is still debated.

In the days and weeks following the July Days demonstrations the Bolshevik Party was persecuted by the Provisional Government. Many of its members, such as Raskolnikov, were arrested for having allegedly organised the armed uprising.

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*The July Days*

Kerensky, the Minister of War during the July Days, called the demonstration "the July rising of the Bolsheviks" and accused the party of instigating chaos in order to seize power and secure a separate peace with the central powers at the behest of Germany.<sup>3</sup> Many other ministers agreed. Vladimir Burtsev, a famous populist, printed an open letter in Petrograd papers on July 6<sup>th</sup> which claimed that "thanks to them – to Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky etc. – during those damnable days, July 3, 4, and 5, William II achieved what he had previously only dreamed about."<sup>4</sup>

However, these accusations must be considered carefully. Burtsev was fiercely counter-espionage and other champions of this theory, such as Kerensky, had a vested interest in blaming the Bolsheviks for the movement, rather than acknowledging its legitimacy. They were members of the Provisional Government, the very people threatened by the people's call of 'All Power to the Soviets.' Since the publication of Lenin's April Theses, the Bolsheviks had called for "no support for the Provisional Government" and the apparent widespread popularity among the workers and soldiers of a Bolshevik slogan doubtlessly scared those in positions of authority.<sup>5</sup> At a joint meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Deputies on July 4<sup>th</sup> Tsereteli was forced to remind its members that "there is a difference between the attitudes expressed in Petrograd and the attitudes in the provinces and on the front."<sup>6</sup> Petrograd was not the whole of Russia so even if the Bolsheviks had organised the uprising; there was no guarantee that they would be

able to seize and hold onto power.

Many historians have agreed with the accusations of ministers such as Kerensky that the events of July were a premature Leninist plot to seize power which backfired. Most notably among these is Richard Pipes. Pipes argued in *The Russian Revolution* that the uprising was an attempted coup by members of Bolshevik high command that only failed because of Lenin's "last-minute failure of nerve."<sup>7</sup> However, aside from the Provisional Government's accusations, there is very little evidence to support this theory. The only real verification appears to be Sukhanov's recollections of the July Days. Those who have compared Sukhanov's memoirs to historical fact have found them to be highly accurate and as they were published in 1919, they have an added advantage over the subjective Stalinist versions written later.

Despite his apparent reliability, Sukhanov's assertion that there had been a Bolshevik plot aiming to put Lenin, Trotsky and Lunacharskii in power does not make sense. He obtained his information directly from Lunacharskii: "According to him, on the night of July 4<sup>th</sup> Lenin was definitely planning a coup d'état."<sup>8</sup> Yet during the July Days neither Trotsky nor Lunacharskii had formally become members of the Bolshevik Party. The argument becomes even less convincing considering that Lunacharskii later claimed that Sukhanov had distorted the conversation, whereas Sukhanov believed Lunacharskii "had mixed up the events."<sup>9</sup>

There are other factors suggesting that it was improbable that the July demonstrations were the result of a planned Bolshevik takeover. Demonstrations that the Bolsheviks had organised were planned in great detail. In June a protest had been fixed for the 10<sup>th</sup>, agreed upon by the Central Committee in a series of meetings earlier in the month. When the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets banned all public gatherings from taking place for three days the Bolsheviks obeyed, sending representatives to convince the workers not to strike. However, when the Soviets later allowed a demonstration the Bolsheviks mobilised. They sent telegrams, prepared local Bolshevik organisations, directed correspondents and made sure that the demonstration would reflect the true aims of the Russian people. The Petersburg Committee, for instance, began "preparing placards, organising mass meetings, and publishing leaflets."<sup>10</sup> In comparison, the July demonstrations were hugely disorganised. As was the case in February, the Bolshevik Party was not ready for an uprising, demonstrated by the chaotic nature of the demonstrations on the streets. Maxim Gorky, a contemporary witness, argued that "these were the actions not of a revolutionary crowd but of a blind and cowardly mob with 'absolutely no idea of what they were doing.'"<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Lenin himself had been on holiday in Finland and only returned to Petrograd at around 11.00 on July 4<sup>th</sup> when sent for by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.<sup>12</sup> If Lenin was supposed to be enacting a vital part of a Bolshevik plot to overthrow the Provisional Government, as Lunacharskii had explained, it is

unlikely that he would have gone on holiday just beforehand. Lenin had also argued prior to July that the time was not right to overthrow the government. At the Seventh All-Russian Party Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. that had met in April he stated that:

“The proletarian party would be making a dangerous mistake if it based its tactics on subjective desires where organisation is required. We cannot say that the majority is with us; what we need in the present situation is caution, caution, caution. To base proletarian tactics on subjective desires means to condemn it to failure.”<sup>13</sup>

Even during the July Days he repeated this message; an attempt at seizing power would be useless unless the Bolsheviks had a majority in the Soviet. He supposedly remarked to Saveliev when asked if the time was coming for action that the movement “would be quite inopportune.”<sup>14</sup>

It is, however, important to remember that Lenin did not speak for the whole of the Bolshevik Party and that the party itself was internally divided. Historian David Longley has demonstrated that different factions had threatened to tear the party apart in March 1917. Although Lenin’s April Thesis had made them more united, inner party disputes still persisted after April.<sup>15</sup> The Central Committee was in charge of determining the official policy of the Bolshevik Party and in April they had agreed with Lenin that the time was not right to depose the Provisional Government.

Their resolution stated: “We shall favour the transfer of power to the proletarians and semi-proletarians only when the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies adopt our policy and are willing to take power into their own hands.”<sup>16</sup> Even as late as July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Central Committee was still encouraging members of the Bolshevik party to do all that they could to restrain the movement, voting against participating in a demonstration, clearly showing that they had not tried to organise a seizure of power. When it became clear that the demonstration was still going ahead, the Central Committee released a leaflet on 4<sup>th</sup> July which called for it to “become a peaceful, organised expression of the will of all the workers, soldiers and peasants of Petrograd”; nothing like the armed uprising that manifested.<sup>17</sup>

It is therefore unlikely that the demonstrations were instigated by the leading members of the Bolsheviks. Instead it seems much more likely that, as Trotsky argued, the July Days were the product of an unprompted outbreak of exasperated masses. As he explained: “contrary to what was said and written at the time in the bourgeois press, there was no intention whatever in our party of seizing the reins of power by means of an armed rising. It was only a revolutionary demonstration which broke out spontaneously.”<sup>18</sup> Koenker and Rosenberg’s investigation into the strikes of workers in Petrograd throughout 1917 seems to support this theory. According to them, the upsurge of strikes started “right before the April crisis, and continued through May and June until just after the July Days.”<sup>19</sup> It has been argued that these strikes were a result of the politicisation and ‘Bolshevising’ of workers through

Bolshevik propaganda. Historian Rex Wade, for example, argued that “the political parties were active in stimulating discontent but did not plan the actual revolt.”<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, the general grievances of the demonstrators in July appear to be frustrations that the Provisional Government had not fulfilled the many promises it had made in early March, such bringing an end to Russia’s involvement in the First World War. This failure to fulfil their revolutionary duty was exacerbated by events such as the Provisional Government’s raid on the anarchists at Durnovo Villa on June 19<sup>th</sup>, increasing unrest among workers and soldiers of the Vyborg District. Other factors such as members of the Kadet party walking out of the government and the failure of the June Offensive at the Front are more likely to have contributed to the uprising, rather than the Bolsheviks taking any role in organising it.

Some Soviet historians have taken this a step further by claiming that the Bolshevik Party did not try to seize power even when the demonstrations started and the opportunity to overthrow the Provisional Government was handed to them. This school of thought suggests that the July Days were a peaceful protest that only turned bloody under the stress of counter-revolutionary suppression. A key supporter of this theory was Soviet historian I. I. Mints. However, he has been criticised for focusing too much on Lenin’s beliefs during the July Days. With the benefit of hindsight looking back after the successful October revolution, Soviet historians have often divided 1917 into two parts, with the July Days marking the end of a period of trying to negotiate peacefully with the Provisional Government. It is

true that it appears as though pro-government forces fired on the crowd first. On July 4<sup>th</sup> “regular government troops began to fire, often at point-blank range, on the workers’ columns.”<sup>21</sup> However, while the Central Committee may have agreed with Lenin about the need for peaceful methods, arguing that the time was not right for a revolution, not all members of the Bolshevik Party agreed. “Bolshevik and Anarchist agitators urged the machine-gunners to take to the streets in an armed demonstration” and the Military Organisation in particular helped to prepare the insurrection.<sup>22</sup>

The Military Organisation was a faction of the R.S.D.L.P. that had originated in 1905 in order to unite the work of the Bolsheviks in the army. Their influence in Petrograd increased after the February Revolution and the first issue of their daily paper, Soldatskaia Pravda, was printed on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Not long after the July uprising began the Military Organisation published an edition of the Soldatskaia Pravda with an inflammatory front page, written by L. Chubunov. It stated: “The time has come not to sleep but to act. Comrades! Chase the bourgeoisie from power... All power must pass into the hands of the workers, soldiers, and peasants. Remove from power the bourgeoisie and all its sympathisers. Hail all power to the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies!”<sup>23</sup> Raskolnikov, the leader of the Kronstadt soldiers who had joined the demonstrations, was appointed overall commander of the force led by the Military Organisation. He distributed ammo and machine-guns on July 5<sup>th</sup> and in a 1927 memoir published in Pravda Raskolnikov stated that “In the mind of each of us

[Bolsheviks] was the thought of seizing power."<sup>24</sup> Other ordinary Bolsheviks probably did believe that the time for action had come. The Soviet historian K. Shelavin believed that "rank-and-file Bolsheviks everywhere turned out not to be steadfast and quickly joined the movement."<sup>25</sup>

However, although it seems apparent that ordinary members of the Bolshevik party were attempting to seize power during the July Days, the leadership still hesitated. In fact, when the time seemed most ripe for the uprising to be directed towards the Tauride Palace and the Provisional Government, the Bolsheviks did not step up to the challenge. As historian Sheila Fitzpatrick has demonstrated, many workers and soldiers stopped off at Bolshevik headquarters at Kshesinskaia Mansion to receive directions, especially Kronstadt sailors, yet Lenin did not take the opportunity to inspire the crowds. Although there are no records of what Lenin actually said, his speech was short and did not confirm whether he supported the overthrow of the government or not.<sup>26</sup> Zinoviev, who had been at Lenin's side for much of July 4<sup>th</sup>, claimed that Lenin had not actually made up his mind at that point, claiming that he was paralysed with indecision.

Similarly, Trotsky did not take steps towards the removal of the Provisional Government when the opportunity presented itself. When Kronstadt soldiers came across Chernov, a member of the Congress of Soviets, they became aggressive at his refusal to help the Soviet take over and one of them even commanded: "take power, you son-of-a-bitch when it is offered to you!"<sup>27</sup> They arrested Chernov, but Trotsky

demanded his release, rather than using the soldiers and giving them the direction they sought. It seems highly unlikely that Trotsky and Lenin would have acted this way if they had been attempting to seize power.

The documents from Bolshevik meetings after the events of July also appear to confirm that the leadership of the party had not tried to seize power. When Lenin fled to Finland to escape arrest he wrote *An Answer* in which he declared that the government's charge that the Bolsheviks had organised an armed uprising was slander and a complete fabrication.<sup>28</sup> He constantly compares the persecution of Bolsheviks for their alleged part in the uprising and the rumours that they were receiving German support to that of the 1913 Beilis case, where a Ukrainian Jew was falsely accused of the murder of a 13-year-old boy and was imprisoned for over two years without trial. It is entirely possible that the Bolsheviks were just saying this in order to cover their backs. As early as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July rumours were reaching the party that the Provisional Government would receive reinforcements from the Northern Front of the Russian army and that the Provisional Government was preparing to smear the Bolsheviks' name by associating them with German intelligence. In the face of such odds it would make sense for the Bolsheviks to call off the demonstration and deny ever having planned an uprising.

Regardless, long after the Bolsheviks had regained their support and popularity among the people, their leading members still stuck to the defence that they had not tried to seize power. The minutes of a meeting of the Central

Committee on October 10<sup>th</sup> show that Lenin stated: “on July 3-5, positive action on our part would have failed because the majority was not behind us.”<sup>29</sup> The other members appear to agree that it would have been a mistake to overthrow the government in July since the Bolsheviks had lacked a majority in the Soviet. This seems to be more of a justification of inaction rather making an excuse for failure.

In conclusion, the armed uprising of the July Days seems to have been a spontaneous demonstration of the people rather than a Bolshevik attempt to seize power. Despite the Provisional Government’s accusations, the demonstration was not very organised and Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, was on holiday in another country in early July. Whether the Bolshevik Party tried to overthrow the Provisional Government once the demonstration started, however, is a more contentious issue. Though some rank-and-file members of the party were in favour of seizing the moment, the leadership like the Central Committee were indecisive, leaning towards wanting to keep the demonstration a peaceful one. While Bolshevik popularity suffered under the allegations of working for Germany and for their refusal to help the Soviets take power, the events of the Kornilov Affair soon had their numbers increasing. “The Bolshevik’s recovery from the July Days was almost as rapid as had been their eclipse. By late July, in fact, the party’s Sixth Congress, held in the capital, testified to a growing and well-managed organisation, even during its leader’s imposed absence.”<sup>30</sup> The party gained a majority in the Soviet for the first time, leading Lenin to address the party in September: “Now the Bolsheviks have

majority in the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies in both capitals, they can and must take state power into their own hands.”<sup>31</sup> This attempt, the October Revolution, was far more successful and showed what the Bolsheviks could achieve when they actually put their minds to it.

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