CHAPTER I

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The nature and working of every scheme of administration is largely determined by the peculiarities of the country's socio-economic milieu and its political culture — which in turn is an expression of certain types of ideological heritage. Therefore, the administrative structures in the Soviet Union evolved under specific ideological circumstances, and were thus understandably different in their nature and scope from those of western and other democratic countries.

It has been claimed that Soviet administration was based on Marxist ideology. In this context it is necessary to draw a broad outline of Marxist ideology in relation with Soviet administration. An ideology in its political meaning may be defined as a set of axioms or a scheme of systematic ideas based upon a particular interpretation of observed phenomena. In the communist case it has also involved a special mode of thinking and method of political analysis, in addition to being a world outlook - a system of thought which seeks to explain or rationalize the totality of reality in a convincing manner and also seeks to provide a vision of
a vastly improved future design to influence human behaviour\textsuperscript{1}.

Marxist ideology has been interpreted as a socio-political theory seeking to explain the course of human history. It does so by describing a given society and then predicting paths for its inevitable development (communism). The major organizing concepts of Marxism – the dialectical, historical materialism, class struggle, economic base – point to the conclusion that social change are not caused by ideas, but rather by material process. The economic structure of society largely determines the legal, political, administrative and even ideological constructs, which in turn, constitute a definite form of social consciousness. According to Marx, political, judicial, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic etc. development is based on economic development. But all these react to one another and also influence the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the cause and alone active, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself.\textsuperscript{2} In its current usage Marxism is popular and


\textsuperscript{2} Karl Marx and Frederic Engles, \textit{Selected Correspondence 1846-1895} (New York, 1942), p.517.
acceptable only when the method used by Marx can be flexibly employed. The autonomy of superstructure and thus administration is essential in this interpretation of Marxism. In contemporary discourse social relations and their interplay is an important epiphenomena. Social reality exhibits little space for dogmatism.

Since it has been declared that the Soviet State was a Marxist state and hence its administration was based on Marxism-Leninism therefore it is necessary to analyse the Marxist theory of state for the purpose of tracing the theoretical foundation of Soviet State and its administration.

The cardinal statement of the origin, essence and destiny of the state, around which most of the later exposition revolve, was given by Engles as follows: "The state has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which have managed without it which has no notion of the state or state power. At a definite stage of economic development, which necessarily involved the cleavage of society into classes, the state becomes necessary because of their cleavage".3

Since "the state arose from the need to hold class antagonism in check", and "its very existence is seen as proof that the class antagonism cannot be

objectively reconciled, the state is regarded as an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another.\textsuperscript{4} Rooted in the material life of the individuals, the state is visualized as a machine, a mechanism, an instrument of coercion maintained by the class dominant in society for the preservation of its privileged position, regardless of the form it takes or its incidental beneficent activities.\textsuperscript{5} Throughout the ages, the essence of state has been violence, and its purpose, the protection of the interest, of the ruling class, the creation of order which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between classes. Only in a few cases in history was the state ever able to pose as a real mediator between classes.\textsuperscript{6}

Thus, the origin of the state, in other words, lead to the appearance of classes in human society. The state as an institution was born, as interprets Julian Towster, on the ruins of the gentile order, when early invention brought about the development of new, improved means of production with the sequels of the division of labour, the institution of private property in goods and means of production, the appearance of

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p.156.

\textsuperscript{5} V.I. Lenin, \textit{The State and Revolution} (Moscow, 1965), p.31.

\textsuperscript{6} Frederic, n.3, p.9.
trade and exchange of products, and coming into being a new social formations—possessing and non-possessing class—with the state emerging as the instrument of institutionalized domination of the former. Julian Towster believes that the conquest theory of state origin—the specific question whether and to what extent the state as an instrument of rule and subordination came about a direct result of intertribal war with the victors establishing themselves as rulers—is not discussed extensively by Marxian writers. Such a question, he further explains, would be secondary in any event, since conquest and subjection of one group by another are not visualized as having been an economic possibility or consideration as long as man was unable to produce more than he could live on. It was only when new and better tools made surplus production and exchanges possible, creating the potentiality of some men living on the surplus produced by others, that the raison de tre for conquest was supplied. Hence the Marxian thesis of state origin is felt to be sustained.

Such, in Marxian Soviet theory, is the general nature of State. From the point of view of this theory,

therefore, it is idealistic folly to regard the state as the same ‘categorical imperative’ standing above classes as an expression and guardian of general human interest common to all within the state. It was Engels himself who disposed the Hegalian concept of the state as the ‘reality of the moral idea’, the image and reality of reason.10 And his follower in the USSR have similarly rejected most of the other characterizations of state current in western jurisprudence and philosophy, including those exposition that view the progression of history in terms of group struggle but lack the specific class interpretation and terminology of Marxism. Specially such conceptions of state as (Jelenek, Gumplovicz), definitions of the state as an embodiment of ‘social contract’ (Roussau), as grounded in or resting on ‘social solidarity’ (Duguit) or as identified with some higher law or objective ‘legal order’ (Krabbe, Kelsen), etc. are regarded in Marxian–Soviet political theory as idealization in complete contradiction to existing reality.11

Karl Marx on the Nature & Functions of State

Karl Marx has given elaborate explanations on the theory of state. His writings on such matters vary in terms of earlier as well as later writings in his life. Earlier notions about ‘state’ was simple and straight

in Marx's view while in later writing, we can find complexity. Unlike his mature writings, in which the state was condemned as a force of class oppression, the overthrow of which was the necessary condition of human liberation, Marx argued in the Critique (and the earlier essays) that laws such as these and satisfaction of such interests are contrary to the true nature of the state which, as a rational organism, is capable of raising the true essence of man to its full station. Therefore, the function of state is positive. But in the German Ideology Marx remarks that members of the ruling class enjoy personal freedom in the state. The relationship between the proletariat and the state is seen to be of a very different order. In a draft of Civil War in France he says that the "state machinery and parliamentarism are not the real life of the ruling classes, but only the organised general organs of their domination". In serving one class the state is an instrument of oppression to another.

A separate issue is that when Marx argues that the state is not the real life of the ruling class, he


indicates that the state cannot be regarded as a class 'community'. In the mature writings the state is not primarily a relationship between citizens, but a structure of governance i.e. administration, which serves the interest of the ruling class in the long term. We say in the long term because Marx argues - especially in the discussion of the 'Factory Acts' in Capital - that the capitalist state guarantee certain economic interest of the working class and contravenes the short term economic interest of the owners.\textsuperscript{15} He also recognizes that the state and the capitalist class sometime meet in antagonism.\textsuperscript{16} Thus the capitalist state is not the bourgeois in politics, but an instrument guaranteeing the dominance of bourgeois production and property. John Sanderson and others have argued that there is a second theory of the state in Marx's mature writings which proposes that the state, rather than being an instrument of the superordinate class, exists independently of classes and constitutes itself at the dominant force in society.\textsuperscript{17} This is

\textsuperscript{15} Karl Marx, \textit{Capital} (Moscow, nd.), pp.257, 285-6.

\textsuperscript{16} Karl Marx and Frederic Engles, \textit{Selected works (MESH)} in 3 vols, (Moscow, 1966), vol.I, pp.463.

relevant to our discussion because as Shlomo Avineri has suggested, this second theory is a restatement of Marx's earlier view of the state.18

The argument that there are two distinct theories of the state in Marx's mature writings is based upon a misunderstanding. It is certainly the case that in one context Marx refers to the state as an appendage or instrument of the dominant economic class, and in another he refers to the state as a force which is independent of all classes and stands above them. But these different accounts do not assume different theories of the state. A formal statement of the first description of the state will show that it implies the second. In the discussion of Bonapartism, for instance, where Marx allegedly develops the second theory of state, the state still serves a class function, but in a contradictory manner:

As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonapartism feels it to be his mission to safeguard 'bourgeois order'. But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense. Nevertheless, he is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks on himself as the adversary of the political literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power, he generates

its political and power anew. The cause must accordingly be kept alive; but the effect, where it manifest itself, must be done away with. 19

What is important here is that, in maintaining social order, the state serves the material interest of the capitalist class. And this is because the social order is itself based on economic exploitation and class domination. What have been claimed to be two theories of the state are really two theorems of single theory. The theory that the state is capitalist state means that the state serves the interest of the capitalist class even though it is independent of it.

The theory of state in The German Ideology constitutes a departure of Marx's political theory, for it indicates that the theory of the state, as alienated social power, has been abandoned. This development basically corresponds to the development of the class concept in Marx's thought. As the conception of class develops in Marx's writings, there is an associated development in the theory of state. Marx's early theory of state, as alienated social power, corresponds to an individualized conception of class, when he conceives of class as a function of the mode of production and irreducible to its individual members, the state is described as an instrument of class rule. 20


Marx advanced the view that the state is a social institution with the specific task of preserving the relations of exploitation between the classes.

The critical element of both theories implies that the state must be abolished if man has to achieve emancipation from alienation.\(^2^1\)

In the *German Ideology*, Marx says that the state is nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests\(^2^2\).

An entirely new theory of state is reflected in this new conception of the state as "the form in which the individual of the ruling class assert their common interest",\(^2^3\) a formulation quite different from one which Marx had previously employed. In his earlier writings, Marx describes the state both as a manifestation of man's self estrangement and a vehicle in its maintenance; a consequence of man's alienated social power and a means for preserving the egoism of man in civil society. With a refinement in his works of the notion of class, it becomes apparent to Marx that the state's role in the preservation of private property right is a class function, and the state,

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 163.

\(^{22}\) *MESH*, I, pp. 77.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 77.
therefore, is a class instrument, an instrument of class domination. Therefore, in Marx's earlier writings, the state appears as a relation between isolated monads, alienated men, and is a consequence of an alienated social power which exists outside civil society itself. In the German Ideology, on the other hand, the state is an expression of the social power of a definite class in society, and that social power is not inherent in man as such but derives rather from the property of the dominant class.24

According to Marx, the general interest of the state is the general interest of capital, which takes a political form in the state, serving the capitalist class as a whole by maintaining the capitalist social order. The conception of state as an instrument of class rule entails that the state encapsulate the general political interest of capital, which requires that it restrain certain narrow and particular economic interest in the capitalist class. The general interest embodied in the state is not conceived in terms of the 'idea of universality'25 according to Marx's mature writings, for it is general interest of capital which, in the state, sanctions and satisfies the interest of the capitalism as such by preserving a social order conducive to capitalist production.26

24. Ibid. p.40.
25. Shlomo, n.18, p.203.
Thus Marx argues that the state is formed by the bourgeoisie and exists as an apparatus delegated with its class power. The direct nexus between the state and the bourgeoisie is indicated further in Marx's association of the will of the state as law with the will of the bourgeoisie.

In the opening paragraph of *The Class Struggle in France* it is argued, on the other hand, that there is a deleterious consequence for the government of society in one function of the bourgeoisie holding state power.27 Because of the difference between the particular and the general interests of the bourgeoisie, the administration of the state in favour of the interest of one function at the ruling class disrupted the equilibrium of national production as a whole. Thus Marx argues that the capitalist state may function adequately as an instrument of class rule even though the bourgeoisie is not directly represented in the state, and also that narrow representation of a particular bourgeois interest in the state apparatus may be disruptive of its proper functioning.28

The relationship between the capitalist class and the capitalist state in Marx mature theory is even less direct when question of the social composition of bureaucracy is considered. While the capitalist nature

of the state is indifferent to the class origins of the government, the professional administrators of state power are not conceived merely as a social stratum. The bureaucracy produces nothing but regulators, it administers state power rather than the power of productive forces, it neither produces nor appropriates value directly but lives on oppressing the other, but remaining distinct from both. Although individuals in the higher echelons of the state administration may have been born into the capitalist class, as a member of the bureaucracy, they are without class. But in their bureaucratic production they serve the interests of the bourgeois by serving the state power. Thus the relation between the capitalist class and the organization of its political power is socially most distant in the bureaucracy, although politically quite direct, for the bureaucracy has a specific vocational interest in the administration of state power and therefore the power of the capitalist class.

Karl Marx on the State after Revolution

The basic proposition of Marx's political analysis, that the state is the political expression of class domination leads him to make two further points which are essential to his political theory. In its

29. MESH I, p.477.
rise to social power the proletariat, Marx argues, must seize the state and turn it against the bourgeoisie. Secondly, in the post capitalist society of communism, in which class and class oppression have been abolished, the state is without purpose and therefore will disappear with the last vestiges of class antagonism.

Marx argues that although the material basis of communism is inherent in the dynamics of capitalist development, in pursuance of its general interest in class struggle, it is imperative that the proletariat capture the state and neutralize the political power of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the conquest of political power is 'the great duty of the working classes', and he explains "between the capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into other. Corresponding to this is also a political transformation period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat".

In its ascendancy to social power and economic dominance the proletariat is compelled, as the bourgeoisie was before it, to turn the state into the political instrument of its class rule. Marx's concept

of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is an expression for the historical form of the state under the conditions of proletariat superiority during the period of revolutionary transformation form capitalism to classless communism.34

Unlike the previous form of the state, however, the class rule of the proletariat is neither to sanction the class relations over which it is dominant, nor it is to advance the particular interests of the proletariat as a ruling class vis-a-vis the defeated bourgeoisie, it is to undermine the basis of class rule itself. The difference between the proletarian state and the capitalist state, according to Marx, indicate that as the former is 'the political form... of the emancipation of labour' it is 'to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundation upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule.35' This is because the 'emancipation of the working class means the abolition of all class rule'.36

The dictatorship of proletariat, therefore, is regarded by Marx as a form of political transition 'from the capitalist state to stateless communism. The claim that the state will disappear in communism as a consequence of social development and

34. Shlomo Avineri, n.18, p.204.
35. MESH II, p.223.
36. Ibid., p.223.
revolution, through which classes are abolished, there is no place for the political organisation of class domination.37

Therefore, the theory of state as an instrument of class rule entails that in the classless society there will be no state and its administrative structure. In other words, in the absence of class oppositions the state will have no function and consequently it is expected to wither away or atrophy from disuse.

Engles described the withering process as one in which "the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things by the conduct of process of production." Engles surely recognised that to administer 'things' and guide production one must direct persons as well, but he apparently believed that in the absence of class antagonism, such direction could be carried out without the repression implied by 'government'.39

Lenin on the Nature & Function at State

Like Marx, Lenin also had a highly negative notion about the nature and function of state and its administrative apparatus. From the beginning of his


39. Ibid., p.231.
political career and till the October revolution of 1917, he advocated the destruction of state apparatus because it was an instrument in the hands of exploiting class to serve their interest against the proletariat class. His vision of the future Soviet state was to establish a highly democratic state in which greater mass mobilization and participation was needed in the sphere of day today administration.

In his State and Revolution, Lenin declares that the "State is a product of and manifestation of irreconcilability of class antagonism". He further says "the state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And conversely, the existence of state proves that the class antagonism are irreconcilable." Therefore, Lenin believes that the basis for state is irreconcilable class antagonism; that state is by no means neutral in the struggle between bourgeois and the proletariat and in history it never acts like a mediator. According to him the regular army, the police, the courts and the whole of the vast bureaucratic apparatus of the state zealously serve the bourgeoisie.

Therefore, the state machine must be destroyed.

40. V.I. Lenin, n.5, p.10.
41. Ibid., p.11.
42. V.I. Lenin Collected works in 45 vols, (Moscow), 1963-70) vol 1, p.335.
This is the proletariat's first main task in the socialist revolution, claimed Lenin. All former revolutions improved the state machine, but the proletariat must break and destroy it. As Lenin pointed out, this conclusion was the chief point of the Marxist theory of state.43 The uncompromising class struggle and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and its state through revolution were the first and decisive steps towards the elimination of state. He wrote "the transitional stage between the state as organ of the rule of the capitalist class and the state as organ of the proletariat is revolution, which means overthrowing the bourgeoisie and breaking up, smashing their state machine.44

Lenin posed the argument that the historical development inevitably leads to the collapse of capitalism and to communism, what then becomes of the state? In this regard he pointed out the main historical stages in the development of state: First, there exists in capitalist society a state in the proper sense, a state indispensable to the bourgeoisie. Secondly, the state is preserved during the transition period from capitalism to communism—since it is also indispensable to the proletariat— but it is a state of special; transitional type, not a state in the proper

43. Ibid., vol 28. p.323.
44. Ibid., p.371.
sense\textsuperscript{45}; finally, in communist society the state is no longer necessary, so it withers away. The only state that could wither away was a special kind of state—the proletariat state.\textsuperscript{46} The decisive step in the transition from state to "non-state" was the replacement of the dictatorship of bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the bourgeois state by the proletariat state. This, Lenin stressed, was the sole way the state can eventually wither away altogether.

The bourgeois state apparatus, Lenin argued in \textit{The State and Revolution}, would actually be supplanted by 'something which was no longer the state proper', that is, by 'a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away'.\textsuperscript{47}

He also believes that the state is a special organization of force for the suppression of some class and in this regard, Lenin maintained, working people needed a state, i.e., the proletariat organised as a ruling class in order to suppress the exploiting classes and completely abolish all exploitation.\textsuperscript{48}

But when Lenin entered into practical politics and confronted the problems of state power new questions

\begin{itemize}
\item[45.] Ibid., p.371.
\item[46.] Ibid., p.371.
\item[47.] V.I. Lenin n.5, p.26.
\item[48.] Ibid., pp.26-27.
\end{itemize}
arose. First, did the project of smashing or destroying the state have any warrant in Marx's thought? Second, what form of administration was to replace the old form, and what were the agencies through which they were to be exercised immediately available? Moreover, what entity would replace the state in an international system based on state and sovereignty?

The commune was, as Lenin tirelessly repeated in his April Theses until at least the Spring of 1918, the popular agency through which the old pattern of bourgeois authority embodied in bourgeois state power were to be transcended. The commune, according to both Marx and Lenin, immediately eliminated the coercive agency of power, the separate bodies of armed men, police and army, which had always guaranteed the domination of particular classes in history. The policing and defensive functions, they had hitherto arrogated to themselves, were now to be vested in the entire population in arms. Power as exercised by bodies of armed men, separate and distinct from population as a whole, was done away with at one stroke. Nor was it simply the coercive functions of the state which were to be eliminated, but all its administrative, economic, political and regulatory functions were to be re-integrated into the collective. The people universally armed and organised as a militia were to reabsorb all the power hitherto arrogated to the state.
and, insofar as they did so, the state would cease to exist. All the people, Lenin insisted, all without exception, must be taught the art of government. "To teach the people, down to the very bottom, the art of government not only in theory but in practice, by beginning to make immediate use every where of the experience of the masses. Democracy from below, democracy without an officialdom, without a police, without a standing army".49

The authority of the soviet, commune form of administration derived from its genuine universality. "All were to participate in deliberations on all aspects of public policy, all were to play their part in implementing decisions. The division between legislative and executive powers was to be done away with, for the commune was at once a legislative and executive body.

The project to dissolve the state and inaugurate mass self administration was not in Lenin's view, simply an article of faith placed upon Marxists by the experience of communes. It was the only way out of the economic, social, political and military crises which the imperialist war had produced. If imperialism and its consequences dictated the imperative to restructure the relationship of authority within society it had also, according to Lenin, itself developed by the very

mechanism and organisational structures through which the people at large could universally participate in administering their own economic and social life. Instead of having to take over a multiplicity of small units of production the people in arms had merely to lay hold of the ready-made mechanism elaborated by the trusts and cartels in order to control the major sectors of industry. The banks, the trusts and cartels, the post office—these were the mechanism which the development of finance capital had so simplified that they could be managed by any literate workmen.50 This, Lenin declared, was the apparatus necessary to the commune/soviet form of administration precisely because it would not involve establishing a stratum of officials standing above the people, precisely because it was an apparatus which was concerned not with the domination of one group of men over others (as the state had been) but with the management of things by all men.

In the State and Revolution, Lenin advocated smashing the repressive organs of bourgeois state, which we discussed, but he nonetheless found managerial and economic agencies capable of fulfilling legitimate functions under socialism.

Industrial organisations were sufficiently productive under the old regime, so few changes would

be required. Even if bourgeois specialists were needed to staff key administrative positions, Bolshevik leadership - by manipulating rewards and through selective threats - expected to elicit their cooperation.51

Events after 1917 demonstrated that Lenin's vision of socialist administration rested on a static, over simplified notion of management and the organisational tasks of future socialist construction.

Therefore as circumstances required, Lenin too modified his notion about bureaucracy and administration which we can notice in the following quotations. In *The State and Revolution*, Lenin had written that "abolishing the bureaucracy at once, every where and completely, is out of question. But to smash the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy - this is not a utopia, it is the experience of the commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat."52 Lenin distinguished between the bureaucrats whose function would be supplanted by 'control and supervision by all' - and


52. V.I. Lenin, n.5, p.48.
the technocrats,53 large numbers of whom were in fact inherited by the proletarian state from its predecessor.

In January 1918, Lenin was still able to maintain that "at all costs we must break the old, absurd, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called "upper classes", only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of the rich, are capable of administering the state and directing the organisational construction of socialist society... every rank-and-file worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and who has practical experience, is capable of organisational work".54 But within the space of a few months the imperatives of the situation in which the Bolsheviks found themselves were becoming apparent. Lenin acknowledged that "now we have to resort to the old bourgeois method and to agree to pay a very high price for the "services" of the biggest bourgeois specialists... clearly this measure is a compromise, a departure from the Paris Commune and of every proletarian power".55 He emphasized nevertheless, that "the sooner we ourselves, workers

53. Ibid., p.86.
54. V.I. Lenin, Question of the Socialist Organisation of the Economy (Moscow, undated), pp.84-93.
and peasants, learn the best labour discipline and the most modern technique of labour, using the bourgeois experts to teach us, the sooner we shall liberate ourselves from any 'tribute' to these specialists. "56

Moreover, the new state not only remained dependent on bourgeois expertise in 'technical' matters, but was also compelled to retain a corps of professional bureaucrats. At the IX Party Congress in March 1920, Lenin openly admitted that "for the work of administration, of organising the state, we need people who are versed in the art of administration, who have state and business experience, and there is nowhere we can turn to for such people except the old class... We have to administer with the help of people belonging to the class we have overthrown". 57

Because of civil war and the policy of NEP and since the new "ruling class" (Proletariat) lacked the expertise in administration to administer the old administrative apparatus and its methods of administration became indispensable. This led to an enormous expansion of the bureaucracy. The problems arising from the educational deficiencies of party, cadres were exacerbated by the enormous numerical predominance of the peasantry in the country. As a consequence of NEP, the material power of the peasantry

56. Ibid., pp.410-11.
and the consciousness of its own interests had grown considerably. This could not fail to be reflected in the party itself, especially since between 1919 and 1922 the party had increased in numbers from 250,000 to 700,000.\(^{58}\) The growing power and influence of the Kulaks, together with that of their urban counterparts, the NEP-bourgeoisie, had thus come to constitute a potential threat to the Soviet regime, as Trotsky and others increasingly recognised. It was not, however, the only, or even the major source of 'bureaucratic distortions'.\(^{59}\)

The problems of bureaucratism was bound up with the party cadres themselves, specially the upper echelons. A great many simply lacked the education and experience effectively to control the vast bureaucracy which ostensibly functioned as an agent of proletarian power.\(^{60}\) In this regard Lenin explained to the Fourth Commintern Congress in 1922 that "we took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune. Very often this machinery operates against us. We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack

\(^{58}\) This took place despite the purging of some 200,000 party members at the X Congress in 1921. See Issac Deutscher, The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky, 1921-1929 (London, 1959), pp.17-18.

\(^{59}\) Paul Bellis, Marxism and the USSR (London, 1979), p.54.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p.53.
sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them".61 Therefore, Lenin proposed that the Party's Central Control Commission and the Workers' Peasant Inspection (RABKRIN) be recognised into a super control agency with a dual function of scientific research and systematic checking.62

The exigencies of the Civil War had necessitated the substitution of a hierarchical and authoritarian system of orders, appointments and dismissal in place of the democratic centralism advocated in a revolutionary party. After the Bolshevik victory, though the procedures of democratic centralism were by no means abandoned, but the 'administrative methods' of War Communism acquired an institutional character. Stalin's accession to the post of General Secretary of the party in April 1922, followed a month later by Lenin's incapacitation due to a cerebral haemorrhage, gave a decisive stimulus to this trend. Although effectively debarred from political activity for most of the period from then until his death, Lenin

61. V.I. Lenin, n.54, pp.345-58.
62. Lenin's last published works focussed on administrative apparatus and ways to upgrade its performance. His two key articles on the subject -- "How to Reorganise RABKRIN" and "Better Smaller, but Better" -- suggest that two agencies, the Workers and Peasants Inspection and Central Control Commission, should be merged into a single agency devoted to scientific research. See V.I. Lenin collected works, vol.33, pp.481-502.
nevertheless came to recognise the nature of the danger which threatened the party from within.63

Lenin's final prognosis for the regime which he and his party had established was an ironic one when considered in juxtaposition with the pronouncement in *The State and Revolution*, in which he had placed so much emphasis on the destruction of the state apparatus of Russian autocracy. We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.64

**Bukharin's Theorization**

Bukharin also greatly contributed to the theory of Soviet state and its administration. He produced from the deceptively simple and unimpeachably orthodox position that the state was a product of a reflection of class differentiation within society. That position, he pointed out, was the starting point of Engle's *Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*.65 The state appeared, therefore, at a specific stage of social evolution when the productive forces and the

63. Paul, n.59, p.54.
64. V.I. Lenin, "Better Fewer but Better", *collected works*, vol.33, p.501.
consequent division of labour within society, were sufficiently elaborated to give rise to distinct classes. The purpose of the state was to preserve, with the power of army and policy, the relationship of domination and subordination which was intrinsic to the mode of production so long as the means of production remained the property of a particular, and constantly shrinking, social class. 66

The essential nature of class society was, in Bukharin's analysis, contained in overlapping patterns of domination and subordination. Thus capital was, in essence, not a specific level of development of the productive forces; its essential character was not to be observed in factories, machinery or railways but was to be sought in a particular relationship between groups of men. 67 'Capital', Bukharin asserted, 'is a social power'. 68 Bukharin now provided the first, and still the most theoretically cogent, vindication of the dictatorship of the proletariat with an entirely new account of administration within society. 69

In 1920, Bukharin published his *Economics of the Transition Period*, the fullest and most theoretically

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67. Ibid., p.33.
68. MESW I, p.121.
69. Neil Harding, n.66, p.44.
cogent Bolshevik vindication of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bukharin now argued the case for the creation of a proletarian state power mightier by far than any state the world had witnessed. Within the space of four years Bukharin had moved from his old position and made a sharp right turn, appealing for political and administrative authority of the strong state, highly nationalist in nature, in which he sought administrative power with manifold dimensions. In 1916, Bukharin had rejected the conventional distinctions between Marxism and Anarchism on the question of political power and administration. By 1920 he had produced a blueprint for the political system of Stalinism, more thorough and convincing than any which Stalin or his henchmen ever produced.

Bukharin's argument in Economic of Transition Period, represented a fundamental revision of Lenin's optimistic scheme of 1917. Lenin had, as we have seen, argued that the development of the big banks, trusts and cartels had created ready-made and simplified mechanism which could be taken over by any literate workers and employed to serve the ends of public need rather than private greed. Lenin's recipe was, in short, smash the state but utilise the administrative mechanism created by finance capital to secure universal participation in the administration of things. By 1920 Bukharin, chastened by the experience of the recurrent crises and civil wars of the young
republic, had come to the conclusion that this project was inherently utopian. Just as revolutionaries could not simply lay hold of the ready made state machine and wield it for their own purpose so "one cannot entirely seize possession of the old economic apparatus the revolutionary decomposition of industry is a historically inevitable stage which no amount of lamentation can escape."

All production systems, according to Bukharin, had their costs. Under capitalism, for example, competition resulted in periodic and increasingly severe crises of overproduction, bankruptcies, amalgamations, recession, destruction of productive forces.

To some extent, state monopoly capitalism overcame this anarchy of production within the national economy but at the cost of replicating it on an international plane and devoting an ever larger share of resources to unproductive consumption, i.e. to the army, navy and swollen state apparatus. It also exacerbated the uneven development of capitalism, particularly by further depressing agricultural production.

In Bukharin's view, therefore, the more desperately finance capitalism struggled to retain its

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71. Ibid., p.21.

72. Ibid., p.82.
mode of production and political power, the more its costs, in terms of productive forces destroyed or wastefully employed, would escalate. The socialist revolution, Bukharin now acknowledged, could not arrest this process. On the contrary, it completed the disintegration of the old industrial base by exploding the patterns of authority that had been its cement.73

"The proletarian revolution is inevitably accompanied by a strong decline of productive powers, for no revolution experiences such a broad and deep break in old relationship and rebuilding in a new way.... The extent of the costs of proletarian revolution is determined by the depth of communist revolution".74

These costs, of revolution and civil war, of eliminating the old patterns of administration in the productive process in the superstructure, were extensive, in Bukharin's account. There was in the first place, the actual physical annihilation of elements of production: factories, machines, livestock, rail roads and persons. In the second place, there was the exhaustion of all the scarce available elements of production - the depreciation of machines through over use and lack of servicing and repairs, the exhaustion of the working class and the consequent employment of 'surrogates' in the means of production and labour

74. Nikolai Bukharin, n.70, p.106.
powers. Thirdly and most important, there was the smashing of the old 'hierarchical system and labour' and 'the dissolution of the cohesion between city and country'; this, Bukharin maintained, 'is the main cause of the decline of productive powers in the transitional period.

Productive powers, he stated, are not physically destroyed here.... They exist in nature, but they exist outside of the process of social reproduction.

There was finally, 'the regrouping of productive power in terms of unproductive consumption. Under this belongs above all the satisfaction of the needs of civil war and of socialist class war'. This, Bukharin noted, inevitably involved the exhaustion of the material forces of production, throwing into the question the next cycle of production. The civil war also observed 'the best human material, the administrators and organizers among the workers.'

At the end of the civil war the socialist revolution was, Bukharin contended, confronted with two inescapable problems. The first of these was how it was

75. Ibid., pp.106-7.
76. Ibid., p.107.
77. Ibid., p.108.
78. Ibid., p.109.
79. Ibid., p.109.
to replenish the vast stock of material productive forces destroyed or exhausted during the revolution and the civil war. The second was how was it to reconstitute the 'human labour apparatus' and produce a new equilibrium in production which would reforge the links between town and country and those between workers, managers and technicians.

To overcome the first problem the regime would have to resort to what Bukharin now chose to call 'socialist primitive accumulation', which he understood as the systematic appropriation by the state of all economic surplus above the bare subsistence needs of the people and its rationally planned allocation to industrial rehabilitation. It was entirely obvious that such a grandiose project, which assumed 'the mobilization of the living productive power' of the whole of society as its basic moment, would entail prodigious growth of the administrative and coercive agencies of the state. In dealing with the second problem Bukharin now openly acknowledged that many of the organisations and attitudes of minds which were constitutive of the earlier revolutionary period, but which were inimical to centralized planning and direction, would not voluntarily be relinquished; they would have to be purged. As coercion, particularly of

80. Ibid., p.111.
81. Ibid., p.111.
peasantry, would have to be used wholesale, in the process of 'socialist primitive accumulation', so it had to be employed against the proletariat, obliged to organise itself in a new way, to accept the new pattern of administration that the new organisational mode embodied. Force, Bukharin argued, had always, in all revolutions, been necessary not merely to put down the opposition of hostile classes but more positively, to 'promote the formation of new production relations'. Bukharin went a good deal further. He produced the classic formula vindicating the total untrammeled, economic, political and coercive power of the proletarian state during the transition period. The greater the power it exercised 'the smaller are the costs of the transition period... the shorter is this transition period, the faster appears a social equilibrium on a new base, and the quicker the curve of productive powers begin to rise'.82 This judgment when transformed into practice led to repression of the most cruel kind. And let to the 'total' state - where democracy had no place.

As we have seen, the socialist revolution was, in Bukharin's view, not primarily concerned with dissolving the legal and political relation of domination which had typified class society but rather with eliminating these same relations from the economic

82. Ibid., pp.150-51.
base of society. The pattern of governance which connected directors to managers, managers to foreman and the technical intelligentsia, and these to the workers; all the old socio-technical bonds of hierarchical nature had been dissolved by revolutionary activities of the proletariat. Only the bonds of unity within the working class itself had been preserved and strengthened. What was lacking was "a new combination of split social groups"\textsuperscript{83} for without it industrial disorganization and technological backwardness would continue to reign.

In the first phase of revolution, power had been diffused to a complex self-acting group. Factory committees of workers had assumed the control and direction of production in particular plants, local soviets operated as virtually autonomous agencies of administration, cooperative societies had taken over distribution on a local scale, detachments of militia had operated as the policing power in the localities, and in the army the power of the officers had been replaced by a system of committees and soviets. This loose structure had the advantage of involving every body in administration and therefore of carrying the dissolution of the old administrative patterns down to grass roots. It also had its costs. It had resulted

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p.61.
every where in decentralization and splintering of relationship. It had certainly roused the masses and invigorated the lower cells of the nascent apparatus of administration, but it had not articulated a comprehensive plan for future development. "Decomposition of the old apparatus and rough draft of the new one—that is the model of administration", Bukharin observed.

The costs of what we might term the commune model were, according to Bukharin, first exposed in the organization of army. The decomposition of the old authority patterns of the Tsarist army was necessary in the first stage to break the old coercive structure and begin the preparation of active organisational powers of the future proletarian army. But Bukharin went on, "no one can maintain that the regimental committees make the army able to fight". When it come to the real crisis point, when the army was obliged to organise itself to fight for the life of the young republic, then Bukharin argued "as a result of the conditions for existence of this organisation itself, a specific model of this organisation is required here; the greatest exactitude, unconditional and undisputed discipline, speed in decision making, unity of will, 

84. Ibid., p.126.

85. Ibid., p.126.
and therefore minimal consultation and discussion, a minimal number of councils, maximal authority".86

In precisely the same way he argued that factory committees and workers councils could and did dissolve the old capitalist relations of production, but this was 'brought at the price of constant errors in administration itself' and encouraged localized as against social production.87 The objective of the first phase was the revolutionary decomposition of the old and the beginning of the schooling of the mass in administration. The objective of the second phase was radically different; it was to make good the cost of the first period and prepare the ground for the technological revolution. This entailed amassing resources through primitive socialist accumulation, which in turn demanded the planned mobilization of the available labour power and its most efficient deployment. "The principle of far-reaching eligibility from below upward is replaced by the principle of painstaking selection in dependence on technological and administrative personnel, on the competence and reliability of candidates."88 The task in hand was, therefore, "the discovery of such a form of administration which guarantees maximal efficiency".89

86. Ibid., p.128.
87. Ibid., p.129.
88. Ibid., p.130.
89. Ibid., p.130.
Only the state could undertake the gigantic tasks of mobilizing and restructuring the entire labour force of society, tasks which, as we have seen, Bukharin considered to be necessary entailments of primitive socialist accumulation. "For this reason, revolutionary state power is the mightiest lever of economic transformation".90 Bukharin had already, in 1921, articulated the major theoretical revision which Stalinism was to appropriate as its own. In particular, he had provided a quite sophisticated justification for the state power of the proletariat during the transition period, being not merely independent of the economic and social base but dominating and moulding it.

The paradox was that the state power, which was ipso facto, the organised coercive arm of the dominant class, would, under the dictatorship of proletariat, be extensively employed against the proletariat itself. And Lenins trusted theoretician, was to provide the theoretical argument for this repression.

The proletariat then, in Bukharin's account, could exist as a class for itself only assuming its most purposive all embracing form as a proletarian state dictatorship. Only through the state could its limited forces be organised and efficiently directed.

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90. Ibid., p.151.
As the bourgeois state had emerged in the imperialist epoch as the organizer of labour and director of production, all-embracing and total in its pretension, so too the proletarian state would, have to assume the same roles and pursue an even more thorough-going organisation and centralization of all available human and material resources to make good the costs of revolution and prepare for socialism. The proletarian state could be nothing other than "concentrated application of force".91

It is absolutely clear that the same method was formally necessary for the working class as for the bourgeoisie in the epoch of state capitalism. This organisational method consist in the coordination of all proletarian organisations with one all-encompassing organisation, i.e. with the state organisation of the working class.

The model which Bukharin arrived at in 1920 and which Stalin's practices were to confirm throughout the thirties and forties, was a model of necessary power rather than one of legitimate authority. Its legitimating principle was based on the distinction between the real or essential interests of the proletariat and their currently recognised interests. Bukharin's argument in 1920 was that, if the proletariat, at a critical juncture, failed to

91. Ibid., p.160.
recognise its essential interest, then its vanguard, concentrated in the state and expressing its collective reason, would have to intervene with force.

Trotsky's Analysis of the Soviet State and Administration

After the death of Lenin, Trotsky and others, loosely constituted as the Left Opposition, continued the struggle against the bureaucratization of the party and state which had occupied Lenin more and more towards the end of life. During the final month of Lenin's illness, Trotsky had launched an attack on the character of the regime which he saw as developing within the party (and thereby, de facto, on the triumvirate of Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, which had assumed the leadership following Lenin's incapacitation). At that time Trotsky raised some issue which was concerned with the internal character of the party, and the distribution of power in it; and within the limits of this issue, he was on the side of democratic principles. Thus one of the central demands which he made, was for a policy which would widen the mass basis of party, increase membership from among workers, encourage genuine mass participation, and compel party officials to be open to the influence of the rank and file.92

No less striking was his plea for freedom of expression, for the values to be attached to criticism, independence of thought, truth and the possibility of open debate.93 He totally rejected every tendency towards one man rule, he believed that the main principle of Bolshevik centralism was always the rule of the collectivity, and that this principle had to be restored now. Therefore he declared that the new blood, new ideas, criticism, discussion, mass enthusiasm - all these, would not only democratize the party, but preserves its revolutionary character, its very obsession with the real goals of socialism.94 Now it appeared to Trotsky that the spirit was being banished, and its place, a new driving force, entirely different in its implications and possibilities, was being implanted. The new force, he declared, was 'bureaucratism', the antithesis and the scourge of revolutionism.

By the time of 1926, it became quite clear that his demise and Stalin's ascendancy was certain, Trotsky showed the development in the party as not merely the result of an internal political struggle, but as deriving from the general post revolutionary situation in the Soviet Union. He admitted that the

93. Ibid., p.92.
94. Ibid., pp.20, 81.
"hopes engendered by revolution are always exaggerated" and inability of the revolution to fulfill rapidly the high "expectation of the masses led to disillusionment".\textsuperscript{95} Masses became apathetic towards socialism and "considerable layers of working class were unable to maintain their revolutionary enthusiasm".\textsuperscript{96} In these conditions, conservative elements in party and state came to the fore, their aim being the stabilization of the regime. These elements expressed themselves through bureaucratism\textsuperscript{97} which exploited the post revolutionary disillusionment and which, in effect, represented a kind of 'bourgeois restoration' a 'counter revolution'.\textsuperscript{98}

Regarding the concept of bureaucracy, Trotsky was much influenced by the standard Marxist interpretation of modern bureaucracy. Thus he took over from Marx the view that the bureaucracy does not and cannot constitute an independent power, that it does not rule, but is an instrument in the hands of wider social or


\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p.145.

\textsuperscript{97} Trotsky defined the term, 'bureaucratism' as a social phenomena in that it is a definite system of administration of men and things. Its profound causes lie in the hetrogeneity of society, the difference between the daily and fundamental interest of various groups of population. Bureaucratism is complicated by the fact of the lack of culture of the masses. See Leon Trotsky, n.92, pp.37-38.

\textsuperscript{98} Issac, n.95, pp.143 and 145.
class interests. On the whole, however, Trotsky adapted and widened such Marxist axioms so as to take account of the special character of Soviet case. This character, he believed derived from the fact, that the Stalinist bureaucracy unlike the Western bureaucratic model, was a consequence of economic and social backwardness.99

In his article "The worker's state and the question of Thermidor and Bonapartism", Trotsky attempted to extend the Marxist concept of Bonapartism to encompass a balancing between internal and external class force. Trotsky maintained that the Soviet bureaucracy—Bolshevik in its traditions but in reality having long since renounced its traditions, petty bourgeois in its composition and spirit—was summoned to regulate the antagonism between the proletariat and the peasantry, between the workers' state and world imperialism. He further maintained that such is the social base of bureaucratic centralism of its zigzags, its power, its weakness, and its influence. As the bureaucracy become more and more independent, as more and more power is concentrated in the hands of a single person, the more does bureaucratic centralism turn into Bonapartism. 100


100. Leon Trotsky, The Workers State and the Question of Thermidor and Bonapartism, (London, 1973), pp.43-44.
In his major work on the Soviet Union and Stalinism, Trotsky argued that Soviet Bonapartism, on the one hand, and Fascism, as a twentieth century variant of bourgeois Bonapartism, on the other, represented two parallel developments characteristic of the retarded maturation of the world socialist revolution, for which the objective conditions were already over-ripe.\textsuperscript{101} He declared that Stalinism and Fascism, in spite of deep differences in social foundation, are symmetrical phenomena. In many of their features they show a deadly similarity.\textsuperscript{102}

By 1938, Trotsky had abandoned his earlier designation of Stalinist political practice as bureaucratic centralism, having come to regard the bureaucracy as being in its international relations, overtly counter revolutionary. He designated Soviet Union as a "counter revolutionary workers' state".\textsuperscript{103} He also called it "bureaucratically degenerated workers' state" which constituted a social formation characterized by the institutional exclusion of the working class from the administration of its own state.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{101} Leon Trotsky, \textit{Revolution Betrayed} (New York, 1972), pp.278-9.
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid., pp.279.
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Leon Trotsky, \textit{In Defence of Marxism} (London, 1971), pp.30-1.
\end{itemize}
an administrative monopoly being ensured for the party-state bureaucracy itself. 104

Marx, in the Critique of Gotha Programme, has argued that bourgeois norms of distribution (bourgeois right) must inevitably remain in force for some time after the collectivization of the means of production. Developing this theme, Lenin had referred to the persistence, during the transition period of 'not only bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie'. Taking up Lenin's essential thesis, Trotsky pointed out that the state apparatus in the transitional social formation necessarily assumed, from the very outset, a dual character: Proletarian; insofar as it defended the nationalized means of production, as the socio-economic base of workers' state and bourgeois, to the extent that it was obliged, as long as it was impossible to implement direct and equal access for all the consumer goods, to support the retention of privilege and inequality. This meant that, inevitably, even the most revolutionary bureaucracy is to a certain degree a bourgeois organ in the workers' state 105 The conditions of existence of stalinist bureaucracy were given this role of the state as the regulator of distribution.

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Regarding the origin of bureaucracy, he maintained that "the basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all".\textsuperscript{106} He further maintained that when there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to, when there are few goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of bureaucracy. It knows who is to get something and who has to wait.\textsuperscript{107}

Superimposed upon the role of the state in transition period as the enforcer of bourgeois norms, Trotsky pointed out, was the character of the bureaucracy itself as a materially privileged stratum.\textsuperscript{106} In its very essence bureaucracy is the planter and protector of inequality. It arose in the beginning as the bourgeois organ of a workers' state. In establishing and defending the advantages of minority, it, of course, draws off the cream for its own use.\textsuperscript{108} It was this case, that not only had industrial expansion and the growth of productivity not undermined the social basis of the bureaucracy's power, but this

\textsuperscript{106} Leon Trotsky, n.101, p.112.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p.112.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.113.
power and its attendant privileges had actually been consolidated and even promoted.109

Regarding the nature of the Soviet state, Trotsky could not make up his mind, in his writings of the 1930s, as to how to define precisely the social character of the Soviet Regime and the society it was creating. In principle, he was prepared to accept the conventional view that formally at least it was a 'dictatorship of proletariat' and as such, a 'preparatory regime transitional from capitalism to socialism',110 and therefore, fundamentally temporary in character. On this view, insofar as classes and social antagonisms continued to exist, the state, and thus the bureaucracy remained unavoidable evils, essential for applying force and decreeing policies where voluntary consent and consensus did not exist; 'Bureaucracy and social harmony are inversely proportional to each other'.111 In this sense too, it was possible to describe the Soviet regime in conventional Marxist terms, as having a 'dual character'; 'socialistic, insofar as it defends social property in the means of production, bourgeois insofar as the distribution of life's goods is carried out with

110. Leon Trotsky, n.101, p.47.
111. Ibid., p.52.
a capitalistic measure of value and all the consequences ensuing therefrom’. 112

The validity of definition, however, depended on the assumption that a workers’ state must evolve away from bourgeois or capitalist characteristics and towards socialist ones. It must be a bridge between the bourgeois and the socialist society, but a bridge open in one direction only. But this, according to Trotsky, was precisely where the difficulty in applying the standard definition to the Soviet regime begin. In the 1930s it was far from certain, in Trotsky’s view, that the Soviet State had of course in the Socialist direction. The growth rather than the diminution of the bureaucracy, the increase in the power of state organs, the intensification of rule from above and the purposeful perpetuation of ‘bourgeois norms’ of economic rewards and distribution, suggested that the ultimate character of the regime remained in doubt, and that a transition in an opposite, non-socialist direction was at least a possibility. Nearly two decades after a workers’ revolution, the state was not ‘withering away’ but growing more and more omnipotent, more and more despotic; the bureaucracy was not dying away but ‘rising above the new society’. 113 The matter of ultimate character of Soviet Union was thus, in

112. Ibid., p.54.
113. Ibid., p.55.
Trotsky's view, far from settled. Trotsky categorically declared that 'the question of the character of Soviet Union had not yet been decided by history'.\(^{114}\) The most that could be done at this stage by way of definition was to describe the Soviet Union as a 'contradictory society halfway between capitalism and socialism' in which opposing forces were vying with one another in a struggle whose outcome was far from predetermined.\(^{115}\) It would be a mistake to believe, Trotsky wrote, 'that from the present Soviet regime only a transition to socialism is possible; in reality, a backslide to capitalism is wholly possible'.\(^{116}\)

The defeat of the right wing in 1928-29 and the consequent shift to the Left under Stalin, appeared to Trotsky to constitute a major blow against the Thermidorian danger. And in 1929 he felt obliged to defend Stalin - inspite of the fact that the later had at the beginning of that year banished him from the Soviet Union - against those who condemned Stalin's regime as Thermidor triumphant.\(^{117}\)

It was not until the 1934-35 period, a crucial one in the Soviet Union, that Trotsky began revising his

\(^{114}\) Ibid., p.252.
\(^{115}\) Ibid., p.255.
\(^{116}\) Ibid., p.254.
\(^{117}\) Knei-paz n.99, p.396.
conception of Thermidor in general, and within the Soviet context in particular. This was the period of assassination of Kirov, of the swing from the previous left wing course in the Comintern to 'popular front tactics', and of the new wave of purge trials and terror. Trotsky was now convinced that the Soviet regime had become 'Bonapartist' in character and Stalin was the 'Soviet Bonaparte'. In April 1935 he now admitted that having grasped the nature of the French Thermidor incorrectly in the past, he had failed to appreciate its reincarnation in the Soviet Union under Stalin.\footnote{Ibid., p.397.} He now claimed that the doctrine of 'socialism in one country' was in fact the doctrine of Thermidor. Thus the doctrine of 'socialism in one country', to protect the Revolution at least of 1917, had but one recourse, the bureaucratic domination of state and society, that is, the undermining of mass organisations and mass participation, and their substitution by a bureaucratic apparatus manned by managerial functionaries and supported only by 'the upper crust of the working class'. In this way the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was replaced by the 'dictatorship of bureaucracy', the latter, however, was a dictatorship in the worst sense of the word since it was not that of a class but of a ruling caste, and it

118. Ibid., p.397.
was wielded for the purpose not of resolving social contradictions but of politically manipulating them.119

Trotsky's decision, in 1933, to urge the founding of a new International, marked a turning point in his attitude towards the possibilities of change within the Soviet Union. Until then he had believed that the Soviet bureaucracy could be removed, more or less peacefully, through internal reforms of the party. Now he was convinced that this was no longer feasible. In the first place, the oppressive methods of Stalin had made it impossible to work either within the party or within the Comintern; the 'Left Opposition' was now so purged or victimized that it was effectively excluded from all influence, institutional or other.120 In the second place, the regime had become so dictatorial and so entrenched that even a peaceful assault upon it, would immediately elicit a violent reaction, 'No normal constitutional ways remain', Trotsky wrote in October 1933, 'to remove the ruling clique' The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power only by force.121 By 1936 he began talking in terms of a revolution against the Stalin regime. Convinced now that state and society had grown completely apart, with the people alienated, 

yet towered over by a tyrannical dictatorship, he saw no way out except through a popular uprising, led by the workers, organised by the ‘opposition’ and the emerging new International. The ‘inevitability’ of such revolution was the concluding message of his book *The Revolution Betrayed*. This revolution, however, would be a political, not a social, one; its purpose would be to bring down a political regime not social system. Trotsky’s critique of Stalin and the Soviet bureaucratic system, was the first most significant critique from within the system, by one of its foremost outcast leaders, in a Marxist perspective. It provided a fairly thorough insight into the most insidious problem of the Soviet system. It was thus typical of Stalin, and even later day leaders never accepted Trotsky’s critique even partially. In fact Soviet official history gave neither place nor status to this dynamic leader. This played a role in the breakup of the Soviet system. Since no real effort was made to get rid of the system of this basic weakness, Trotsky’s critique of the Soviet bureaucracy formed the basis from which writers of the “new left” perceived the Soviet System.

122. Leon Trotsky, n.101, p.288. Conscious of the irony of Russian Proletariat having to make a revolution for the first time in less than twenty years, Trotsky added, “the proletariat of a backward country was faced to accomplish the First socialist revolution. For this historic privilege, it must, according to all evidence, pay with a second supplementary revolution against bureaucratic absolutism”. p.289.
Max Weber on Marxism and Socialist Bureaucracy

As a champion of the theory of ideal-rational type of bureaucracy specially for capitalist society, Weber paid hardly any attention towards Marxism.

Weber never accepted the thesis that all social phenomena could be explained sufficiently by relating them to economic causes. He maintained that "the common materialist view of history that the economy is in some sense an ultimate in the chain of causation is totally worthless as a scientific statement". Weber ignored the fact that Marx's and Engel's position on this matter was much more sophisticated. Weber's famous essay on The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of capitalism are commonly viewed as an attempt to prove that idealist, and specially religious, factor play an independent role in the historical process.

For Weber, Marxism was acceptable in only two forms: 1. as a political theory which, instead of invoking objective scientific truths, proclaimed revolutionary struggle against the purportedly unjust social order on the basis of ethical convictions and without regard for the possible consequences for the individual, or 2. as a system of brilliant ideal-type hypothesis.124


Weber contradicted Marx’s view that further capitalist development would cause an inevitable polarization between the bourgeoisie and the overwhelming majority of the proletariat, absorbing all remaining social state. Weber referred expressly to the rapid increase in “white-collar workers” and, hence, of bureaucracy in the private sector, a development which, he believed, indicated increasing differentiation within the workers’ rank as well as within the middle classes.\(^\text{125}\) Even so, Weber assumed that a socialist revolution was extremely improbable in his time. In his view, the Russian October Revolution was a military revolt veiled in socialist drapery.\(^\text{126}\)

Quite apart from the question of prospect of socialism, Weber rigorously disputed that the abolition of private appropriation of the means of production and transition to a demand oriented economy, of whatever type, would substantially improve the lot of workers. Weber believed that the separation of workers from the means of production, which Marx emphasized so strongly, was by no means limited to a social order based on private property.\(^\text{127}\) Rather he considered it to be an essential precondition of all modern, highly developed

\(^{125}\) Ibid., p.59.


\(^{127}\) Mommsen, n.123, p.60.
societies, capitalist or otherwise. He believed that the separation of workers from the means of production exists in state directed socialism just as much as in capitalism. In both, an increasing divergence of formal ownership and managerial control becomes manifest, a split which Weber saw as a mark of advanced industrial system and which he took as the starting-point for an ideal-typical theory of social stratification that differs significantly from Marxist theory. 128

Weber saw the roots of alienation, not in property relations, but in omnipotent structure of bureaucratic domination. He considered the demand for abolition of private controls of production to be a fetish, which ignored the true state of affairs and glossed over the fact that individual workers had nothing to gain by such measures. However, this would mean a further strengthening and bureaucratization of the economy and, indirectly of the social system. Socialization would not liberate workers, it would make them more dependent upon those who controls the means of production. 129

State socialist economic organisation, with its powerful bureaucratic machinery to control production, distribution and management had, in Weber's view, obvious disadvantages when compared to the capitalist

128. Ibid., p.60.
129. Ibid., p.61.
market economy. Socialist economic system would have to cope with a considerable reduction in the formal accountability of the production and distribution system.130

Marxist critics justifiably appealed to the conception of Marxist classics (particularly that of Marx) that bureaucracy represents a specific expression of (late) bourgeois domination which would have to be eradicated in the course of the socialist revolution and replaced by radical democratic forms of self-administration. In view of this conception and post-revolutionary reality which corresponded so little to it, Weber assumed that socialist revolution could not lead the abolition but rather lead an extension and acceleration of bureaucracy.131

Weber grounded his assumption by saying that rational socialism in particular could by no means dispense with the specific rationality of a bureaucratically organised administration of the masses. Weber asserted that indeed 'the calculable administration' would have to increase in rational socialism, and saw the 'specific rational fundamental

feature of bureaucratic administration of power through knowledge'.132 It is this specifically rational aspects of bureaucracy that is evidently of special importance for the development of socialist state.

Weber's fundamental observation regarding Soviet democracy and bureaucratization is that democracy as such, despite and because of its inevitable and uninternal promotion of bureaucratization, opposes domination by bureaucracy and this being the case possibly makes for very perceptible contradictions and inhibitions in bureaucratic organisation.133

Clearly, any evaluation of Weber's critique of the Marxist idea should bear in mind that he only lived through the first years of Bolshevik regime and, therefore, he lacked concrete experience of socialist systems. Regardless of this, his essential points are still worthy of consideration. His theses - that the distribution of property is not as important as the groups who control entrepreneurial position and that socialist revolution would not lead to the abolition but rather an extension and acceleration of bureaucracy - deserves special attention.

133. Ibid., p.113.
Theorization after Stalin’s Regime

Soviet leaders after Stalin from Khrushchev to Brezhnev, and later Andropov and Chernenko also theorized on the bureaucratic phenomenon. This theorization however did not discuss any critiques. They choose to ignore Trotsky, new left, and liberal western critiques. Their main concern, behind theorization was to legitimize the Soviet system with its inbuilt system of rigidity. Therefore they moulded and defined Marxism—Leninism in a way suited to their national interest and their interest in maintaining the dominance of the CPSU. Although Khrushchev attempted reform and political changes, nowhere did he really deviate from the accepted norms of the rigid Soviet State. Theoretically, Khrushchev saw the Soviet Union on the verge of the great historical breakthrough to communism predicted by classical Marxist-Leninist Theory.

Despite the fact that many of the modifications brought about in the Soviet system have been substantial, it was left to the Brezhnev regime to introduce far-reaching changes in Soviet social and political theory. Under Brezhnev a new conceptual apparatus was devised. It was to provide a characterization of Soviet society which evolved through the Brezhnev period and that was different from earlier accounts, on three major points. First, a new
and lengthy historical period, called 'developed socialism' was interposed between the original first phase and the eventual higher phase of communist society. Second, a new political doctrine, based on concept of the 'all people's state', was elaborated for this new stage of socialist evaluation. Third, the idea was advanced that there is a special 'socialist mode of life' appropriate to developed socialism. 134 The ideological legacy Brezhnev lent his name a major conceptual innovation, but one designed to encourage settling in for a long evolution on the historical plane. 135

By introducing the concept of developed socialism, Brezhnev and his ideologists created a new theoretical situation that could endure for years to come.

The All People State

The idea of an 'all people's state' sometimes translated 'state of whole people' was first introduced under Khrushchev — a fact that has not been mentioned in the Soviet literature for some 20 years — and thus it actually antedates the identification of developed socialism. The original characterization of the Soviet socialist state as a dictatorship of the proletariat had long seemed unnecessarily harsh to many Soviet

135. Ibid., p.239.
ideologists. Even Stalin was moved to exclude the term from the 1936 constitution, calling the Soviet state instead of a socialist state of workers and peasants. With the end of Stalin's rule Khrushchev saw the opportunity to have done not only with the term but also with the very idea that the Soviet state continues to function as an instrument of class domination. Accordingly in the Communist Party Programme of 1961 it was announced that "the dictatorship of the proletariat has fulfilled its historic mission" and hence is no longer needed in the USSR and that the Soviet state has become "a state of the entire people, an organ expressing the interests and will of the people as a whole". 136

The new development immediately taken up in the theoretical literature, where the all-people's state was trumpeted as the first state in history that is not an instrument of coercion used by one class to oppress other but instead represents the entire population. 137

After Khrushchev, this concept officially got recognition in 1977 constitution. "Having fulfilled the tasks of dictatorship of the proletariat" that document


reads, echoing the words at the 1961 Party Programme, "the Soviet state has become an all people's state", a socialist all people's state which expresses the will and interests of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia, the working people of all the nations and nationalities of the country".

Although regarded as an unprecedented political system, in which coercion is not employed systematically against any class, the all people's state is not identified with the "communist public self administration" expected by post socialist society. Rather it is viewed as something between statelessness and the dictatorship of the proletariat, neither the one nor the other. To the extent that it had lost its class-coercive features, the socialist state in the USSR at that time was regarded as having already partly "withered away". But Soviet theorists were quick to note that it was still a professionally administered institution that marshalled repressive force, against both external threat and internal deviants and that in fact had still greater power of organisation, education and control in the period of developed socialism than it had before. The socialist state is

139. Ibid., p.6.
140. M. Perfilyev, Soviet Democracy and Bourgeois Sovietology (Moscow, nd.), p.88.
expected to endure throughout the period of developed socialism, or in other words for an indefinitely long time to come. 141

Soviet accounts of all the conditions that must be met for the full withering of the state often seem calculated to remove any expectation of achieving statelessness in anything sort of a geological age, 142 as in the following pronouncement: "with respect to internal conditions, the state can wither away only after communism has essentially been built i.e., when the following problems are solved: creating the material and technical basis of communism; eliminating the essential differences between town and country and between physical and mental labour; attaining complete unity among the nations (of the USSR); developing the traits characteristic of man in a communist society; developing democracy to the fullest possible extent; increasing the role of mass organisations in the administration of the country; involving all citizens in the job of administering public affairs. As for external conditions, the Soviet state can wither away fully only upon the disappearance of the imperialist camp and the consequent elimination of danger of aggression on the part of the imperialist state". 143

142. Ibid., p.241.
143. M. Perfilyev, n.140, p.113.
Alternatively it might be asked that despite all this theoretical adverseness why the concept of the all people's state was promoted at all. It is not difficult to find a number of inducements.

First, some sort of major political advance was needed to mark the new historical stage attained in the USSR. Second, the concept of all people's state was useful in assuaging the sensitivities of multitude of national minorities that made up the USSR. The interest of the Brezhnev regime in stimulating a sense of solidarity within the multinational Soviet population was demonstrated in 1972 by the introduction of the concept of a single "Soviet people" (Sovetsky narod), into which, as a "new historical community", the separate Soviet nationalities were said to have merged in the course of building socialism.¹⁴⁴

More fundamental theoretical importance of the concept to the Soviet leadership was that it offers a justification for the use of systematic political coercion against individuals who were not class enemies.¹⁴⁵ This Soviet extension of the potential


¹⁴⁵ Throughout the seventeens heavy repression had been carried out by the "all peoples' state" to "social deviants". Most eminent victims were scientists, writers and independent thinkers like Shakharov, Medvedev etc in particular, and masses in general.
objects of political coercion to embrace the entire citizenship was a genuine novelty in Marxist political theory.\textsuperscript{146} The organised coercive force of the dictatorship of the proletariat was always held by Marxist to be directed, like the force of every state before it, against a hostile class or classes. Marxist theory never recognised a need to use state force against members of one's own classes. Laws were viewed as designed to control subordinate classes only; precisely for that reason the state was expected "to wither away once class domination had disappeared. In developed socialist society, on the other hand, there are no subordinate classes, and yet there was organised coercive force. This force was said to be employed internally not against classes but against deviant individuals — specially, against individuals who had not yet "become accustomed to observing elementary rule of social intercourse" or who were "wilfully impeding the building of communist society".\textsuperscript{147}

Finally, the concept of the all people's state was valuable to the Soviet leadership because it supported the broad extension of power into whatever area the state deems necessary. "The Soviet State not only governs all the citizens at the Soviet Union", 

\textsuperscript{146} James, n.134 p.245.

\textsuperscript{147} Perfilyev, n.140, p.83.
Perfilyev writes, "it does so along all - economic, political and ideological".\textsuperscript{148} The justification for this totalitarian view of state power is that the all people's state by its very definition expresses the will and interests of all the citizen of the land, so that whatever the state dictates must be a legitimate manifestation of popular demand. Therefore, justifying the further extension at state power is moreover no academic matter for the Soviet leadership, for just such extension was said to be required for the effective building of communism. Only by growing stronger can the state eventually be in a position to wither away.\textsuperscript{149} This concept also was used as a pressure against the concept of popular democracy, used by the West to attack the Soviet state. The concept necessarily meant that the leadership represented all sections of Soviet society, and expressed their demands.

**Socialist Mode of Life**

The Brezhnev regime's final major contribution to the theory of scientific communism is the notion of a special "mode of life" that is said to be characteristic of developed socialism. Introduced and popularized during 1970s, this notion provided the new

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., p.89.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p.89.
stage of history with a distinctive social identity, complementing the political identity supplied by the concept of the all people's state.

At the 25th Party Congress in 1976, Brezhnev proclaimed that with the attainment of developed socialism, there had been formed in the USSR a special "Soviet mode of life", calling this mode of life one of the principal fruits of six decades of Soviet rule. Brezhnev identified it briefly as marked by true collectivism and comradeship, by unity and friendship of the various nationalities within the USSR, and by moral health. In 1977, a reference to "the advantages of the socialist mode of life" was included in the new Soviet constitution, and Brezhnev continued to stress the concept at his last Party Congress, the 26th in 1981.

No definition of the generic concept is contained in Party documents, however, and left to their own device Soviet theorists have fallen into disagreement on the question.

First, the socialist mode of life is invariably said to be a life of industrious labour. Eventually in the fully developed economy of communism, it is argued


that free time will exceed working time and greater attention can be given to social and cultural activities. In the meantime, however, labour must take precedence; and hence according to Butenko the socialist mode of life is the one in which, among the various forms of life activity, labour "occupies the dominant place with respect to time".152

Second, the socialist mode of life is presented as one marked by the closest unity of all the members of society, "the unity of all classes and social groups, of all nations and nationalities of all generation of Soviet society".153

A third recurrent theme in Soviet presentation of the socialist mode of life is the need for externally imposed norms of behaviour. What is called "the planned improvement of the socialist mode of life" - presupposed the observance by individuals of "social parameters" established by the planners with an eye to "the harmonious development of all sphere of social life and the formation of the new man". It is often emphasized that such planning does not exclude

152. M.N. Rutkevich, etc. eds, Problemy sotsialisticheskogo abraza zhizhi (Moscow, 1977), p.47.
individual lifestyle as long as they are chosen "within the framework of existing conditions".¹⁵⁴

Finally, a feature that is stressed in all accounts of the socialist mode of life is the large growing role in the life of the Communist Party. The unity and direction already mentioned are not seen as haphazard consequences of spontaneous development; rather it is argued that "the leading and directing activity of the Communist Party" was "the guiding force of the whole social structure and political system of developed socialism, cementing all its links and all its activity".¹⁵⁵ Politically, this increase in the role of the Party goes along with the increased role of the state in developed socialist society, since it was taken as a course that the Party was the nucleus of the socialist political system. "Democracy without the leading role of Communist Party is anarchy".¹⁵⁶

Thus the socialist mode of life elaborated during Brezhnev regime was the life of citizens who are personally ambitious, eager to gain greater economic rewards and willing to work hard to do so; who seek to


¹⁵⁵. Ibid., p.100.

be like their fellow in intellectual and moral as well as social respects; who submit to the discipline of externally imposed norms in the every area of their social and cultural activity and who place boundless trust in the wisdom of the communist party. 157

Thus to accompany the new social order that is the Brezhnev regime dreamt up of, also advanced a new ideal of harmony. Soviet Marxists often chided for failing, after long period of October revolution, to produce the tabled "new man", fit for communism - the self governing internally motivated, transformer of nature whose labour is a free and creative as any artists. But producing that man was not on the agenda. Instead the Brezhnev ideology, through the concept of the socialist mode of life, introduced a forerunner - a socialist new man, whose traits differ sharply from those of his eventual communist descendant. All efforts were concentrated on producing this newer new man, and he was provided with a lengthy era in which to flourish before yielding the historical stage to the kind of man envisaged by man. 158

The lag between this kind of theorizing and the actual reality, was seen only by Mikhail Gorbachev and his reforming regime. Before that reality had eluded

157 James, n.134, p.251.
158 Ibid., p.252.
the leaders of this super power, who based the analysis of their strength on the military successes and cast iron rigidity of the bureaucratic machinery which placed them in power and gripped the entire Soviet system.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION OF GORBACHEV

As a reformer in power Mikhail S. Gorbachev made tremendous theoretical revision of the past models of the Soviet administrative system. Due to the impact of his ideological and functional policies, the scenario of the Soviet administrative system was radically changed. He pushed the bureaucracy, the Party and society itself to revise past practices, however he had no intention of altering the socialist foundation of the Soviet system. He downplayed ideology as a motive force in his reform programme, but had not abandoned theory. He in many ways redefined ideological precepts long taken for granted and had initiated policies based on his redefinitions. In his book, Perestroika Gorbachev clarified that "we are not going to change Soviet power, of course, or abandon its fundamental principles, but we acknowledge the need for changes that will strengthen socialism, and make it more dynamic and politically meaningful".159 This statement provides insights into Gorbachev's ideological values

and serves as an abbreviated theoretical justification of his policy agenda.

Though he took many ideas from previous Soviet leaders, he developed a basic policy agenda that was clearly his own. His programme stressed the independence of nations within the world socialist community, advocates greater democracy and participation by Soviet citizens in the political process, and called for a rejuvenation of the Party to enhance the CPSU's credibility and authority.160

(a) Rejection of the concept of Developed Socialism:

In a speech in late 1984, soon after he took on the ideology portfolio in addition to other duties within the politburo, Gorbachev addressed the need for improvements in ideology. The main theme was that official ideology was inadequate. He strongly rejected the ideological formulas of the past. Upon assuming the General Secretary position, he intensified his urging for more truthful ideology. He continued to stress that ideology could not stand still, that Party members could not continue to rely on old formulas to motivate the population to pursue new policies. In his speech to the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev noted that ideological work had been out of mainstream of Soviet

life. He stated that the most important goal of ideology was to convince all Soviet citizens of "the critical nature of the present time and its pivotal role" in the development of Soviet economy and society. He also clarified that the Brezhnev ideology of developed socialism could no longer serve as the basis for policy.

During the 27th Congress, he attacked this concept saying that "we used the thesis of developed socialism in reaction to the simplification of ideas about the paths and time periods for accomplishing the tasks of communist construction". He also attacked this notion on the ground that it was used only to tout successes instead of focusing on the many problems facing society and the economy. He concluded as saying that "developed socialism served as a unique justification for slowing down the resolution of pressing tasks". Such an approach, Gorbachev underscored, was no longer acceptable.

Gorbachev thus categorically rejected the theoretical underpinning of the Brezhnev period just as he rejected most of Brezhnev's policy agenda. In his statement that developed socialism had been used in

162. Ibid., pp.121-22.
163. Ibid., p.122.
reaction to the simplification of ideas about the paths
and time periods for accomplishing the tasks of
communist construction", he was admitting that the
concept was essentially a band-aid measure to counter
Khrushchev's 1961 prediction about the imminent arrival
of communism. With the Gorbachev's speech to the 27th
Congress, developed socialism has been consigned to the
past. In his rejection of the old formulas, Gorbachev has lashed out against the "simplified and
mechanical understanding of socialism", encountered in
the most theoretical formulation. He insisted that
theory be derived from real-life situation.

Two important elements in Gorbachev's rejection of
developed socialism have been his effort to re-
establish friendly relations with China and the
campaign to reveal the truth about Stalin. Developed
socialism was based on the notion, that the Soviet
model of communism based on industrialization was
inherently superior to the Chinese model based on
communal agriculture. After an initial attempt at

164. The new edition of the CPSU programme states that
the dedicated work of the Soviet people, the big
success in the economy, in the social and
political spheres, in science and culture "opened
the stage of developed socialism". Interestingly
the party program does not state that the stage of
developed socialism has been completed. See 27th
Congress of the CPSU: Programme of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union Soviet Review, (New

165. Mikhail Gorbachev, n.159, p.29.
reconciliation with the Chinese in 1965 - 1966, the Brezhnev leadership reverted to the ideological hostilities that had characterized the Sino-Soviet split of the early 1960s, justifying this action with the new doctrines of developed socialism. Although Brezhnev again attempted to reach out to the Chinese near the end of his tenure in office, he continued to use developed socialism to support his policy agenda.166 While Brezhnev seemed not to recognise it, there was little hope that even a post-Mao leadership would respond favorably to any Soviet overtures about reconciliation as long as official Soviet ideology contained an implicit rejection of Chinese communism.167

Gorbachev, however, changed all this. In the 27th Party Congress he rejected the traditional view that the USSR was the leader of the communist movement. In tune with the post-Brezhnev consensus and the revised party programme, he reiterated that there was much to be gained for the Soviets in studying the experiences of other communist countries. He stated that the Soviets did not consider "unity to have anything in common with uniformity, with hierarchy, with

166. Kommunist (Moscow), no.6, 1982), pp 14-21.
interference by some parties in the affairs of others, or with the attempts of any party to have a monopoly on the truth".168

Gorbachev's treatment of Stalin was his second major departure from developed socialism. Although the 'Stalin Question' was addressed under Brezhnev it was in the context of mostly esoteric debates about the periodization of socialism. Those who felt developed socialism should be declared a new stage in Soviet ideology believed it was important to separate the Stalin period from the post-Stalin era to signal the end of the command economy and arbitrary rule. While Brezhnev, attempted to distance himself from Stalin, he never made, according to Thompson, Stalinism a major issue from the pages of theoretical journals and scholarly discussion into full public view. Giving Stalin credit for industrialization and collectivization, he has also criticized the former leader for violations of socialist principles of government and of Soviet law.169

The main line of Gorbachev's rejection of developed socialism are thus clear; the simplistic formulas, as noted by Thompson, under Brezhnev where no longer applicable to Soviet society seeking to solve

168. 27th Congress, n.161, p.121.
many problems; the USSR could no longer claim dominance over world communism. These dramatic changes had an earth-shaking impact on the nature and foundations of Soviet administration and bureaucracy. Its hierarchy, organisation, structure and method of functioning were questioned. The bureaucracy and administration with their centrality in the Soviet system, meant that any criticism of the bureaucracy was an attack on the system itself. This became then, the contentious issue of the Gorbachev period which struck a lethal blow to the system of Soviet administration.

170. Ibid., p. 63.