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5. Origins of Stalinism: How Important Was the Civil War?

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The origins of Stalinism have been a perennially interesting question for Western Sovietologists. In the classic totalitarian-model analyses of the Soviet system written after the Second World War, the genesis of Stalinism was discussed largely in terms of Leninist theory and practice. But in recent years other kinds of explanation have been explored, chief among them being the Civil War. Scholars have begun to see the Civil War as a crucial formative experience for the Bolshevik party and Soviet regime.¹ They have been struck by similarities in policies and political mood between the Civil War period and Stalin's "revolution from above" a decade later. They have pointed to a variety of Civil War phenomena as antecedents to the Stalinism of the 1930s.

Robert C. Tucker identifies two types of Bolshevik/Leninist political culture.² One derives from the experience of the Civil War and War Communism, is associated with the Lenin of 1917-20 and Stalin in his conflict with Bukharin in 1928-29, and flows into Stalinism. The other derives from NEP and is associated with the late Lenin and Bukharin in 1928-29. The Civil War culture was characterized by:

martial zeal, revolutionary voluntarism and *elan*, readiness to resort to coercion, rule by administrative fiat..., centralized administration, summary justice, and no small dose of that Communist arrogance... that Lenin later inveighed against.

The period of the Civil War and War Communism was "above all the *fighting* period [of the Russian Revolution], the time when in Bolshevik minds the citadel of socialism was to be taken by storm."³

While Tucker sees Civil War culture as an aspect of historical Leninism ("Stalinist Leninism"), others seem less willing to make this connection or to acknowledge the existence of a "Stalinist Leninism."⁴ Stephen Cohen and Moshe Lewin are inclined to offer the Civil War as an *alternative* to the standard derivation of Stalinism from Leninism. Lewin, polemicizing with the traditional emphasis on Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* as an antecedent of the Stalinist

1 See, for example, Roger Pethybridge, *The Social Prelude to Stalinism* (London: Macmillan, 1974) and Robert Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution: A Study in Organisational Change, 1917-1923* (New York: Barnes Noble Books, 1979).

2 Robert C. Tucker, "Stalinism as Revolution from Above," in Tucker, ed., *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 80-82, 89-92.

3 Ibid., pp. 91-92.

4 Ibid., p. 91.

party, asserts that the regime that emerged from the Civil War “had been shaped by that war as much as by the doctrines of the party, or by the doctrine on the party, which many historians have seen as being Lenin’s ‘original sin.’”⁵ He finds it disputable that the origins of Stalinism lay “in Leninism itself,” and argues that the “statism” which he sees as a leading principle of Stalinism was never Lenin’s strategy: “The Civil War brought with it a fully fledged practice and ideology of ‘statism,’ which was entirely new to Leninism.”⁶

Cohen explicitly categorizes the Civil War as an alternative explanation when he writes that, while Bolshevism⁷ may have contained seeds of Stalinism,

equally, ... the “seeds” of Stalinism are also to be found *elsewhere* — in Russian historical and cultural tradition, *in social events such as the Civil War*, in the international setting, etc.⁸ [my emphasis]

His description of the impact of the Civil War stresses deflection from the norms and policies of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and early 1918:⁹

The experience of Civil War and War Communism profoundly altered both the party and the emerging political system. The party’s democratic norms of 1917, as well as its almost libertarian and reformist profile of early 1918, gave way to a ruthless fanaticism, rigid authoritarianism and pervasive “militarization” of life on every level. Victimized was not only internal party democracy but also the decentralized forms of popular control created throughout the country in 1917 — from local soviets to factory committees. ... As part of this process, the party’s attitude toward its political rivals changed. ... Repression by the security police, the Cheka, added a new dimension to Soviet political life.

Cohen and Lewin deal with the Civil War only in passing. But they link it to a question that is very important in their work, namely that of continuity between Leninism and Stalinism. This is “the quintessential historical and interpretive question,”¹⁰ according to Cohen. Before 1956 both Western and Soviet writers, albeit for different reasons, emphasized continuity. After the Twentieth Party Congress, revisionist Soviet scholars began moving towards a discontinuous model, as they attempted simultaneously to expose Stalin’s errors and crimes and

5 Moshe Lewin, *Lenin’s Last Struggle* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 12.

6 Lewin, “The Social Background of Stalinism,” in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *Stalinism*, p. 113.

7 Cohen prefers the term “Bolshevism” to “Leninism” because it allows for the diversity of the movement. But he specifically disclaims the idea that Leninism, as distinct from Bolshevism, might have been “nascently Stalinist.” Stephen F. Cohen, “Bolshevism and Stalinism,” in Tucker, ed., *Stalinism*, p. 13.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

9 Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1939* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1973), p. 60.

10 Cohen, “Bolshevism and Stalinism,” p. 3.

to dissociate Lenin from them. Solzhenitsyn later challenged this view, but Roy Medvedev has always advocated it forcefully:

Stalin not only did not "follow exactly where footsteps before him led (as Solzhenitsyn suggested). Such "footsteps" do not exist in history. In fact, Stalin swiftly rejected the few guidelines left by Lenin in his last writings.¹¹

In the West, scholars also began to question the continuity thesis, partly because it was associated with the totalitarian model, which came under attack in the late 1960s. Reevaluations of Lenin, the October Revolution, NEP and Bukharin were undertaken or suggested. Among the most influential of these were Lewin's study of the late Lenin¹² and Cohen's biography of Bukharin.¹³ Lewin emphasized the late Lenin's commitment to NEP and evolutionary change, concern for party democracy and estrangement from Stalin. Cohen presented Bukharin as a figure who equalled Stalin in stature in the second half of the 1920s and offered an ideological alternative to Stalinism that was legitimate in terms of Bolshevik tradition. Both scholars were interested in the idea that the "Bukharin alternative" might re-emerge in post-Stalinist Russia.¹⁴

The continuity thesis was directly attacked by Cohen in a provocative article on "Bolshevism and Stalinism." Here Cohen suggested that the traditional view that Bolshevism/Leninism was "nascently Stalinist" must be rejected as crudely deterministic and founded on anti-Soviet prejudice — "more on the order of 'axiomatic value-judgment' than authentic historical analysis."¹⁵ Bolshevism, he argued, contained many diverse possibilities. However, there was — or emerged — a dominant strain in Bolshevism, exemplified by NEP, the late Lenin and the Bukharin of 1928-29. When Stalin broke with Bukharin and NEP, "he abandoned mainstream Bolshevik thinking about social and economic change."¹⁶

Within the revisionist framework, the Civil War question assumes a particular importance, though this has yet to be developed fully in terms of research or even hypothesis. The proposition that Stalinism was essentially discontinuous with Leninism and the Bolshevik Revolution is open to the objection that Stalinism then appears to have *no* historical roots in the immediate past. Yet presumably Stalinism, however monstrous a phenomenon, is still accessible to historical explanation, in theory if not in revisionist practice. If the focus is to be shifted from Lenin and Leninism, the best solution to the problem of explanation is that a major external event deflected the Bolsheviks from paths they would otherwise have followed. The event that most plausibly serves this function is the Civil War.

11 Roy A. Medvedev, *Political Essays* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1976), p. 70.

12 Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*.

13 Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*.

14 This idea is developed by Moshe Lewin in his *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates: From Bukharin to the Modern Reformers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

15 Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism," p. 14.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

It is the purpose of this paper to examine the hypothesis that the Civil War deflected the Bolsheviks from paths they were otherwise likely to follow, paying particular attention to the questions of democracy, bureaucracy and dictatorship that have been at the center of discussion on the issue of continuity between Leninism and Stalinism. Three specific questions will be addressed: (1) Was the Civil War an external event for which the Bolsheviks had no real responsibility? (2) Did the Civil War prevent the emergence of a more democratic political system? and (3) Was the stifling of democracy within the party a consequence of the Civil War?

The Civil War as an External Event

If the Civil War is to be viewed as an agent of discontinuity, it must necessarily be conceived of as an external event — something like a natural disaster that “happened” to the Bolsheviks, not something that they foresaw or provoked or desired. Many summary accounts do treat the Civil War in this way; and the Bolsheviks themselves often used natural-disaster metaphors. The Civil War presented the new Soviet regime with a whole series of problems they had not anticipated and did not know how to cope with. It caused the Bolsheviks to abandon policies and methods tentatively adopted in the eight-month “breathing space” between the seizure of power and the outbreak of Civil War. It produced rapid, spectacular changes in Bolshevik behavior and organization, as the party figuratively and its members literally went out of civilian dress into uniform. As in almost every war, those who fought saw their opponents as the instigators, and the Reds said they were defending the revolution from the attack of White counter-revolutionaries and foreign interventionists.

Nevertheless, the Civil War was far from being an act of God which the Bolsheviks could not have predicted and for which they had no responsibility. Civil war was a quite predictable outcome of the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, which was why many had counselled against it. At Lenin’s urging, the Bolsheviks had disregarded such warnings and staged an armed insurrection in Petrograd. It could well be argued that they did not need to do this, since the Second Congress of Soviets was about to meet, and would probably come in (as it did) with a Bolshevik plurality — enabling the Bolsheviks to dominate proceedings and win control of the Executive Committee — and a mandate to abolish the Provisional Government. The insurrection and the subsequent naming of an all-Bolshevik cabinet (Sovnarkom) were highly provocative actions. Though Lenin claimed before the coup that the chances of civil war were slight, it was in fact a likely outcome. Obviously he was willing to take the risk.

Lenin’s risk-taking and confrontational strategy worried some members of the party leadership, but it was quite in accordance with Bolshevik tradition and the mood of the Bolsheviks and their supporters in 1917. The Bolsheviks had always had the reputation of being a fighting party. They were the ones to push for armed uprising in Moscow in 1905. They were the ones associated with street violence and demonstrations in the capitals in the spring and summer of 1917. Lenin’s “Peace” slogan should be treated with caution by historians: it did not mean that the

Bolsheviks were thought to be peaceable. When it seemed that a German attack on Petrograd was imminent early in October 1917, the Bolsheviks' popularity rose (despite earlier rumors that Lenin was a German agent) because they were the ones who led the Soviet's military preparations, encouraged the workers to arm, and were expected to fight for the city.

The seizure of power in Petrograd, a comparatively nonviolent action, left many Bolsheviks with a sense of unfinished business and a revolutionary victory that was only provisional. The new government clearly would have preferred to avoid a full-scale civil war, but at the same time Bolsheviks expected they would have to fight and did not believe in peaceful transfers of power. In Baku in January 1918, "the approaching civil war appeared to the Bolsheviks not only inevitable but desirable," according to the historian Ronald Suny. As one of the Baku leaders — by no means a radical in Bolshevik terms — explained:

We are supporters of civil war, not because we thirst for blood, but because without struggle the pile of oppressors will not give up their privileges to the people.¹⁷

Lenin was also in this sense a supporter of civil war; and if, as Medvedev suggests,¹⁸ his discussion of civil war had nothing to do with the actual Civil War that broke out, he certainly laid himself open to misunderstanding. Leaving aside his earlier wartime call to turn the imperialist war into civil war, we find him writing in January 1918 that civil war is "the only war that is legitimate, just and sacred" and passionately denouncing those who fail to understand this.

We have always known, said and emphasized that socialism cannot be "introduced," that it takes shape in the course of the most intense, the most acute class struggle — which reaches heights of frenzy and desperation — and civil war; we have always said ... that violence is always the midwife of the old society¹⁹

It is very difficult to see the Civil War as an accident as far as the Bolsheviks were concerned. We should also be wary about thinking of it as a disaster, natural or otherwise, from their point of view, though when it was over they complained bitterly that its economic and social effects were disastrous. New regimes need legitimation, and victorious civil wars legitimize. There was a potential political gain for Lenin and other revolutionary leaders to set against the economic and human cost of civil war, and it is reasonable to suppose that, consciously or unconsciously, they knew it.

17 Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Baku Commune 1917-18* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 207-208.

18 Roy A. Medvedev, *The October Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 178-179.

19 From "Fright at the Fall of the Old and the Fight for the New," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Lenin Anthology* (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 424-425.

Democracy versus Dictatorship

The proposition that the Civil War strangled the Bolsheviks' democratic inclinations and strengthened their tendencies towards dictatorship is accepted by many recent writers;²⁰ and those who advocate it most strongly, like Cohen (see above, p. 52) and the French writer Jean Elleinstein, generally rate the Bolsheviks' commitment to democratic norms in 1917 very highly. (Cohen, in fact, goes further, and sees the Bolsheviks as having an "almost libertarian" profile in early 1918.) The Civil War's anti-democratic impact, it is argued, was manifest in the establishment of a one-party system, the diminution of the role of the soviets, the creation of bureaucratic administrative structures, the consolidation of a party (rather than a class) dictatorship and the resort to terror on a large scale.

In assessing this proposition, it is important to think clearly about what alternatives were plausible in terms of Bolshevik tradition and the circumstances of late 1917/early 1918. As has already been mentioned, in October 1917 the Bolsheviks chose to take power by a coup, despite the fact that more correct and democratic means of claiming national leadership were available to them as a result of their substantial popular support in the cities and the armed forces. Presumably they had reasons for this choice; and one *prima facie* reason is that they did not want to be part of any coalition. This stance was not unfamiliar to those who had followed Lenin's career from 1903, or the Bolsheviks' actions through 1917. Lenin never wanted to be part of any coalition. Boycotting socialist coalitions was a hallmark of traditional Bolshevism.

Medvedev and other Soviet revisionists now argue that there was no *a priori* commitment to the one-party state, and a coalition government would have been a likely outcome but for the Civil War.²¹ But this seems extremely dubious, despite the Bolsheviks' short-lived alliance with the left SRs and the fact that some Bolshevik leaders (angrily opposed by Lenin) were interested in broader socialist coalition at the beginning of 1918. Not only was Lenin against coalitions, but his major political rivals in the socialist movement were against coalitions with Lenin because of his well-deserved reputation as a coalition-breaker. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, which took place months before the outbreak of the Civil War, was further indication that the Bolsheviks, having taken power, were not interested in sharing it.

With regard to the broader question of Bolshevik political intentions, Lenin set this out fairly clearly in an article "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" written shortly before the October coup. The title itself indicates his premises and preoccupations. He was not thinking about coalition. He was not primarily thinking about Soviet democracy. He was thinking about Bolsheviks seizing state power and hanging on to it in order to carry out a revolution.

What was to be the nature of the new revolutionary regime? Because Lenin's

20 See, for example, Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, p. 60; Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution*, p. 110; Jean Elleinstein, *The Stalin Phenomenon* (London: Lawrence Wishart, 1976), p. 14.

21 Medvedev, *The October Revolution*, p. 152.

opponents (past and present) accuse him of seeking to establish a dictatorship, revisionist historians are often chary of using the term, treating the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as a Marxist metaphor with no definite political implications. But, as is evident from *State and Revolution* as well as "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?," Lenin was serious about dictatorship. When he talked about the "dictatorship of the proletariat" that would lead Russia through the transitional period from capitalism to socialism, he was not using the term in any metaphorical sense. He meant that Bolsheviks and "conscious workers" (the categories are used interchangeably) would take over state power and use it coercively against the class enemies of the revolutionary regime. The soviets would become part of the new state apparatus, implying that they would be subordinate to centralized state power. Quasi-parliamentary institutions in which liberal as well as socialist parties were represented — described by Lenin as "rotten," "abominable, putrid to the point of nausea"²² — evidently had no future role.

"During [the] first few months," Medvedev writes, "Lenin expected to get by without terrorism."²³ This seems like wishful thinking on Medvedev's part since Lenin was straightforward about the inevitability of resistance from the class enemy and the need to crush this resistance by force. This applied to "passive" as well as "active" class enemies, meaning that he was not simply talking about punitive responses to hostile acts. Terror was a legitimate exercise of revolutionary power. The danger, Lenin wrote in January 1918, was that the revolution might not act "with *sufficient* vigor to suppress the resistance of the exploiters."²⁴

To be sure, Bolshevik rhetoric about terror cannot always be taken at face value, for even the "softest" Bolshevik intellectuals felt obliged to talk tough and outrage squeamish liberals. Thus, Bukharin thundered that:

proletarian coercion in all of its forms, beginning with shooting and ending with labor conscription, is . . . a method of creating Communist mankind out of the human materials of the capitalist epoch,²⁵

but it is still a safe bet that he personally practised only verbal coercion, and would have interceded with the Cheka to save any class enemies that he actually knew.

However, it is the rank and file Bolshevik attitude that is more relevant. In 1917, the Bolsheviks attracted support from workers and soldiers who were angry and resentful, people who wanted revenge on the old upper classes, and probably also people who simply liked violence. There was a popular constituency for terror, as Ferro points out,²⁶ and one of the concerns of the Bolshevik leadership in the early

22 "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" in V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, 12 vols. (London: M. Lawrence, 1936-39), 6 : 255.

23 Medvedev, *The October Revolution*, p. 98.

24 "Fright at the Fall of the Old and Fight for the New," in Tucker, ed., *The Lenin Anthology*, p. 425.

25 Quoted in Cohen, *Bukharin*, p. 92.

26 Marc Ferro, *October 1917: A Social History of the Russian Revolution* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 265.

months was to keep it under some measure of control while maintaining revolutionary credibility. Describing the arrests and conscription for forced labor of class enemies in the "heroic period" of the Russian Revolution, Kritsman remembered how popular such actions had been:²⁷

The social annihilation of the exploiting classes... was a great moral encouragement, *a source of passionate enthusiasm* for the proletariat and all those who had been exploited.

The Civil War undoubtedly increased the incidence of terror and encouraged the Bolsheviks to push harder for the centralized dictatorship to which in principle they were already committed. But these phenomena were evident before the Civil War and thus cannot be attributed to it. Indeed, it can be argued that the same internal and external dynamics that generated terror and dictatorship and made "democratic alternatives" unlikely also generated the Civil War.

Democracy within the Party

As Cohen and Lewin have argued,²⁸ Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), with its prescriptions for an elite, disciplined, centralized and ideologically united party, has been overemphasized by scholars intent on demonstrating an inexorable progression from pre-revolutionary Leninism to Stalinism. The prescriptions applied to the special circumstances of conspiratorial party organization in a police state; and in practice the pre-revolutionary party fell far short of the *What Is To Be Done?* model. Moreover in 1917, when the party came out from underground with the February Revolution, there were dramatic changes. The Bolshevik party became a mass party, loosely organized, generally democratic with respect to the election of local secretaries and delegates, diverse, argumentative and (in comparison to other socialist parties) particularly responsive to radical pressure from the grass-roots. It bore virtually no resemblance to the *What Is To Be Done?* party model.

Even after the Bolsheviks took power, the party retained some of its 1917 characteristics for a number of years. There was open disagreement on a series of important policy questions between 1918 and 1920, and organized factions were formed in the party leadership. During the elections to the Tenth Party Congress in the winter of 1920–21, the factions behaved almost like competing political parties, seeking to win votes and secure the allegiance of the major provincial delegations. At the Tenth Party Congress, however, Lenin successfully outmaneuvered the factions, and used his advantage to impose a total ban on organized factions in the name of party unity in March 1921.

²⁷ Lev Kritsman, *Geroicheskiei period velikoi russkoi revoliutsii* (2nd ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1926), pp. 81-82.

²⁸ Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism." pp. 15-16; Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, p. 12.

Sovietologists have traditionally seen the ban on factions as a key link in the chain leading from pre-revolutionary Leninism to Stalinism. But for the revisionists, who see lively open debates and factional conflict as a core characteristic of the post-revolutionary Bolshevik party, the ban on factions appears aberrant; and they suggest that it was probably a temporary measure from Lenin's point of view.²⁹ Again, they blame the Civil War for undermining the democratic tradition of Bolshevism, "reviving the self-conscious theory of an embattled vanguard, which had been inoperative or inconsequential for at least a decade, and implanting in the once civilian-minded party what a leading Bolshevik called a 'military-soviet' culture."³⁰ Once the real fighting started,

it had taken merely a few months for customs of collective deliberation and democratic accountability, which until recently had seemed so solidly established, to succumb to radical erosion.³¹

The question, of course, is how solidly established the democratic customs actually were, and how strong the countervailing traditions within the party. Before the Revolution, one of the main distinguishing features of the Bolshevik party (as compared with the Mensheviks and SRs) was that if a Bolshevik had a major disagreement with Lenin, he left the party. In other words, the party's pre-revolutionary tolerance of diversity and factionalism was exceptionally low.

Whether this pattern would reassert itself in the post-revolutionary party was to some extent an open question. The party's enormous increase in size and change in functions meant the earlier traditions could presumably be discarded as irrelevant. The former *komitetchiki* (Bolshevik underground workers in Russia) had now joined the former emigres in leading the party, and might impose new mores. There was a rank and file opinion (mainly lower-class, in contrast to the mainly intelligentsia leadership) to be taken into account. Under post-revolutionary circumstances, leaving the party because of disagreements with Lenin was likely to mean leaving political life altogether, and people with serious political interests were much less likely to do it willingly. It is possible to hypothesize that, as the Bolshevik party became the sole *locus* of political life, it might in some circumstances have chosen to institutionalize diversity and disagreement within its own ranks rather than outlawing them. This would have meant in effect loosening the one-party system by developing a multi-faction party.

Militating against this, however, was the fact that Bolsheviks really did despise "parliamentarism," including parliamentarism within the party, associating it with decadent bickering and loss of a sense of purpose. A very high value, going beyond mere expediency, was attached to party unity. Kritsman expressed this in rather highfalutin terms when he said that proletarian rule "exudes a monistic wholeness unknown to capitalism, giving a foretaste of the future amidst the chaos of the

29 Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, pp. 128 ff.

30 Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism," pp. 15-16.

31 Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution*, p. 110.

present,"³² but the sentiment (or aspiration) was widespread in the Bolshevik party. As Rigby writes:

from a liberal-democratic viewpoint all this [internal party controversy] may seem normal enough, but in terms of Bolshevik traditions the constant fever of policy debate, the public displays of party disunity, and the recurrence of "factionalist" tactics within the party were decidedly pathological;³³

and they were perceived as such.

In addition, there was the class factor, always of great importance in the first fifteen years of the post-revolutionary Bolshevik party. Many of the factionalists of the Civil War period were returned emigres, and most were intellectuals. The *komitetchiki*, as it turned out, had a lower tolerance for factionalism and less appreciation of the democratic value of free debate than the emigres; but they in turn were much more tolerant and appreciative than the party's working-class rank and file seems to have been. Of all the factions, only the Workers' Opposition got support from Bolshevik workers — and even it got comparatively little, considering the nature of its platform and the acute grievances of workers, including Bolshevik workers, at that time. Rank and file Bolsheviks were generally not sympathetic to the factionalists because they regarded them as *frondistes*, self-willed party "aristocrats" rather than spokesmen for Bolshevik democracy.

A compelling argument against the view that the Civil War spelt doom for the factions is that during the war factional activity flourished, reaching a peak in the winter of 1920-21; and it was only after victory in the Civil War that party factions were outlawed. But this is not the case in another often-cited instance of erosion of democratic prerogatives, namely the process whereby election of local party secretaries gave way to central appointment. Here, a change took place during the Civil War, and the war obviously had a lot to do with it. In this case too, however, there is a question how solidly the "democratic norms" were rooted in the first place.

Before 1917, for all Lenin's democratic-centralist theory, the Bolshevik party lacked a strong tradition of electing local leaders, and central nomination of delegates to congresses was certainly not unknown. It is, of course, difficult to imagine a conspiratorial party in which local prerogatives and democratic norms would be scrupulously upheld. In the Bolshevik party, at any rate, local groups were always clamoring for the Central Committee to send them professional revolutionaries to bring instructions and provide leadership. Sometimes there were personality clashes when the cadres were sent, but there are no signs that this was ever elevated to the level of principle.

After February, the party expanded so rapidly that there was no immediate possibility of the Central Committee sending out cadres systematically, and local or-

32 Kritsman, *Geroicheskiei period velikoi russkoi revoliutsii*, p. 78.

33 T. H. Rigby, "Stalinism and the Mono-Organizational Society," in Tucker, ed., *Stalinism*, p. 69.

ganizations generally chose their own leaders. However, the Central Committee continued to receive large numbers of urgent requests from the provinces to send experienced cadres because local Bolsheviks were overwhelmed and could not handle the situation on their own. The volume of requests shot up after the outbreak of Civil War, as local Bolshevik leaders departed for the Red Army or elsewhere, leaving their organizations bereft. Appointment of local party secretaries, and central intervention to discipline or even disband deviant local committees, became much more common during the Civil War years, though it was not until after the war that the Central Committee Secretariat began to systematize procedures.

The Democratic Centralists protested against "appointmentism" in 1920-21, but did not get much grass-roots support. Rank and file Bolsheviks were more concerned about "bossism," the fact that cadres (whether appointed or elected) were acting like bosses and separating themselves from ordinary party members without official position.³⁴ The rise of "bossism" — like bureaucratization and the less tangible "statism" of which Lewin writes (see above, p. 62) — may be linked to the Civil War, but it seems perverse to push the causal connection too far. The main reason for the emergence of bosses and bureaucracies was not that the party had to fight a war. It was that the party had taken power in the state in October 1917 and now had to govern.

The conclusions of this paper may be summarized as follows. First, the Civil War cannot be treated as a historical aberration or act of God for which the Bolsheviks had no responsibility. Civil war was a likely consequence of Bolshevik actions; and the Bolsheviks acted as they did because of the party's ideology and tradition as well as the militant mood of their mass support in 1917-18. When we talk about certain kinds of consequences of the Civil War — for example, "militarization" of the political culture, inculcation of habits of violence, familiarization with terror — we must bear in mind that these were predictable consequences of the war which the Bolsheviks were willing (or even eager) to fight when they took power. In effect, the party chose to have these particular formative experiences.

Second, it seems implausible that the Civil War deflected the Bolsheviks from a democratic path they might otherwise have taken. Both actions and statements of intent in late 1917/early 1918 indicate that a one-party state and a party dictatorship were the likely outcome of a Bolshevik takeover. The Bolsheviks, strong believers in class war, expected to have to use terror, although that meant further political polarization which in turn made a democratic outcome (in the liberal sense) extremely unlikely. Soviet democracy hardly had a promising future once the soviets were to be incorporated into a highly centralized administrative structure.

Third, the Civil War did not cause the Bolsheviks to abandon established democratic procedures within the party, for no such procedures were firmly es-

34 See Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution*, pp. 118-120 and *passim*.

tablished. It is possible that certain democratic habits might have taken root after the Revolution in more favorable circumstances. However, such developments — the institutionalization of factionalism and successful assertion of prerogatives by local party committees — would probably have been associated (as Lenin feared) with a more general disintegration and loss of control on the part of the new regime. Although successive Bolshevik oppositions in the 1920s claimed to be heirs to a tradition of party democracy, such claims should be treated with scepticism. It is in the nature of oppositions to advocate internal democracy and seek historical justification for their position.

Fourth, the hypothesis that the Civil War might explain a putative deep discontinuity between Leninism and Stalinism seems to be untenable. This was not an external event that imposed totally new values and patterns of behavior on the Bolsheviks. Stalinism may well have drawn on the Civil War mentality, as many recent historians suggest. But the Civil War mentality was itself a product of Bolshevik tradition and (as Tucker argues) an aspect of Leninism.

The last point to be made concerns the whole discontinuity approach to Soviet history. We may (and the present author does) sympathize with Soviet efforts to de-Stalinize and Western Sovietologists' desire to cast off the totalitarian model. But this does not mean that we have to accept either the dubious premise that there was essential discontinuity between Leninism and Stalinism, or the associated belief that we *ought* to accept the premise to save Lenin and the Revolution from being tarred with the same brush as Stalin. It is true that "axiomatic value-judgment" has distorted Sovietology in the past, as Cohen suggests, but surely that means we should abandon the practice rather than just switching values. To say "Lenin was good and Stalin bad" is no real improvement on saying "Both Lenin and Stalin were evil," even if in practice it may make it easier for historians to write about the Lenin era. In fact the new version, to the extent it succeeds in rescuing Lenin for the historians while leaving Stalin to the moralists, may only add to the problems.

Comment

Haruki Wada

The term "Stalinism" was coined by Trotskyists and indignantly rejected by Stalinists who pretended to be true Leninists. Respectable scholars and other intellectuals used to frown on this word imbued as it was with hatred, resentment, and arrogance. The first Western authority on Soviet history, E. H. Carr, never used this term. But in the last ten years it has suddenly begun to enter into usage in Western academia. A number of books on Stalinism have been published in the United States, England, Germany, Italy, France, and in Japan. Maybe the forerunners of this trend were the organizers of the Bellagio conference on Stalinism in 1975. One of the main speakers at that conference, Stephen Cohen, is today under critical investigation by Sheila Fitzpatrick.

The very use of the term "Stalinism" tells much about the user. This term expresses the user's intention to distinguish the Stalin system from the Lenin system. So we must say that it essentially belongs to the "discontinuity" school. At the same time it now presupposes the notion that the Stalin system is one of the Soviet systems which followed the Lenin system. So discontinuity does not go beyond a certain limit.

The conclusion of Fitzpatrick's criticism can be reduced to the assertion that the "discontinuity" theory of Cohen and others is wrong. In Japan, too, there are many people who tend to think that "Lenin was good and Stalin bad." Our first authority on Soviet history, Yuzuru Taniuchi of the University of Tokyo, also started from the discontinuity theory. I think that this revisionist paradigm played a positive role in liberating people from the prejudices of the Stalinist and totalitarian "continuity" schools. But it cannot be denied that revisionists tend to idealize Lenin. So now is the time for us to go forward and see exactly who Lenin was and what Leninism was. In this sense I think Fitzpatrick's initiative very pertinent and well-timed.

But every historical phenomenon has "continuous" and "discontinuous" elements in its relations with preceding phenomena. "Stalinism," or Stalin's system, is no exception. What is necessary is to investigate both elements and to structuralize them. So it is not sufficient to criticize the discontinuity theory only by pointing out the existence of continuous elements. Not an antithesis, but a synthesis is needed now.

Specifically, I would like to make remarks about four points. First, Fitzpatrick is absolutely right in asserting that the Civil War cannot be seen as a historical aberration for which Bolshevism had no responsibility. The Civil War was an important and inevitable stage of the Russian Revolution. Its coming was predetermined by the structure of the October Revolution. I think the term "October coup" is not accurate, because workers and soldiers organized by the Petrograd Soviet took part en masse. The October Revolution as a whole was

a revolution of the workers and soldiers of northern and central cities and fronts against the Provisional Government, which represented the bourgeoisie. The revolution by workers and soldiers was loosely supported by revolutions by the peasants in the countryside and by the nationalities in the nationality regions. As a result, the Bolshevik Soviet government, and later the Bolshevik-Left SR government, were established. The realization of the revolutionary goals, including the demobilization and democratization of the army, led to the disappearance of organized revolutionary soldiers. The Bolshevik government at first expanded the October Revolution by making the soviets in other cities seize power.

At this stage the Bolshevik government sent the army to Kiev in order to set up the Soviet government there by crushing the Ukrainian nationalist government, which had resulted from one of the nationalist revolutions. Next came the task of converting Soviet strongholds in a number of cities into the Soviet state governing the entire territory and people. One of the inevitable operations for this purpose was conquering the countryside — the forceful integration of the peasant revolution. Peasants had seized land in their autonomous peasant revolution, and refused to give grain to the towns. The conquering of the countryside was begun by proclaiming a civil war against the so-called “kulaks” — peasants who hid their grain. Of course, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly gave legitimacy for the armed uprising of the democratic counterrevolution. But only with the war against the kulaks did the true Civil War begin. So the Civil War was a result of objective reality. But subjectively the Bolsheviks, including Lenin, thought the Civil War should be fought. Fitzpatrick’s assertion is especially right about the Bolsheviks’ subjective willingness to fight the Civil War. But I wish to stress that the size and depth of the real Civil War, full of cruelties and horrors, was far beyond the imagination of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Lenin liked to cite a Russian proverb: “Those who fear wolves should not enter into the woods.” But he could not have imagined that in the woods he himself would become a wolf.

Second, Fitzpatrick tends to think that Bolsheviks originally had inclinations toward dictatorship. She asserted that Lenin never wanted to be part of any coalition. I do not agree with this assertion.

In 1905 Lenin proposed as a goal of revolution the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants. Specifically, he thought that the provisional revolutionary government should be formed by a party representing peasants — that is, by a party of Socialist Revolutionaries. He admitted that the Social Democratic Party might join this SR government if conditions allowed.

During World War I, Lenin decided for the first time that his party should strive for power in the coming revolution. At the same time he made up his mind to reject any coalition with social-chauvinists — that is, with socialists who supported the war. This attitude was responsible for Lenin’s boycotting the all-socialist coalition in 1917. But this does not mean that Lenin was against coalition with left internationalists. So coalition with the left SRs was natural to Lenin. The assertion that there was no *a priori* commitment to the one-party state seems more appropriate.

Third, the refutation of Medvedev's assertion that Lenin expected to get by without terrorism during the first few months is too hasty. Medvedev cited Lenin's words of November 1918: "We are arresting but we are not resorting to terrorism." So it can be said that Lenin then thought that repression is necessary but that wholesale terrorism might be avoided. But after the ban of the Kadet party, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and the foundation of the Cheka, Lenin began to feel the necessity of terror. And in August 1918 with the beginning of the Civil War, Lenin and his government resorted to mass terror and terrorism.

Fourth, I agree with the assertion that no democratic procedures were established within the Bolshevik party in 1917. However, there was no such principle as that if a Bolshevik had a major disagreement with Lenin he had to leave the party. During the war many Bolsheviks stood against Lenin's defeatism but none left the party. And Kamenev's and Zinoviev's "betrayal" on the eve of October did not lead to their expulsion, although their act seemed to Lenin to be a capital crime.

If we are going to grasp the whole picture of Leninism before October 1917, Tucker's argument that there are two aspects of Leninism is reasonable. I myself have tried to distinguish two Lenins — two souls of Lenin — or to understand him through his contradictions. Even in the book *What Is To Be Done?* two Lenins can be discerned. And Stalin, as a passionate reader of that book, certainly inherited one of two Lenins.

But finally I agree with Fitzpatrick in her assertion that the main reason for the emergence of bosses and bureaucracies was that the party had taken power in October 1917 and now had to govern.

A revolution consists of two stages. The first stage is that of destroying the old state and liberating all other people who were oppressed by the old state; this is the liberation period, the stage of the people's festival. The second stage is that of constructing a new state. This stage includes the suppression of all counterrevolutionaries and part of the revolutionary masses. It is the dictatorship period. During this stage the Civil War began. So during the Civil War the Soviet state and the ruling party were constructed. The fundamental structures and characters of the state and the party were shaped at that time. But when the war was over, mass terror was stopped and policy toward the peasants was changed. So it is not enough to assert that the Civil War played a decisive role in creating Stalinism.

During the Stalin revolution new terror and the old policy toward the peasants came back and many of Lenin's utterances at the time of the Civil War were taken out of the archives and published. So I think the historical conditions which made Stalinism inevitable at the end of the 1920s also made the political culture of the Civil War come back.

Comment

Yoshimasa Tsuji

First, I have to introduce the general setting of my argument: how to understand Leninism and Marxism as distinct from Stalinism. I think Bolshevism was originally a Marxist version of the Russian socialist movement and as such it was distinct from the Socialist Revolutionaries' theories. When the Cheka was formed, its most ardent supporters came from the left SRs, not from the Social Democrats, because terror was the primary bone of contention between the Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries.

Regarding continuity and discontinuity, Bolshevism is itself a culture and a product of its environment. The question is: Are the Bolsheviks to blame for the scope and depth of the Civil War? Fitzpatrick says that they were prepared for and wanted the Civil War, and that they won the revolution. She is right. But they did not foresee the depth and cruelties of the Civil War, because what they foresaw was a war between the middle class and the working class. But what really happened was not that simple. The war was fought between workers and workers, between peasants and peasants, between nationalities and nationalities. Every combination of groups was quarreling with every other combination; up to the 1920s the Bolshevik government was merely one of the governments in Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution was not complete until the beginning of 1921. Until then its government was self-appointed, without legitimacy. But after it defeated all rival political parties, the self-appointed government became automatically the legitimate government. I wonder whether or not Fitzpatrick questions the legitimacy of the Bolshevik government before 1920 or 1921. I think that this legitimacy was quite doubtful, and that the dubiousness of the authority of the Bolshevik government was one of the main sources of contention between political parties. But this does not mean that some other political party enjoyed an authority sufficient to claim to be the legitimate government. No one had such legitimacy. The Rightist military formed a government after a coup in Ufa relying solely on its military power and had no legitimacy whatsoever.

The continuity and discontinuity among Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism is a difficult question. I quite agree with Fitzpatrick on most of the points. But I wonder why she does not explain the continuity between Marxism and Stalinism. I think the continuity between Marxism and Stalinism is as strong as that between Leninism and Stalinism. As a matter of fact, Marxism was a form not of socialism but of communism. And "Communists" meant the supporters of the dictatorship of the proletariat. "Dictatorship of the proletariat" was coined, to the best of my knowledge, by Auguste Blanqui. And most of his followers understood the dictatorship of the proletariat to be the rule by the lower class over the upper class and at the same time understood it as the expansion and not the reduction of democracy in society. Blanqui himself did not view it that way, however. He regarded it simply

as the dictatorship of Blanqui. When Lenin became known as a Russian Blanqui, people thought that when a Bolshevik revolution occurred he would be the dictator of Russia and all other people would be suppressed by him. This may be an exaggeration, but as is well known, it was predicted by young Trotskii, who thus became an archenemy of Leninism. What surprises us is that that fanatic Lenin, the Blanquist, supported Trotskii in 1917, admitting him into his ranks. This was virtually a coalition between Lenin and Trotskii. On this point I quite agree with Wada, who says Fitzpatrick is mistaken in saying that Lenin never wanted coalition. Trotskii was still an archenemy of Leninism. He never threw his theory of Permanent Revolution away, keeping it until his death. The main difference between Lenin and Marx was the desire for power. All the Mensheviks were orthodox Marxists in that they never thought of actually seizing power in the near future. They were merely muttering nonsense. What mattered to Lenin was grabbing power immediately. He did not care whether the new government would be coalitionist or not. What was important to him was whether or not the revolution would be completed. If the revolution could be completed by means of a coalition with some other parties, it would be fine as far as he was concerned. If it could not be accomplished, they alone would have to do it. If the Bolsheviks did not want a revolution, he would have to start one with the Kronstadt sailors. That was Lenin's stand.

Bolshevism was always changing, and had shown great ability to adapt to new environments. When you read the writings of Mensheviks or of K. Kautsky, you notice that they are always saying that Lenin departed from orthodox Marxism. Although Lenin's arguments were always changing, one thing that never changed was the desire for power before October 1917 and the will to maintain it at all costs after the revolution. But it is difficult to understand whether such a stand could ever be justified by his sheer desire to monopolize power. What made Lenin justify himself was his assumption that he was acting as a true disciple of Marxism. But the Marxism interpreted by Lenin was a rather pragmatic, not dogmatic, one. This stand was the major difference between Leninism and Menshevism.

I am reminded at this point of a small pamphlet written by Bertrand Russell after his visit to Bolshevik Russia. He says in effect that whether democracy is necessary at a time of emergency is a senseless question. The question is whether it can be resurrected when the emergency is over. So he was not accusing Lenin of discarding democracy, but of being a fanatic. Even when the Civil War was over, Lenin's fanaticism would lead to another disaster. What Russell predicted in 1920 has sadly come true.

Another point I would like to make here is the continuity between NEP and War Communism. Reading Fitzpatrick's paper, I am led to believe that there was a jump from the Civil War to the Stalin period, bypassing the NEP period. In my opinion no matter how terrible the period of the Civil War might have been, it was at the same time quite decentralized, because every Commissar was able to act on his own without consulting others, thus concentrating enormous power. The trade unions had their own centralized apparatus. Centralization on the one hand could mean decentralization on the other. But looking into the details of the NEP

period, although there was a loose social life on the surface, I see underneath a terrible process of centralization at least in political life, particularly in the formation of the new party apparatus.

Finally I would like to point out some misunderstanding of facts in this paper. Lenin's stand on coalitions has been pointed out by Wada. I would like to add to this point. Was the coalition with the left SRs a short-lived one? As far as I know it was rather long-lived. It started at the latest in 1915 and ended in July 1918. Lenin conceived of the new government as being a government of workers and peasants; by workers he meant his party, but by peasants he meant the SR party. Since the SRs were chauvinistic and supported the War, he had to find his supporters in the ranks of the SR party, the left SRs. If Lenin had wanted to find supporters among the peasantry his party would have had to be converted into a peasant party or at least into a party of workers and peasants. This would have been an inexcusable deviation from Marxism.

The paper says there was no "strong" tradition of democracy. To my knowledge, the Bolshevik party had a negligible existence up to 1905 and so it did not matter whether there was an election, self-appointment, or appointment from above. But in the Revolution of 1905 Social Democracy including Bolshevism became popular with the working class. In my research on the workers' movement from 1914 to 1920, I found that there were always two kinds of selection: self-appointment and direct election. Though self-appointment (*samozvanie*) was quite popular particularly in political life, election was the main procedure practiced in the trade unions, insurance movement and other workers' movements. Appointment from above was always an extraordinary measure practiced only when an appropriate or reliable person was not available. As Bolsheviks had a sufficient number of reliable workers in their ranks after March 1917, they had no need to resort to appointment from above. But as the Civil War wore on, it became very hard to find a sufficient number of party or social organization workers; the working class was running away from the party. Nevertheless the tradition was very strong and a right SR was elected to the Petrograd Soviet in an ammunition factory as late as in 1920. Mensheviks were elected to trade union organizations as late as in 1923. Kautsky was still a great teacher of Marxism whose books were read by Bolsheviks and so was Plekhanov.

Discussion

In response to Wada's comments, Fitzpatrick agreed that "Stalinism" is a loaded term. Although aware of the necessity of getting away from such ideologically charged terms, she had had to use "Stalinism" to describe the phenomena characteristic of the Stalin period simply because of the lack of a better word. As for the use of the term "coup" to describe the October Revolution, she conceded that the movement had had substantial support from the workers and the soldiers in the Northwest, but still insisted that the event had been on the whole in the nature of

a coup. She understood the reasons why people objected to the use of the term, but she objected less to the use of the word "coup" than to Alexander Rabinowitsch's type of approach, which states that the Bolsheviks "came to power."

Fitzpatrick further agreed that the size and depth of the Civil War had been beyond the imagination of the Bolsheviks. The Bolshevik leaders had made loud, vague noises in support of terror before the Civil War, but she could not take these comments at their face value. They had not clearly imagined what they were talking about.

On coalition, specific corrections Wada had made might be correct, but Fitzpatrick did not find her generalization invalidated by them. The Bolshevik party had been essentially an anti-coalition party, although she did not believe that there had been an *a priori* commitment to a one-party system. She did not think that the Bolsheviks had thought this problem through. Whether or not to have a one-party system had not become a practical problem until after October.

Fitzpatrick then responded to Tsuji's criticisms by pointing out that he had used a number of words like "blame," "accusation," and "justification." She argued that judgments of moral and political choices are so much up front in the Soviet history profession that historians should make every effort to avoid them. One useful way to make that effort is to eliminate terms like "accusation," "blame," and "justification."

As for Bolshevik legitimacy, Fitzpatrick said that she was in complete agreement with Tsuji. The Bolsheviks had not had legitimacy before the Civil War, and they had gained it by their victory. On some level they had known that they would. This was the way they had gained and the only way they had wanted to gain legitimacy.

On Lenin's attitude toward coalition, Fitzpatrick stated that Lenin's coalition with Trotskii or other Bolshevik leaders was an irrelevant issue, since she had been talking about coalitions with different political parties. She reiterated that Lenin had been genuinely hostile to the notion of coalition, although there had been circumstances in which he had entered coalitions. One of the facts going against coalitions was that no one had believed that Lenin would stay in them.

Fitzpatrick expressed resentment with regard to Tsuji's list of "factual mistakes," since he had not been talking about "facts" but about generalizations and interpretations with which he had not agreed.

Shiokawa agreed with Fitzpatrick in her conclusion that the Civil War should not be considered an antecedent to Stalinism. But he found two additional reasons not mentioned by Fitzpatrick to be important. First, the Civil War period had been characterized by the anarchism of the proletarian natural economy in contrast to the planned economy developed in the Stalin period. Second, in the Civil War years interparty debates had been conducted much more freely than under Stalin.

Shiokawa also pointed out that some historians in Japan emphasize the importance of the year 1918. In this view, once the Bolshevik Party had taken power its post-revolutionary dictatorship had become inevitable. The Bolshevik dictatorship had not been imposed by external, unexpected events, but had rather been the result

of the internal logic that had stemmed from its having assumed power. There had been discontinuity between pre-revolutionary days and the post-revolutionary period.

Fitzpatrick explained that one's view of the essential similarities depended on how important he thought that the revolution from above had been in the total picture of Stalinism. What had struck some people who had emphasized resemblance between the Civil War and the Stalin period had been the resemblance between the type of mobilization carried out in the Civil War and the revolution from above in the Stalin period.

In regard to the question of the year 1918, Fitzpatrick said that there is a Soviet school of revisionists who have examined in detail the eight months before the outbreak of the Civil War in order to find out what the Bolsheviks could have done if circumstances had not pushed them. She did not find this approach very fruitful because she believed that the Bolsheviks had known that they would fight a civil war. Thus, half of the things they had been doing during this period were to gear up for the impending war. She did not believe that studying those eight months would produce big answers to major questions.

Shiokawa asked Fitzpatrick what kind of synthesis she could offer if Cohen's interpretation had been meant as the antithesis to the thesis offered by the totalitarian school. She answered that to claim that she was offering a synthesis would be to make too many claims for her little paper. She felt that her expertise on the Revolution and her research on the Lenin period were sufficient to allow her to make little marauding attacks on other positions, but nothing more.

A question was raised about the significance of the term "Stalinism." A speaker objected to the seeming reluctance of both Wada and Fitzpatrick to use the term. In his opinion, "Stalinism" is preferable to such euphemisms as "the cult of personality." Kimura offered another interpretation, suggesting that "Stalinism" is not necessarily a pejorative term. Unlike his successors, Stalin had had some original ideas that he had put into practice. Fitzpatrick responded by stressing that, as Wada had pointed out, "Stalinism" had originally been used by Trotskii to stress the discontinuity between the Lenin period and the Stalin period, and that it would be wrong to use the term in that sense when she did not think that the two periods were characterized by discontinuity. As for the positive connotation of "Stalinism," she could not accept Kimura's position since she did not feel any desire to offer such a compliment to Stalin. She stressed that in general she had used the term merely as short-hand, in a descriptive sense.

Hough pointed out the danger of describing the entire period from 1928 to 1953 with one simple term when different people emphasize different aspects of the period. Some people emphasize the great leap forward, while for others such as Cohen "Stalinism" means the excesses of the Great Purge. The dynamic transformation of 1928 cannot be called the same thing as the rigid petrification of 1952. The Stalin period has different phases; some are associated with Leninism, and others with his own personality. The task of the historian or the political scientist should be to distinguish the features of the Stalin period which had continuities with the past and which rested on the social force of revolution and on other forces.

What worried Hough was that "Stalinism" carries too much meaning to be used as short-hand.

Koyama stressed the importance of the Bolshevik assumption that world revolution would follow the Bolshevik Revolution — the assumption that had failed and forced them to build socialism in a backward country. He asked why Fitzpatrick had not mentioned this. Fitzpatrick agreed that the Bolsheviks had been disappointed in their expectation of a world revolution and that they had been forced in practical and theoretical terms to reorient themselves to building socialism in one country. But she was not sure in what part of her argument these considerations might have been introduced, although they were valid considerations.

Uda thought that both Wada and Tsuji had put too much emphasis on Lenin and Stalin as individuals. In his opinion, historians should pay more attention to the system which Lenin left behind. What Stalin did in the 1930s was possible only with the devices which Lenin had created. Fitzpatrick thought that this was a proper correction. Wada responded by stating that it had not been his intention to explain the whole process as stemming from the personality of Lenin. On the contrary, what he wanted to stress was that the peculiar structure of the October Revolution had made a special type of dictatorship necessary.

Drawing from the recent events in Poland, Ito asked if the alternatives were limited to either a totalitarian state or a collapse of the political system. Fitzpatrick answered that in the specific historical situation in the Soviet Union the effect of greater democracy inside and outside the party would have been disintegration of the system. But she stressed a disinclination to make such a generalization about Communist systems in general.

Wada commented that while Fitzpatrick had emphasized continuity between Lenin and Stalin, he would stress discontinuity, although on certain specific points he found general agreement. Beyond that, he was struck by the general similarity that he saw running through Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism. He had been astonished recently to discover Bakunin's prediction that if a Marxist revolution broke out, it would result in a state of slavery. Wada also referred to Trotskii's writings in 1917, which in the most militant terms call for a civil war at all costs. This is surprising because the Mensheviks blamed the Bolsheviks for initiating a civil war. It seems that everything was predicted by the Mensheviks or by anarchists. And yet much of the actual development of history was determined by unpredictable events.

Fitzpatrick agreed with others that the liveliness of the discussion was a tribute to the maturity and development of Soviet studies in Japan and abroad. Kimura pointed out that some of the interpretations developed by Wada and other Japanese historians two decades ago were only recently picked up by Western historians. It is a pity, he said, that the high level of Japanese scholarship remains largely unnoticed. Fitzpatrick said that she had not expected such vigorous discussions from the Japanese. She stated that these discussions showed the high level of Japanese expertise on a series of aspects of Soviet and pre-revolutionary Russian history.