CHAPTER I

BUREAUCRACY: A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
The increasing complexities of social life, and the multiplying effect of the extension of the state's regulating functions have made the 'bureaucracy', an epitome of institutionalised social power. Be it a liberal democracy or a socialist state, developed or a developing society, bureaucracy in some form exists, and governs primarily because of its farflung system of professionalised administration and its hierarchy of appointed officials upon whom society has become thoroughly dependent.

Its importance has led it to become one of the most examined concepts in academic social science where it has been studied, individually and comparatively, within the governmental structure and outside it by sociologists, political scientists and psychologists. The bureaucratic phenomenon all over the world has led to many debates, discussions and controversies. The vast outpouring of books, monographs, research reports and journal articles serve as noteworthy indices to gauge its significance in social research.

The coining and the subsequent acceptance of a term in social science theory is a sure guide to the importance or level of concern about a phenomenon. Bureaucracy as a term is known to have had an extraordinary reception, though it has been almost from the start,
a vessel into which many different meanings have been poured. However, the increase in the quantity of literature associated with bureaucracy, its personnel and their role, has led to a concomitant increase in the perspectives reflected in their works. On the one hand, this institution has defenders who justify its existence to the hilt in their work, on the other hand, it faces scathing criticism from social scientists who foresee with the growth of bureaucracy a corresponding growth of dehumanization process.

Etymologically, 'bureaucracy' represents an addition to the Greek classification of governments, i.e. - monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, - suggesting government by a new group of rulers-officials. The term was used with a pejorative bias during the struggle against absolutism by liberal critics of the years preceding the French Revolution. The neologism is attributed to Vincent de Gourney (1745) who is also said to have coined the term 'laissez-faire'.

However, in modern times the term has been conceptualised in various ways, depending on the

interests and focus of the particular writers. For instance, bureaucracy has been conceptualised as rational organisation (Max Weber, Peter Blau etc.), as organisational inefficiency (Marshall Dimock, Michel Crozier etc.), as rule by officials (Harold Laski, Herman Finer, Arnold Brecht, Harold Lasswell, Abraham Kaplan etc.), as public administration (F.M. Marx, S.N. Eisenstadt, La Palombara, F.W. Riggs etc.), as administration by officials (Karl Renner, Reinhard Bendix, Carl Friedrich etc.), as large-scale organisations (Talcott Parsons, Presthus, Herbert Simon etc.), as modern society (Rizzi, Djilas, Burnham etc.).

Broadly, there can be discerned two schools of thought, i.e., Marxist and liberal which have systematically reflected upon bureaucracy. First of all, in the following pages classical representative formulations of Karl Marx and Max Weber belonging to these two schools will be discussed. Thereafter a discussion of the views of different writers (both Marxist and liberal) who have reflected upon the functioning of bureaucracy in Socialist states (especially in the context of former Soviet Union) will follow.

2. For details, see Martin Albrow, Bureaucracy (London, 1970), pp.84-105.
It is necessary to bear in mind that the concept of bureaucracy did not occupy a central position in Marx's thought. But he did have his views on bureaucracy and its relations to the power structure of society. As Marx developed his concept of bureaucracy through his critique of Hegel's philosophy of Right, it seems useful to briefly recall Hegel's views on bureaucracy as a backdrop for the study of Karl Marx's approach to bureaucracy.

Hegel, like Marx, did not deal with bureaucracy as such. The interest of both of them in bureaucracy grew out of their larger interest in examining the nature of the state. The state, for Hegel, is the last development in a series of rational social orders, the other two being the family and the civil society. Once the state is produced, it is supposed to provide the grounds where the unconscious and particularly oriented activities become gradually self-conscious and public spirited. For Hegel, the prince, the bureaucrats and the deputies of the estates are political actors par excellence.

3. For details, see G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, Trans. by Knox (London, 1967), paras 159 and 256.
Hegel finds in the society the existence of three classes, namely, the agricultural class, the business class and the universal class, each of which reflects three modes of consciousness, conservatism, individualism and universalism respectively. He distinguishes between civil society and the state on the ground that the former represents the general interest and the latter, the particular interest. Bureaucracy plays the role of a link between the civil society and the state. It is what Avineri, while explaining Hegel's views, has called "the paradigm of mediation" between the particular and the general, between the civil society and the state. Hegel says that "the universal class (the bureaucracy) has, for its task, the universal interests of the community." It is to be mentioned here that for Hegel, bureaucracy represents the universal interests not because of the negative universality of their wants, but because of the positive universality of what they already have, the state itself. In his opinion, the universal class should not be misunderstood as the 'unhappy consciousness' suffering from a sense of estrangement from its own product. They

5. For details, see G.W.F. Hegel, No.3, para 205.
are on the contrary, a 'self-satisfied consciousness,' which understands and accepts the world as world.

It is interesting to note that like Hegel, the young Marx believed that the rational state must represent the universal interests of the community, but he insisted that the existing state did not do so, and the prominence of the bureaucracy within it was one of the major reasons why it could not do so. He rejected Hegel's claim that the bureaucracy was an impartial and thus 'universal' class. Reversing the Hegelian dialectic, he asserted that, though the function of bureaucracy was in principle a universal one, the bureaucrats, in practice, ended by turning it into their own private affair. Certainly in the past the bureaucracy fought on the side of the monarch against the corporations, and separatism. But once the victory had been won the bureaucracy needed constantly to maintain the appearance of the separation in order to justify its own existence. For, "the same spirit that creates the corporation in society, creates bureaucracy in the state. If bureaucracy earlier attacked the existence of corporations to make room for its own existence, it now attempts to sustain forcefully the existence

of the corporations' spirit which is its own spirit." 7

In other words, on the one hand, the bureaucracy considered other corporations as rivals and fought against them. On the other hand, it presupposed the existence of corporations, or at least the 'spirit of corporations', for like them it sought simply to serve its particular interests.

Marx's fundamental criticism of Hegel hinges around the fact that attributes of humanity as a whole had been transferred to a particular class, which thus represented the illusory universality of modern political life. The bureaucracy was just another class with particular interests like the others, peculiar in the sense that base of its particular interests was state. It too was based on a sort of 'property', but its private property consisted of the state itself - the political power. It was this peculiarity that created the illusion of universality. But it was based on a lie - "the lie that state is the people's interest or that the people is the state's interest."8

It is important to note that the foregoing analysis is based on the writings of the young Marx of 1843, with

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p.28.
his historical materialism not yet fully developed, Marx allowed the bureaucracy more autonomy than he was later prepared to concede.

By 1845, the doctrine usually taken to characterize 'classical' Marxism had been developed. Thereafter Marx insisted that productive economic activity is fundamental in human affairs, that the 'bearers' of relations of production are social classes and that their conflicts are the motor of historical change. Within each "mode of production" a fundamentally important distinction exists between that class which owns the means of production and that which does not; these two classes are the fundamental actors in each society, and their relationship and conflict are at the root of the definition and capacity for change of the society. In this theoretical context, neither bureaucratic activity nor bureaucrats were needed to be central foci of attention. In class societies, bureaucracy was not a class but the servant of classes; not basic, but ultimately subordinate to the ruling class. In capitalist society, that class is the bourgeoisie. In the German Ideology of 1845-46, Marx and Engels claim that the state in bourgeois society is simply "the form of organisation which the bourgeoisie are compelled to adopt... for the mutual guarantee to their property
and interests." The independent state, they insist, is an anomalous and pre-bourgeois phenomenon which only remains where estates have declined but classes are still not fully developed and where no group has the power to overcome the rest. The state in this situation is relatively autonomous, free from control, by any of the contending classes but not from society as such. The historical moorings of Germany was a case in point as distinct from the more advanced countries of that time, England and France. Engels hints at this relative autonomy in an article on the Prussian Constitution:

"Thus the King, representing the power of the state, and supported by the numerous class of government officers, was enabled to keep down the middle class... and the nobility, by flattering (their) interests... and balancing... the influence of both. This stage of absolute monarchy... has now given place to the government of the middle class. This is because the nobility and middle classes are placed in such a situation that by natural progress of industry and civilization the latter must increase in wealth and influence while the former must decrease and impoverish." 10

Engels tries to find out the root of the situation and in a brilliant article on the 'constitutional question in Germany' written in 1847 he refers to the

formation of bureaucracy as a result of the resigning of power by the nobility and the petty bourgeoisie. Both contending classes, however, contribute to the formation of this third class, with the nobility reserving the higher positions and the petty bourgeoisie content with the lower positions in administration. For Engels this regime represented by the bureaucracy is the political summing up of the general importance and contemptibility of the dull boredom and sordidness of German society. The reason for this situation of status quo, according to Engels, is the lack of capital in the hands of one class. He argues that it is only the bourgeoisie class which overthrows the compromise established between nobility and petty bourgeoisie in the bureaucratic monarchy. 11

Engels later on referring to Prussia as a specific historical model makes clear the growing power of the bourgeoisie and the shift from absolute bureaucratic monarchy towards a bourgeoisie monarchy. The Prussian bourgeoisie after the formation of the new Constitution under Fredrick William IV in 1847 refused to finance the state. The King was in despair and for the first few days, Prussia was almost without a King. The country was in the throes of revolution without knowing it. It

11. Ibid., p.79.
was only after receiving aid from Russia that the monarchy stabilized a bit. The Prussian bourgeoisie was for the time being defeated. But it made a great step forward, had won for itself a forum, had given the King a proof of its power and had worked the country up into a great stage of agitation. The state bureaucracy is seen here as the main political obstacle to social progress at the given point in history. Once the bourgeoisie gains power, both social and political, thereby taking over in its own name the direct command of the state, the bureaucracy gets reduced more and more to the status of social stratum acting merely as the agent of the ruling class. This is the status it tends to be restricted to as a rule, wherever the ruling class of a given society is robust enough to exercise unchallenged socio-economic and political sway. Perhaps this suggests why the class status of the bureaucracy has again become a moot question in the contemporary world, which sees the down phase of bourgeois society, and the increasing prevalence of the autonomized state phenomena.

12. Ibid., p.522.

This study and uncomplicated formula dominated Marx's writing about the modern state until 1851 - Napoleon's coup d'état of 2nd December. Marx recognised that the result of the coup appeared to be a triumph of Napoleon and the bureaucracy over society, a triumph of the executive over the social classes. In "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", he complained of:

"this executive power with its enormous bureaucratic military organisation, with its ingenious state machinery with a host of officials numbering held a million.... Every common interest was straightaway severed from society, counterposed to it as a higher, general interest, snatched from the activity of society's members, themselves, and made an object of government's activity." 14

More important was the fact that the French bourgeoisies' economic interests depended directly on a huge bureaucracy, for it offloaded its surplus population and received in salaries 'what it cannot pocket in the form of profits, interests and rents'. 15 Politically, the bourgeois was compelled to build up the power of the state in order to defeat the classes which it oppressed economically.

15. Ibid., p.139.
In the Bonapartist state, then, a class may rule economically without ruling politically; indeed, its lack of political power is, in these circumstances, a condition of its economic dominance. French Bonapartism, in other words, is a regime which in times of bourgeois weakness and fierce struggle within and between classes, serves the bourgeoisie's economic interests without being in their control. It is not an example of a truly autonomous state or bureaucracy, but a response to the special nature of its class base.

The significance of Marx's analysis of bureaucracy lies in his insistence that bureaucratic structures do not automatically reflect prevailing social power relations but pervert and disfigure them. Bureaucracy is thus the image of prevailing social power distorted by its claim of universality. This insight may perhaps serve as a clue to Marx's reluctance to systematize his views on the modern state. Though he never conceived the state or the bureaucratic structure as a mere reflection of socio-economic forces, he still considered it as a projection, even if a distorted one, of those forces. The basic contradiction in which the modern state finds itself reveals that to attain its expectations and standards it must appear different from what it really is - its alienation lies in its very essence. Like religion which projects on to God what is lacking in
this vale of tears, the state ascribed to itself and to bureaucracy those attributes which should have been part of every person as a subject.  

If so, why waste time in studying the distorted looking glass instead of looking through it at the reality hidden behind it? Instead of discussing the imaginary arrangements of the state, why not analyse the reality of civil society and its economic forms? This is the way Marx summed up his own programmatic position in 1859 in the Preface to 'A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy'. Marx thus viewed bureaucracy within the context of the class struggle, it represents the tool of the ruling class, an instrument by which the latter exercises its domination over the other classes only with the establishment of classless society will result the gradual absorption of bureaucracy into the society as a whole. In his own words: "Thus instead of having an oppressive structure which is separated from and antagonistic to the rest of the society, in the communist state those functions of bureaucracy which are not parasitic will be performed by all social members. The administrative tasks, losing

16. S. Avineri, n.4, p.51.
17. Ibid., p.52.
their exploitative character will consist in the administration of things and not of people, as was the case with the bureaucracy."  

In his manuscript for the fourth volume of 'Capital' Marx approached the role of bureaucracy from the economic side. He was concerned with the state officialdom as one of those social strata that consist of people who do unproductive labour but are nevertheless useful to the ruling class in some way. The bourgeoisie although initially had a critical and severe attitude towards the state machinery soon discovered and learned by experience that it was out of its own organisation that the necessity arose for this class which was quite unproductive. Having realised this the bourgeoisie gradually began to justify the demands of its defender. The dependence of the bureaucracy on the capitalism was thus proclaimed. 

For Marx, the relationship between bureaucracy and capitalism was established in stages; at loggerheads at first and then discovering that one was

beneficial for the other. The second stage can be seen as a voluntary ceasefire from both sides.

Max Weber had a different story to tell in this regard. He viewed the relationship from a much more rigid perspective, which led him to conclude that bureaucracy is indispensable to modern economic organization, among the many preconditions necessary for it to develop in its purest form is the rational economic base of capitalism.

Like Marx, Weber regarded the developed capitalist order as a system with imperatives, with rules of actions which the individual capitalist had to obey to survive. In this system, the imperatives of mechanised production and incessant competition force enterprises continuously to maximize profit and therefore to operate in the most efficient way possible. For this, bureaucracies are essential in two areas. Internally, large scale capitalist enterprises are 'unequallled models of strict bureaucratic organisation', simply because bureaucracies get things done better than any other form of organization. Externally, the capitalist enterprise is equally dependent on the predictability and calculability provided by a rational

---

legal order and state administration staffed bureaucratically and working according to strict formal rules.\textsuperscript{21}

The framework of Weber's conception of bureaucracy is to be sought in his ideas on power, authority and legitimation. For Weber a person could be said to have power if "within a social relationship, his own will could be enforced despite resistance."\textsuperscript{22} But such a broad concept, Weber commented, was "sociologically amorphous."\textsuperscript{23} Individuals could be said to have power in all kinds of ways. For the structuring of human groups it was 'a special instance of power' which was most important.\textsuperscript{24} This 'special instance' was authority. It existed when "a command of a definite content found obedience on the part of specific individuals."\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, p.1394.
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Max Weber, n.22, p.152.
\end{itemize}
However, Weber stressed that obedience was primarily dependent upon a belief in their legitimacy, a belief that the orders were justified and that it was right to obey. It was this idea of legitimacy which provided Weber with his principle for classifying organisations. In his strongest statement on the subject he said: "The foundations of all authority and hence of all compliance with others, is a belief in prestige, which operates to the advantage of the ruler or rulers." With different forms of belief in the legitimacy of authority were associated different authority structures and hence organisational forms.

Weber identified three kinds of such beliefs. The first was that obedience was justified because the person giving the order had some sacred or altogether outstanding characteristic. This, Weber termed 'charismatic authority'. Secondly, a command might be obeyed out of reverence for old-established patterns of order - 'traditional authority'. Thirdly, men might believe that a person giving an order was acting in accordance with his duties as stipulated in a code of legal rules and regulations. This was Weber's category of 'legal authority', which, he added, was of

a rational character. It was the type of authority which characterized the modern organisation, and with it was associated increasingly a bureaucratic administrative staff. 27

In conformity with his theory that a belief in legitimacy was basic to nearly all systems of authority he began by setting out five related beliefs on which legal authority depended. In abbreviated form these were:

I. That a legal code can be established which can claim obedience from members of the organization.

II. That the law is a system of abstract rules which are applied to particular cases, and that administration looks after the interests of the organization within the limits of that law.

III. That the man exercising authority also obeys this impersonal order.

IV. That only *qua* member does the member obey the law.

V. That obedience is due not to the person who holds authority but to the impersonal order which has granted him this position. 28


On the basis of these conceptions of legitimacy Weber was able to formulate eight propositions about the structuring of legal authority systems. In short, these were:

(a) Official tasks are organized on a continuous, regulated basis.

(b) These tasks are divided into functionally distinct spheres, each furnished with the requisite authority and sanctions.

(c) Offices are arranged hierarchically, the rights of control and complaint between them being specified.

(d) The rules according to which work is conducted may be either technical or legal. In both cases trained men are necessary.

(e) The resources of the organization are quite distinct from those of the members as private individuals.

(f) The office holder cannot appropriate his office.

(g) Administration is based on written documents and this tends to make the office (Bureau) the hub of the modern organization.

(h) Legal authority systems can take many forms, but are seen at their purest in a bureaucratic administrative staff. 29

29. Ibid., pp.331-3.
The last proposition is vital for the understanding of Weber's thinking on bureaucracy. The five conceptions of legitimacy and the eight principles of authority were exhibited in the organization of the bureaucratic administrative staff, but they did not in themselves warrant talking of bureaucracy. Other kinds of administration, e.g. collegial or honorary, could also be based on these propositions. Weber also added that it was possible to have a bureaucratic administrative staff when the leadership did not base itself on the legal rational principles.

The bureaucratic administrative staff, the bureaucracy in its most rational form, presupposed the preceding propositions on legitimacy and authority, and had the following defining characteristics:

1. The staff members are personally free, observing only the impersonal duties of their offices.
2. There is a clear hierarchy of offices.
3. The functions of the offices are clearly specified.
4. Officials are appointed on the basis of a contract.
5. They are selected on the basis of a professional qualification, ideally substantiated by a diploma gained through examination.
6. They have a money salary, and usually pension rights. The salary is graded according to position in the hierarchy. The official can always leave the post, and under certain circumstances it may also be terminated.

7. The official's post is his sole or major occupation.

8. There is a career structure, and promotion is possible either by seniority or merit, and according to the judgement of superiors.

9. The official may appropriate neither the post nor the resources which go with it.

10. He is subject to a unified control and disciplinary system.  

These ten features constituted Max Weber's renowned ideal, pure on most rational type of bureaucracy. Weber was sure that rational bureaucracy was bound to increase in importance. It had a series of characteristics - precision, continuity, discipline, strictness, reliability - which made it technically the most satisfactory form of organisation, both for authority holders and all other interested parties: "The development of modern organisational forms in all spheres (state, church, army, party, the economy, interest groups, voluntary associations, charitable bodies or whatever)"

30. Ibid., p.334.
is simply identical with the development and continuous increase of bureaucratic administration.  

Two things should be noted about this conception. First, it must be remembered that this is the ideal type of bureaucracy in its purest and most extreme form. This pure, unmixed form is never found in reality. Weber never claimed that all modern organisations display all the aforementioned features. He merely claimed that there is a general tendency in this direction and that the closer an organisation comes to displaying these features, the more rational and effective it is likely to be. Weber thus referred to actual administrations as bureaucracies even when they displayed only in parts the characteristics of his ideal type.

Second, since Weber was interested in the form of organisation rather than to the uses to which it was put, he was not limited to talking of government. He recognised that the state's monopoly of legitimate force puts its bureaucracy in a unique position, and in his political writings he usually referred specifically to state bureaucracy when he used the word, but he repeatedly stressed that bureaucracies were

found in all kinds of enterprises. Weber gave many causes for this kind of development, three of which, however, need special mention.

(i) Creation of money economy - Bureaucracies based on compensation of kind had existed for instance in Egypt, Rome and China. But payment in kind could not ensure dependable revenues for bureaucrats. Hence the practice was to reward them by grants of land or the collection of tax revenues from given territories. This led to the disintegration of bureaucracies into feudal or semi-feudal domains. A money economy on the other hand permitted payment of secure, regular salaries, which in turn created dependable organizations.

(ii) The emergence of capitalist economy - The system of free enterprise, the essence of capitalism, fostered bureaucracy. It created the needs which only bureaucratic organisation could satisfy. The growth of capitalism required and even encouraged strong and orderly government based on bureaucratic organisation in its own interests. Not only governments but also capitalist enterprises themselves began to follow bureaucratic principles of organisation because of the requirements of rationality and calculability - the prime features of Capitalism.

(iii) The more encompassing trend towards rationalists, in Western Society - This trend found an
expression in a general 'disenchantment' or demystification of the world, in a more effective adaptation of means to ends and a more systematic organization of reality. For Weber, the protestant ethic was the basic of the spirit of capitalism which called for the rational investment of time and effort so as to maximize profits and achievements. The general trend towards rationality was also evident in the development of modern science with its combination of rational theory, mathematical calculation and systematic empirical observation. Protestantism, capitalism, science and bureaucracy were thus all part of one cluster of developments - the process of rationalization. 32

The pivotal political fact of the modern age was the indispensability factor of bureaucracy with its expertise born of long and specialized training. But Weber was deeply concerned about its effects both on the individual and society at large. "The individual bureaucrat", he wrote, "is reduced to a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march." 33 Weber saw in bureaucracy equally grave dangers for society as a whole. In the past, bureaucratization of society, 


as part of a growing rationality, had a liberating effect on society by destroying oppressive traditions. But Weber saw further bureaucratization as leading to the permeation of bureaucratic values and ways of thought throughout the population, a prospect he did not find heartening. Weber sounds quite radical when he says:

"it is in such an evolution that we are already caught up and the great question is therefore not how we can promote but what we oppose to this machinery in order to keep parceling out of the soul from this supreme mastery of this bureaucratic way of life."34

If one follows the political writings of Weber a little more closely one will discover that there are two principal foci of Weber's uneasiness regarding bureaucracy. The first as mentioned before is the bureaucratization of the whole of society in the sense of the percolation of bureaucratic values, ways of thought and behaviour throughout a population. It is important to note that although Weber drew attention to the 'socially levelling' effects of bureaucracy on status structure, he was more aware and disturbed about the kind of status hierarchy which bureaucracy itself encouraged - a hierarchy based on the 'patent

of education' and on education of a uniquely important kind in specialized functional skills. 

His second concern was more directly political in focus. It was the fear that those who manned the bureaucratic organization might come to be the equal rulers of a state. It was less a fear that we would all become bureaucrats, than we would all come to be ruled by bureaucrats. In one sense Weber believed that this was already the case in every modern society because all domination was exercised through bureaucratic agencies. But 'rule' in the sense of ultimate directive power, did not inevitably lie in the hands of officials for there was a fundamental difference between the functional indispensability of bureaucratic forms of organisation and of bodies of trained officials and the 'power' of those officials. Weber's stand in this regard is a little ambiguous for he says:

"It must... remain an open question whether the 'power' of bureaucracy is increasing in the modern states in which it is spreading. The fact that bureaucratic organization is technically the most highly developed power instruments in the hands of its control doesn't determine the height that bureaucracy as such is capable of procuring for its own opinions in a particular social structure." 


36. Ibid., p.991.
Weber, however, admitted that normally, the power position of a fully developed bureaucracy was everywhere over towering. The political master is no match for the expert bureaucrat. Another feature of bureaucracy, as he pointed out, is to increase the superiority of the professionally informed by keeping their knowledge and intentions secret. In his own words: "The concept of the 'official secret' is the special invention of bureaucracy, and nothing is so fanatically defended by the bureaucracy as this attitude.... If it chooses to overrule its master, there is nothing to prevent it from doing so; against the bureaucracy the ruler remains powerless." 37

In his most important essay in political polemics, "Parliament and Government in the Newly Organised Germany" (1918), Weber wrote explicitly on the problem of beamtenherrschaft or rule by officials which, in his view, was different from bureaucracy. How to prevent the inherent tendency of bureaucracy to accumulate power bothered him very much. Weber was, therefore, considering a number of mechanisms for limiting the scope of systems of authority generally and bureaucracy in particular. These mechanisms fell

into five major categories: (i) Collegiality, (ii) The Separation of powers, (iii) Amateur Administration, (iv) Direct Democracy and (v) Representation.  

Among these mechanisms it was through the medium of representative bodies that Weber saw the greatest possibility of a check on bureaucracy. Leadership recruited and developed in Parliament in Weber's view, provided the only means of controlling the administration. To quote Weber, "It is only this school of intensive work in the realities of administration... that equips an assembly to be a selecting ground, not for mere demagogues, but for effective politicians with a grasp of reality, of which the English Parliament is the supreme example. Only this kind of relationship between officials and professional politicians guarantees the continuous control of the administration and through this the political education of both leaders and led."  

This solution propounded by Weber was in sharp opposition to the Marxist solution of the withering away of the state and bureaucracy under communism.

38. For details, see Max Weber, n.22, pp.392-423.
Further unlike Marx, for Weber the real danger of capitalism was the rise of more and more almighty bureaucracies, and not simply the private ownership of the means of production and the relative or absolute exploitation of the working classes to the advantage of their masters. He pointed out that the nationalization of the means of production would not substantially alter the situation under socialism. 'Any socialist economy organised on rational lines...would retain the expropriation of all the workers and merely bring it to completion by the expropriation of the private owners'.  

A socialist revolution according to Weber cannot result in a dictatorship of the proletariat. In modern mass society it can only result in a consolidated dictatorship of the bureaucrats. In economic enterprises bureaucrats would now be in the highest position, formerly held by private entrepreneurs, strikes would be more difficult than ever before, and the possibility of appeal or support from one enterprise against another would be gone. If private capitalism were destroyed - "What would be the practical result.... It would simply mean that the top management of the nationalised or socialized enterprises

would become bureaucratic.... state bureaucracy would rule alone if private Capitalism were elimi­
tated. The private and public bureaucracies, which now work next to and potentially against, each other and hence check one another to a degree, would be merged into a single hierarchy."41

Weber's case against socialism was good; first, in so far as he argued that it was not the ownership of property as such, but rather the control of the entrepreneurial positions which matters; secondly, when he pointed out that the real cause of the 'alienation' not only of the working classes, but of the great majority of the population in modern socialism, lay in the emerging bureaucratic structures and not so much in the particular modes of the distribution of wealth.

Weber was not a champion of capitalism either, although, he was an enthusiastic admirer of the capital­ist system. Weber clearly perceived that capitalism creates social trends which are detrimental to a humane social order. No doubt, he pointed out time and again, that it is only the "market economy" which

is capable of attaining a maximum degree of formal rationality, particularly regarding the exact rational calculation of all economic operations. Any socialist economy, for Weber, especially if it goes so far as to abandon a market-oriented system of prices, would have to cope with a substantial diminution of 'formal calculating rationality'. On numerous occasions Weber strongly emphasized that capitalism is infinitely superior to all other known forms of economic organisation precisely because it alone is capable of organizing all its activities on a purely formal-rational basis. 42

But Weber, himself pointed out on various occasions that 'formal rationality' and 'substantive rationality' are by no means identical and as a rule not compatible with one another. The concept of 'formal rationality' is identical with the principle of maximization of efficiency, whereas, 'substantive rationality' in Weberian terms refers to social systems or social institutions or even to forms of social conduct that are rationally oriented towards the realization of certain fundamental ideas as for example, the principle of social justice. On one occasion Weber declared explicitly: "The fact that the maximum of formal

rationality in capital accounting is possible only provided that the workers are subjected to domination by the entrepreneurs is a further specific case of the substantive irrationality of the capitalist economic system."\(^{43}\) That is to say that an economic system which in economic terms is rationally organized throughout can well be and is extremely irrational, when analyzed from the angle of particular value positions. Weber was also convinced that all socialist economies had to face serious problems which resulted from the fundamental contradictions between formal and substantive rationality. Although he did not state this explicitly, it was in his eyes a key argument against the feasibility of socialist systems.\(^{44}\)

Here a comparison of the views of Marx and Weber is in order. Both of them were aware of the inhuman consequences of modern industrial capitalism. Marx attributes it to the close exploitative nexus between bourgeois society, state and bureaucracy, whereas for Weber the inhuman consequences are a result of bureaucratic domination. For Marx bureaucracy is the lesser


\(^{44}\) Wolfgang J. Mommsen, n.42, p.69.
villain, characteristically impotent, serving the greater villain, the capitalist ruling class. Conversely, for Weber, bureaucracy is a necessary evil. The way out, therefore, for Marx is a socialist revolution and the subsequent establishment of communist society whereas Weber feels the necessity of a strong working parliament to counter bureaucratic domination. Arguing from a more humane perspective, Marx denounces the state, the bureaucracy and the capitalist system. Whereas Weber, while making bureaucracy the target of his attack, reserves a lot of admiration for the capitalist set-up and pins lot of hope especially on the political/governmental role of the state.

It is important to note that the relevance of these theories in analysing the industrialized capitalist societies of today have become a hot point of debate specially in the light of the growing power of the state. The issue for the Marxists has been to account for the prominence of the modern state while at the same time remaining faithful to traditional Marxist assumption that the political realm is ultimately a consequence of the interaction of economic forces. The solution that has proven most popular has been to extend Marx's analysis of Bonapartism in French politics, into the theory of relative autonomy. Thus relative autonomy would mean an autonomy from particular capitalist interests, so that the
state can represent the long term needs of the capital as a whole. The concept of relative autonomy accommodates the growth of the modern welfare state and also helps account for frequent conflicts between state agents and capitalists, a tension hard to explain in Marxism which treats the state as the captive of the ruling class. The relative autonomy theory allows us to understand better some of the structural constraints upon direct exercise of power by the capitalist class, but it still sustains the traditional Marxist practice of dismissing the possibility of bureaucrats being an independent force in political struggle. Poulantzas arguing in this line says: "the bureaucracy cannot constitute a particular class nor even a fraction of a class and thus it cannot have its own political power. The so-called 'bureaucratic power' is, in fact, the mere exercise of the state's functions, functions exercised on behalf of the hegemonic class. To exercise power on behalf of another class is not to have power by itself." 45

Although Marxists have resisted recognizing the power of bureaucrats in contemporary capitalism, the neo-conservative stand within the liberal tradition

of analysis has made bureaucratic power their target of attack. These neo-conservatives would have us interpret government regulations and welfare expansion as the growth of the new bureaucratic elite imposing its interests, against the public good. To establish that the growth of the welfare state primarily reflects increased bureaucratic power, it is necessary to show that the welfare state grows at the expense of the interests of the dominant capitalist class. Capitalists are somehow missing from the neo-conservative analysis; anti-bureaucratic tracts ignore an entire literature and perspective showing that precisely these extensions of state power are necessary and an integral part of the development of monopoly capitalism.

In summary, the sociological analysis of the power of bureaucracy in advanced capitalism has been distorted by strong political feelings. Leftists have been unwilling to confront the independent power of state officials, thereby clouding the understanding of the state's relative autonomy within a capitalist class system. At the same time, neo-conservative analysis has attributed unreal qualities to state officials directing attention away from the ongoing class conflicts in which bureaucrats play a significant but limited role.
SECTION-II: BUREAUCRACY AND SOCIALIST PRACTICE

The lacunae in Marx's account of bureaucracy presented his successors with a double problem. In the first place, they had very little guidance as to how a revolutionary party, and, after a revolution, a socialist state, should be organized. Secondly, once a socialist state had been established the emergence of features in the administrative system which seemed to resemble much which was condemned as bureaucracy in bourgeois states had no easy theoretical explanation. The full brunt of both sides of this problem was met by Lenin.

Lenin's political acumen resided in his capacity both to organise and to theorize about organization. He was convinced that rational organization was necessary both for winning power and for at least the early stages of a socialist society. At the same time, he had to demonstrate his rights to leadership by expounding Marxian ideology. Marx's rejection of bureaucracy as an instrument of class rule clearly hindered him in his organizational task.

Initially, Lenin agreed with Karl Kautsky that the proletariat should take over and use the existing
state apparatus rather than smash it. The odd man out among the Marxist theoreticians was Bukharin, who propagated the theory of smashing the state. Dubbing Bukharin as an anarchist, Lenin stated that the "socialists are in favour of utilising the present state and its institutions in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, maintaining also that the state should be used for specific form of transition from capitalism to socialism. This traditional form is the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is also a state. However after undertaking a systematic research on the works of Marx and Engels on the state, in the early months of 1917, Lenin abandoned the views of Kautsky and adopted a theory of smashing the 'state machinery'. This view is different from Bukharin's version of smashing the 'State'.

The state, for Lenin, is a product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonism. "The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And

46. Unlike Kautsky, Lenin did not believe that the state should be taken over peacefully.

conversely the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable.\textsuperscript{48} Following Marx, Lenin believed that "the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another. The state is a special organisation of force; if the organisation of violence for the suppression of some class."\textsuperscript{49} This is the chief function of all states including the socialist state where the proletariat rules and the capitalist is suppressed. In Lenin's view, the bureaucracy is the basic structure through which the capitalist class rules. Furthermore, bureaucratic organisation is suited only for capitalist domination. Lenin attributed the growth, perfection and strengthening of bureaucracy to the fall of feudalism and the growth of capitalism. As class struggle intensified with the development of capitalism, the progressive expansion and centralization of the bureaucratic apparatus became necessary.\textsuperscript{50} Further the era of imperialism has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening

\textsuperscript{48} V.I. Lenin, \textit{State and Revolution} (Moscow, 1979), pp.10-11.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p.11.

of the state machine and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic apparatus. Bureaucrats for Lenin are "the most faithful servants of the bourgeoisie" connected to the latter 'by thousand of threads'. Bureaucrats could not be neutral, let alone amiable to the proletariat; as a result of their social position, connections and conditioning, they would necessarily take the side of the bourgeoisie. They would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of proletarian state.

But Lenin was not arguing that the proletarian dictatorship could do without a state. To him the existing State rested in effect on two separate apparatus; one - police, bureaucracy and army - was highly oppressive and had to be smashed; the other apparatus however had extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates. It is an apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work. This apparatus must not be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists.

51. Ibid., p.198.
53. Lenin, n.48, p.31.
54. Ibid., p.57.
Lenin had clearly visualized the limited amount of smashing the state structures had to undergo. After the revolution, Lenin made it clear in his writings that the average Russian workers did not know how to administer the state. The reason for Lenin, was that, there was no canonical guide to show them the way: "We know about socialism but knowledge of organization on a scale of millions, knowledge of organization and distribution of goods - this we do not have.... The Bolshevik Party cannot boast of this in its history." Lenin, therefore, insisted that lessons had to be taken from the bourgeoisie, in techniques of management, industrial production and trade. In fact, he fought for better treatment and higher wages for bourgeois specialists, higher indeed than those of workers and even of party leaders.

Lenin was fascinated by any technique which promised to increase industrial production - piece work, adjusting wages to productivity and in particular the Taylor system, Lenin reviewed the book [Taylor System and the Scientific Organisation of Labour](https://example.com) by O.A.

56. Lenin, [Collected Works](https://example.com), vol.27 (Moscow, 1965), pp.296-97.

Yermansky and recommended it as a standard text book for the trade union schools. In this review article, Lenin writes: "To learn how to work is now the main, the truly national task of the Soviet Republic. Our primary and most important task is to attain universal literacy, but we should in no circumstances limit ourselves to this target. We must at all costs go beyond it and adopt everything that is truly valuable in European and American science." 58

Lenin's views exhibit many tensions and strains. He emphasized the primacy of politics in a revolutionary state, yet decried the excessively 'political' orientation for communist administrators, 59 he emphasized the need for bourgeois specialists yet continually blamed them for their 'bureaucratism'; he insisted that they be treated well yet ordained that they in particular should be harshly scrutinized. 60 But it seems clear that he sought an efficient bureaucracy staffed increasingly by workers. His attack on bureaucracy in the


59. At the 8th Congress of Soviets in December 1920 Lenin applauded "the beginning of that very happy time when politics will recede into the background, when politics will be discussed less often and at shorter length.... Henceforth less politics will be best politics." *Collected Works*, vol.31 (Moscow, 1965), pp.513-14.

60. A. Ulam quoted in Martin Krygier, n.34 , pp.82-83.
post-revolution phase was centred around abuses, excesses and inefficiency. His fury with inefficiency, his tendency to view 'bureaucratism', as a moral fault led him to encourage punishment of anyone found guilty of red-tapism by people's courts. But he did realize that the cure for bureaucratism was not possible only by throwing inefficient people out, but by recruiting a new type of persons into it. A way out for him was "to pour as many workers and peasants as possible into this apparatus." In 1919, the Workers and Peasants Inspection, also called 'Rabkrin' was set up under Stalin as a means of drawing the masses into supervising the bureaucracy and training them in state administration. But in no time 'Rabkrin' grew to some 12,000 officials, very few of them were workers and it became 'one of the most bureaucratic-ridden agencies in the whole government'.

How did 'bureaucratism' become such a widely prevalent a malaise of the Soviet state? To Lenin the answer was simple,

"The Czarist bureaucrats began to join the Soviet institutions and practice their bureaucratic methods, they began to assume the colouring of the Communists, to procure

membership card of the Russian Communist Party, to succeed better in their careers. And so, they have been thrown out of the door but they creep back in through the window."63

The answer perhaps can be categorized as vulgar Marxism at its best for Lenin himself wrote extensively on the skills of the old officials' and communists' and workers' lack of skill. Thus, since many of the former had never been thrown 'out of the door', there was no need for them to return through the window.

The fundamental problem with Lenin's formulation is that it confines workers' control to the administrative sphere of bureaucratic organization. Bureaucratic functions of control and accounting, Lenin's claims, "have become so simplified... that they can be easily performed by every literate persons... for ordinary 'workmen's wages'...."64 The technical services and operations, which Lenin regards as non-bureaucratic and hence not a possible source of elitist structures, are not subject to political control. "The question of control and accounting", Lenin states, "should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers...."65 The first question

64. V.I. Lenin, n.48, p.44.
65. Ibid., p. 96.
is concerned with political necessity, the second with technical necessity. Control and accounting functions comprise the power dimension of bureaucracy and to the extent they are democratized, bureaucratic domination is precluded. Technical functions are independent of this political dimension, and therefore, technically determined subordination is not open to political challenge. The technique of modern, industrial enterprise, Lenin comments, "makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop..."66

It was therefore natural that technical necessity came to dominate more and more spheres of activity in the bureaucracy and beyond. Concurrently, there was a narrowing of those areas of concern subject to political control. This is evident in a series of proposals Lenin offered in 1918, which as summarized by Bendix, proclaim that,

"The masses of the people must participate actively in planning the policies which should govern production and distribution, but during the work day they must observe iron discipline and subordinate themselves, unconditionally to the dictatorial will of one man, the Soviet Manager.... Towards

this end the courts must be used to circulate labour discipline. Anyone who violated the demands of labour discipline must be discovered, brought before the courts and punished...."67

Technically necessary subordination, required for the development of the 'higher' phases of communism, underlie the progressive depoliticization of Socialist Russia, not with the abolition of private property but with the emergence of a technically expert bureaucracy. Detached from the political will of the masses by 'technical necessity', the experts in industry and in the party successfully and efficiently supervised the modernization of Russian society. But they did so, as Weber predicted, by establishing a highly repressive and an immensely powerful bureaucratic organization. This is not to suggest either that the bureaucracy became independent of political controls or that the technicians and managers came to assume central positions within the party. What happened was that the Party increasingly justified its demand for unity and obedience with reference to technical necessity, thus placing these demands outside the realm of political or collective discourse and debate. Party officials in this context are viewed as social technicians and experts and of course this view does not diverge significantly

from Lenin's conception of the Party as the vanguard of the proletariat, a vanguard comprised of professional revolutionaries, scientific socialists with an expert knowledge of the laws of socio-historical development. Compliance with Party commands, then was seen as a matter of 'technically necessary' subordination, since these commands were based on specialized scientific knowledge which like the knowledge of the engineers was not yet widely diffused, and since such compliance would contribute to the material advancement required for the full development of consciousness. In short, the bureaucratic technicians did not become Party officials, rather the Party officials became political technicians and as such they were beyond challenge and criticism.

It will perhaps be fruitful here to recall Weber's distinction between formal and substantive rationality and compare it with Lenin's 'rationality of technique' and rationality of consciousness. Weber says: "The fact that the maximum of formal rationality in capital

68. By distinguishing the two aspects of rationality Lenin's theory envisages the possibility of a society where the application of instrumental rationality and technical reason is confined to the material world and critical rationality or political consciousness permeates every other sphere of life to the degree that domination becomes virtually impossible."
accounting is possible only provided that the workers are subjected to domination by the entrepreneurs is a further specific case of the subjective irrationality of the capitalist economic system. 69 From the Leninist viewpoint, the class structure of capitalism impedes the rationalization of consciousness. As a result, the rationalization of technique, although furthered by the development of capitalism, defies rational control and strengthens the irrational domination of social life. Thus the central problem concerns the eradication of class restrictions. But the rationalization of technique is also simultaneously seen to establish the material conditions necessary for the rationalization of consciousness. In more familiar terms, ideological changes are dependent on substructural changes, the realm of freedom is contingent upon the realm of necessity. Technically determined subordination, so long as it occurs within an organization stripped of its class, functions and establishes the material conditions of classlessness which permits the acquisition of rational understanding and consciousness.

What Lenin fails to realise, however, is that "it is not only class power but any source of societal

domination that inhibits dialogue and undermines rationality." The extension of technology and technocratic bureaucracy severely delimits the space where communication free from domination is possible and thus deteriorates the ideological and political discourse that precedes rational understanding. Political goals are transformed into technical problems whose solution require not public discussion, but subordination to the technically necessary.

Whatever judgement is made on the practicality of Lenin's formulation of bureaucracy, it did mark an

advance in sophistication in Marxist thinking about administration. In the initial harsh years of socialist reconstruction his ideas were largely ignored. 'Bureaucracy', instead of being a key term in a theory of administration, became an abusive catchword.

Marxist opponents of Soviet policy found disturbing theoretical problems in the practices of the Stalinist state. The facts of power in Soviet Union, the fact that the withering away of the state seemed more and more unlikely, appeared to be contrary to some basic tenets, namely that the sequence of changes was determinate; that types of society through different types of society were deduced from class structure; that politics reflected class structure. How could Soviet politics possibly be explained in these terms? The most influential writer to consider this question was Leon Trotsky.

Lenin and Trotsky quarrelled over the latter's criticism of the growth of bureaucracy, and this issue precipitated Trotsky's break with Stalin. In 1924, he criticized the way the party apparatus was imbued with a feeling of its own importance and he lamented that Leninism had become a sacred canon rather than

something demanding initiative and ideological courage. In 'The Revolution Betrayed' (1937), he considered the theoretical implications of the emergence of a privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy. Trotsky had no doubt that it was legitimate to call the privileged officials of party and government in Soviet Union by the same name as the administrative officials in bourgeois societies. Soviet officials were also concerned to maintain a system of social ranks; they too exploited the state for their own ends. But there was a crucial difference. 'The Soviet bureaucracy takes on bourgeois customs without having beside it a national bourgeoisie'.

The crucial question of Marxist theory was whether such a bureaucracy constituted a ruling class. Although Trotsky, recognized that it controlled the means of production, he considered it as lacking the essential and distinctive feature of a class: a special type of property. The bureaucracy was, therefore, a stratum or caste, parasitic upon socialist society. Soviet Russia did not require a social revolution, as in 1917, but merely a political revolution which would oust the


bureaucracy without changing the basic form of social relations. Hence, it was not a new type of society, but was poised between the bourgeois and socialist types.

The later Marxists, however, did not agree with Trotsky’s thesis and emphasised the class character of the Soviet social reality. In this regard, broadly three interpretations can be discerned; First, that the Soviet bureaucracy is a post-capitalist ruling class governing on the basis of new bureaucratic but non-capitalist relations of production; Second, that it constitutes a non-bourgeois ruling class under conditions of a bureaucratic capitalist order; and third that it is a sector or fraction of a post-revolutionary state bourgeoisie.

According to first interpretation there was both a political and economic revolution in the Soviet Union. It found in the de facto ownership of nationalized means of production, the clue to the nature of the new ruling class; but it identified the new rulers with a managerial or bureaucratic-collectivist class, while denying that the corresponding economic system was a capitalist one. According to this view, new order was a post-capitalist social formation. The chief exponents of this view were Bruno Rizzi, Burnham and Milovan Djilas.
Bruno Rizzi's ideas centred around the conception of an unanticipated social formation, 'bureaucratic collectivism', intruding upon the expected transition of capitalist into socialist society. It entails the ascent of a new, bureaucratic, ruling class and the conversion of the means of production into a new form of property, owned through the State in a nationalised, 'class' form, rather than privately. Collective property enabled centralised economic planning and - being economically more efficient than capitalism - tended to supplant it. From these conceptions, others - focusing more on political phenomena - arise. He saw in Soviet Union the purest, most advanced form of bureaucratic collectivism. But, in his view, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, were also moving towards the same point along different routes. Generally, as he opined, the superiority of collective, state-directed economy leads all modern societies to converge towards 'the bureaucratization of the world'.

One of the most influential books to appear at this time was James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (1945). Burnham, a famous American Trotskyist, revised not only Trotsky but Marx. He argued that Marx's prediction about socialism emerging through the over-

throw of capitalism had been proved incorrect and that
capitalism, whether or not it was upset by a proleta-
rian revolution, was being replaced by a managerial
revolution. Burnham saw this as a universal trend
in modern industrial societies and his book emphasized
similarities in this respect between New Deal America,
Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. In all cases the
managers were defined as the new ruling class. The
managerial class was defined rather differently for
each society and the Soviet Union's managerial class
even more broadly than Trotsky defined his 'bureaucra-
tic caste'.

In 1957, Milovan Djilas, a former member of the
league of Yugoslav Communists, published his book,
"The New Class". This book had echoes of earlier books
by Trotsky, Buzi and Burnham but its analysis was
confined to the Communist World and particularly to
the Communist States of Eastern Europe. The core of
Djilas's argument is contained in the following
quotations:

"For a long time the Communist revolution
and the Communist system have been con-
cealing their real nature. The emergence

78. For details, see James Burnham, The Managerial
Revolution (London, 1945), Ch.14."
of the new class has been concealed under socialist phraseology and more importantly, under the new collective form of property ownership. The so-called socialist ownership is a disguise for the real ownership by the party or political bureaucracy. Contemporary Communism is not only a party of a certain type or a bureaucracy.... More than anything else the essential aspect of Contemporary Communism is the new class of owners and exploiters.... after having come into power in underdeveloped areas, it became something entirely different - an exploiting system opposed to most of the interests of the proletariat itself."

Another group of critics agreed that the dictatorship of the proletariat was overthrown. But they advanced a novel thesis of their own: the Soviet Union was a form of "capitalism without capitalists". Although the economic basis of the new ruling class was the collective control of the means of production, the possession of 'State Capital', did not make its possessors capitalists. On the contrary, the new men of power were said to make up a bureaucratic class.

Tony Cliff's "Russia: A Marxist Analysis" offered the ablest defence of this thesis. In its underlying assumptions the analysis is Trotskyist; its starting point is the belief that socialism was impossible in a backward and isolated country, that socialism is of necessity internationalist. The accumulated capital.

which ought to have been there before the revolution took place, had to be created in a post-revolutionary society by the bureaucracy, forcing workers and peasants to produce surplus value for social investment:

"Thus industrialization and technical revolution in agriculture (collectivisation) in a backward country under conditions of siege transformed the bureaucracy from a layer which is under the direct and indirect pressure of the proletariat, into a ruling class, into a manager of 'the general business of society', the direction of labour, affairs by state, justice, science, and so forth." 80

Cliff was firm in his assertion that the Soviet bureaucracy was a ruling class:

"It would be wrong to call the Stalinist bureaucracy a caste for the following reasons: While a class is a group of people who have a definite place in the process of production, a caste is a judicial-political group; the members of a caste can be members of different classes, or in one class there can be members of different castes; a caste is the outcome of the relative immobility of the productive forces - whereas the Stalinist bureaucracy was transformed into a ruling class on the crest of the dynamism of the economy.

We can therefore say that the Russian bureaucracy, owning as it does the State and controlling the process of accumulation, is the personification of capital in its purest form." 81


He concluded that to qualify the Soviet system either as a bureaucratic state regime or as state capitalism was correct, but not sufficient. It combined both features: "The most precise name for the Russian society is therefore Bureaucratic State capitalism." 82

The forcible suppression of Communist tendencies in the Soviet Union has been interpreted by one group of Marxist critics as not only the perpetuation or restoration of capitalism but also as the rule of a new state bourgeoisie. These critics found the basis of this new class in the collective possession and control, if not the legal ownership, of nationalized means of production in the form of 'State capital'. These theorists differed over the purely political or economic character of the proletarian revolution and subsequent counter-revolution and the precise nature of the new ruling class.

This theory of new state bourgeoisie in the socialist countries came in response to the abandonment of centralised planning by Yugoslavia during the 1950s and the scrapping of the dictatorship of the proletariat for a 'state of the whole people' by the Soviet Union during the sixties. This two-pronged criticism was

82. Ibid., p.170.
first systematically developed by the Chinese communists in their opening salvo against Yugoslav and Soviet 'revisionism' in 1963-64. In two pamphlets, 'Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country?' and 'On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism', the Chinese communists argued that Yugoslavia's adoption of market socialism and Soviet's adoption of a new programme at its party's Twenty-second Congress were tantamount to a peaceful retreat on the road back to capitalism.

In the West the first criticism represented by Paul Sweezy and second by Charles Bettelheim were aired in the pages of Monthly Review. Beginning in the March 1964 issue on Yugoslavia and continuing with his articles on the Soviet Union (November, 1967) and Czechoslovakia (October, 1968) Sweezy argued that the clue to understanding the tendency toward capitalist restoration in these countries was the retreat from central planning. Replying to Sweezy in the March 1969 issue, Bettelheim claimed that the key was the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The

political, rather than the economic factor was decisive, he argued, for the loss of power to a new Soviet bourgeoisie. 84

Bettelheim went on to develop his thesis in a major historical study, 'Class Struggles in the USSR'. The first volume covering the period 1917-23, appeared in 1974, and second, on the period 1923-30 appeared in 1977. In his review of the first volume in the November 1974 and January 1975 issues of Monthly Review, Sweezy called it a work of historical significance for the international Socialist movement. However he admitted that nothing in the way of factual evidence or theoretical argument presented by Bettelheim persuaded him that economic planning in the Soviet Union was mainly a cover for the laws of capitalist accumulation. Sweezy was especially skeptical of Bettelheim's thesis that planning centralised strengthens rather than weakens the power of the state bourgeoisie. 85 For Sweezy, writing in


1974-75, these questions were still wide open.

*They ceased to be controversial by the time of Sweezy's October, 1977 review of the second volume.*

By then, he had accepted Bettelheim's premise that the new industrialisation and planning policies initiated as early as 1926, reflected a sort of alliance between the old Bolsheviks and the nascent state bourgeoisie. In effect, the original labour-peasant alliance basic to Lenin's New Economic policy was subtly undermined by the party's leaders in favour of an alliance with the new bourgeoisie. Because this rising class had common interests but was not fully conscious of them, Sweezy interpreted it as a class in itself rather than for itself. Nonetheless, he argued that it gradually replaced the working class as the party's social base when the surplus that could be squeezed out of the peasantry proved to be too little to sustain the projected rate of industrialization, it became necessary 'to add the working class itself, to the sources of tribute'. After that it was only a matter of time for the new class to infiltrate the party and take it over. 86

What were the features of this new class? Turning to a direct discussion of Bettelheim's work, we find in footnote no. 52 of his 'Preface' to the first volume the following characterization of the 'bureaucratic state bourgeoisie': "These new bourgeois are distinct from the direct producers because they have effective control of the means of production and of the products that formally belong to the state. But they do not own them. The new ruling class is defined exclusively by economic relations of domination and exploitation."  

In defence of this departure from conventional Marxism, Bettelheim claimed that the relations of production and appropriation rather than juridical forms of property were basic to the Marxist definition of class. So far we may agree with him, although we should add that ownership is a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition of Marx's definition. The abolition of bourgeois property in the means of production, Bettelheim argued, did not suffice to put an end to antagonistic classes. We can also agree with this claim, except that he interpreted it in an un-Marxist way. For him the antagonistic classes that remained

were still Marx's bourgeoisie and proletariat, only in a different form. The place of the old bourgeoisie were filled by a new state bourgeoisie that left the social production relations of capitalism essentially intact. Thus, in section two of the Preface, Bettelheim characterized the Soviet state as a "capitalist state of a particular type". 88

The composition of the state bourgeoisie is described in part two of the first volume. It consisted of the managers of state enterprises and the organizers of new industrial branches, plus highly qualified engineers and technicians. Below them were the state petty bourgeoisie consisting of low-grade administrators and white-collar employees in business and industry, including engineering and technical specialists with comparatively modest qualifications. 89 Bettelheim showed that the elements of a petty-bureaucratic class were present in the Soviet Union from its very beginning.

Although workers' self-management never took hold in the Soviet Union, before 1926 workers exercised

88. See ibid., pp.45-48.

89. For details, see ibid., pp.155-66.
control over the economy through the party and trade unions. The end of effective collective bargaining and the 'autonomization' of the administrative apparatus in charge of economic planning undermined these elements of workers' power. The system of one-man management ceased to be provisional and was henceforth justified as an essential condition economic planning. As a result, Bettelheim maintained that the workers remained in the condition of a proletariat while high paid experts and administrators retained their status as a state bourgeoisie.

Continuing their debate of the 1960s and 1970s on the nature and working of Soviet bureaucratic class and the manner in which it came to appropriate the social capital, Bettelheim-Sweezy picked it up further in the issues of Monthly Review starting from July-August 1985 continuing right upto December 1986.

Both Bettelheim and Paul Sweezy agreed that Soviet Union was not a socialist country in the original Marxist sense. However they differed on its characterization. Bettelheim characterised the Soviet system as a specific form of capitalism (i.e., 'Party capitalism') in which 'party bourgeoisie' was a ruling class. He maintained that the internal goal of these Soviet rulers was the largest possible accumulation of surplus value
for the sake of accumulation and international goal of world domination. For Paul Sweezy Soviet system was certainly new and different from capitalism. He contended that the characterization of new ruling class as Party bourgeoisie seemed appropriate in view of its modes of organization and functioning, though the historical connotations of the term bourgeoisie might be somewhat misleading. When it came to clarifying the dynamics of class rule, however, it seemed to Sweezy that Bettelheim fell into the basic error of assuming that underneath all outward appearances, the norms of capitalism were controlling the Soviet Union. In Sweezy's view, Soviet system was completely different, having no individual capitalists. He opined that the power, prestige and privileges of the Soviet rulers were derived from an unmediated control over the state apparatus and by implication, over the entire social capital. He further maintained that in the absence of objective economic laws of motion comparable to those of capitalism the ruling class had to generate their own goals for managing the social capital. This they did by opting for the goal of preserving and strengthening their privileged class position.90

From early 1950s onward, many Sovietologists, basing their analysis on Weberian model, attempted to describe the Soviet system in terms of bureaucratic power.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the views of these writers, it is pertinent to point out here that official Soviet approach drew a distinction between bureaucracy (byurokratia) and bureaucratism (byurokratizm). The former term was not normally used to describe either party or state bureaucracies. The preferred term for the former was apparatus (apparat) while that for the state structure was apparatus or administration (upravlenie). Thus the 1958 political Dictionary has no entry under bureaucracy but gives the following definition of bureaucratism:

"A method of administration or control of affairs distinguished by a predominance of red-tape, procrastination and care for the formal side of the questions, by the absence of interest in the essence of things, by isolation from the people by scorn for their needs and demands."

The definition refers to various writings by Lenin in which the dangers of bureaucratism are analysed and remedies suggested. It concludes with a summary of means to combat bureaucratism:

By means of the scientific organisation of labour, accounting and control, strengthening the verification of decisions,
by the widening of self-criticism and above all of criticism from below of the party and government and by the systematic improvement of the work of the Soviet apparatus."  

Now coming to the discussion of the views of writers who adopted a Weberian approach for the analysis of Soviet system, we find in Barrington Moore's book 'Terror and Progress - USSR', the first attempt at applying Weberian approach. Just as Weber had constructed three ideal types of authority (traditional, charismatic and rational-legal) so Moore found three ideal types in which position and power are distributed in society. These he called traditional, rational-technical and political power (in which position and power are awarded according to loyalty to a political system or leader, party or regime). He found elements of all three types in the Soviet Union but felt that it was formed mainly to the rational-technical type. This type was essentially a bureaucratic type directed at maximizing industrial development. Writing about this model fifteen years later Professor Jerry F. Hough described it as 'by far the most successful model of its time in predicting the major developments of the post-Stalin political system'. Nevertheless, Hough


made a number of salient criticisms of the model. He criticized it because it did not recognize that certain Soviet administrative practices could not be summarized as ones of 'enforced conformity to law'. Secondly, Hough pointed out that Moore was wrong in his prediction that party would decline in influence along with the police.\(^{93}\) Hough was not rejecting a bureaucratic model but merely seeking one that would allow for the analysis of the peculiarities of the Soviet bureaucracy, particularly the relations between party and state agencies.

T.H. Rigby came nearest to adopting Weber's theory of bureaucracy. Authority in Rigby's three types of society is based respectively on custom, contract and command. He found that Soviet Union contained elements of all three types but that it was still predominantly an organisational society, although less so than it was in the Stalin period. In his view, the organisational society is of course a bureaucratic society although it is not wedded to Weber's theory of bureaucracy. He argued that Soviet bureaucracy combined two types of bureaucratic organisations; a mechanistic, hierarchical (Weberian) type found characteristically in Soviet state administration and a generalist or 'staff' type found more in the Communist party.\(^{94}\)

---

\(^{93}\) Ibid., pp.282-3.

\(^{94}\) For details, see T.H. Rigby, "Traditional, Market and Organisational Societies and the USSR", *World Politics* (Princeton), vol.XVI, No.4, July 1964, contd...
Not all those who have argued about Soviet politics in terms of its essential bureaucracy have been as concerned to use 'ideal types' as Barrington Moore and T.H. Rigby. This has sometimes been so even when the writer has invoked Weber's name. Thus Allen Kassof described the Soviet Union as an 'administered society'. He described this as a Weberian 'ideal type' but he did not argue in Weberian terms. The concept was defined in this way: "The administered society can be defined as one in which the entrenched and extraordinarily powerful ruling group lays claim to ultimate and exclusive scientific knowledge of social and historical laws and is impelled by a belief not only in the practical desirability, but the moral necessity, of planning, direction, and co-ordination from above in the name of human welfare and progress." 95

Kassof, like Brzezinski eight years earlier, sought to retain the totalitarian model but to give it a different emphasis. In this he was unlike writers such as Alfred G. Meyer and T.H. Rigby who sought to replace the totalitarian model.

---

contd...


Professor Alfred G. Meyer developed his interpretation of Soviet politics as 'bureaucracy writ large' during the early 1960s. He held the view that 'USSR can best be understood as modern bureaucracy writ large' or as 'total bureaucratization'. The advantage of this approach, he claims, is that bureaucracy is a less emotive term than totalitarianism and since it is a feature of American society, it enables American students to start examining the Soviet system on the basis of known institutional and behavioural patterns.

Not all the interest in Soviet bureaucracy in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s went into the production of general models for the analysis of Soviet politics. There were at least as many books devoted to the analysis of particular bureaucratic levels or groups. All such books made use of bureaucratic theory to some degree. One has only to recall the books by John A. Armstrong (The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite, 1959), Jerry R. Azrael (Managerial Power and Soviet

Politics, 1966) and Jerry F. Hough (The Soviet Prefects, 1969) to recognize the truth of this observation. Perhaps because such writers were analysing particular problems in Soviet politics rather than the whole of Soviet politics they were generally attentive to the limits of Weberian theory.

However, even the most superficial analysis of the Soviet system of administration leads us to the conclusion that it deviated from the Weberian bureaucratic type in its most central respects and that these deviations cannot be dismissed as marginal 'anomalies'. The specific features of Soviet system of administration have been dealt with in some detail in the third chapter. However, some of the specific features of Soviet administration which deviated from Weberian model can be discussed here briefly.

Churchward listed four major deviations from the bureaucratic type: the close overlap of political and administrative systems on all levels coupled with the ideology of progress; job insecurity and the very high, often arbitrary, power of the top officials; the absence of autonomous control agencies; and the frequent involvement of amateurs (neshtatny) at the local levels of administration.97

Rigby mentioned eight non-bureaucratic features:
the disparity between the actual and formally prescribed (constitutional) power structure; the superior position of the party organs and party officials vis-a-vis state administrators; the overlapping jurisdiction and blurred division of labour between the government and party hierarchies; frequent reliance on 'political judgement' (rather than formal regulations); the widespread tolerance of extra-legal and illegal practices; the importance of ideology and the centrality of (quasi-) charismatic elements in political leadership; the salience of mobilizational methods (which involve 'a mixture of exhortation and coercion'); and the widespread patronage associated with the 'nomenklatura' system of appointments. 98

In the sphere of criminal law the absence of formal legalism was even more conspicuous. Legal norms did not seem to be binding for the security services combating political non-conformity, and the administrators of law - judges and jurists - act under strict party supervision.

The instrumental treatment of regulations was not limited to judicial-political sphere; it is also conspicuous in the area of economic administration. Rigby

observed, for example, that "In the economy this (bending and stretching of rules) is often seen as so widespread as to be essential to its effective operation, since managers are constantly being placed in situations where their tasks cannot be achieved while observing all the laws, regulations and instructions to which they are subject." These semi-legal and illegal practices are accepted and tolerated as the way of getting things done and correcting the rigidity of the centralized economic system.

Another important departure from the bureaucratic type, closely related to the paucity of legal norms, can be observed in the political-administration sphere, where depersonalization - seen by Weber as an essential part of the bureaucratic modus operandi - seems to be almost totally absent. The empirical studies conducted by Willerton, Hough, suggested that a distinctive feature of the Soviet political-administrative system was the existence of a 'second polity'. It was characterized by patronage and informal connections which, according to Bauman, constituted 'a func-


tional equivalent of law and/or impersonal marketplace'.

Perhaps the most complete inventory of deviations from the 'classical' Weberian model of rational bureaucracy on the middle level of Soviet administrative system can be found in Hough's famous study of 'The Soviet Prefects' where he provided - contrary to his own rhetoric - the basic arguments for rejecting the Weberian concept of bureaucracy as the basis for the heuristic 'model' of the Soviet administration.

As he pointed out, the Soviet system was characterized by the absence of such elementary 'bureaucratic features' as a clear line of subordination and clearly defined spheres of responsibilities in the party apparatus. The activities of administrative organs were not subject to any clear limitations as far as their interference with lives of the citizens were concerned, and the spheres of privacy and individual autonomy were very vaguely outlined.

The most conspicuous deviation from bureaucratic principles was evident in the recruitment of personnel


102. For details, see J.F. Hough, n. 92, pp. 31, 289-300.
to the Soviet political-administrative apparatus. The system of 'nomenklatura' seemed to be totally incompatible with the principle of appointments on the basis of impersonal, universalistic and meritocratic criteria, as practised in Western bureaucracies and analysed by Weber. Instead, as Harasyriw and Voslensky pointed out, nomenklatura functioned as 'a party system of patronage'. Such a system elevated 'political qualifications' to the status of central credentials for recruitment and promotion. 103

The above-discussed praxiological deviations from the theoretical designs of the phenomenon and problematic of bureaucracy put into stark relief the fact that history in general and history of revolutions in particular, is just as instructive as it is creative: Its creativity sometimes defies any imagination, by virtue of its being a grand open-ended programme. Theoretical

constructs may not always catch up with its dynamic representations. The problematic of bureaucracy in a socialist state remains an intractable one, because, as we have seen it cannot be reduced to any definitio­nal or doctrinal kit. The phenomenon of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union has to be seen in terms of its historical specificity. Such an angle of understanding the phenomena is more profound and explanatory, and constitutes the bed-rock of the following chapter.