

things forward, smashes the past and opens up perspectives. Without it no progress is possible. But Russian revolutionary sweep has every chance of degenerating in practice into empty 'revolutionary' Manilovism if it is not combined with American efficiency in work . . . American efficiency is that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognises obstacles; which with its businesslike perseverance pushes aside all obstacles; which continues with a task once started until it is finished, even if it is a minor task; and without which serious constructive work is impossible. But American efficiency has every chance of degenerating into narrow and unprincipled commercialism if it is not combined with the Russian revolutionary sweep . . .

The combination of Russian revolutionary sweep with American efficiency is the essence of Leninism in party and state work. Only this combination produces the finished type of Leninist worker, the style of Leninism in work.

Source: Stalin, *'The Foundations of Leninism'*, lectures delivered at the Sverdlovsk University, April 1924, *Voprosy Leninizma* (Problems of Leninism), 3rd edn (Moscow, Gosizdat, 1931), pp. 7, 82–3, 90, 91, 92, 93.

Document 4.23 Stalin – Against 'Permanent Revolution'

Against the background of the failure of the German socialist revolution – sporadic uprisings against the inflation-ridden Weimar republic were repressed in 1923 – Stalin by the end of 1924 had devised the notion of 'socialism in one country'. The concept was also clearly directed against Trotsky who, recovering somewhat from his depression of early 1924 provoked by the counter-productive outcome of the 'new course' debate, argued that the isolated Soviet regime, not reinforced by the international revolution, was in danger of losing its socialist character. Stalin responded by condemning Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution', contrasting Lenin's alleged views on the possibilities of autonomous Soviet development with Trotsky's apparent pessimism that the Russian revolution was fatally dependent on the world revolution. For good measure, Stalin insisted that the Russian revolutionary experience was a model for the rest of the world.

The Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a purely 'Russian' theory, but a theory obligatory for all countries. Bolshevism is not just a Russian phenomenon . . .

According to Lenin, the revolution draws its strength above all from the workers and peasants of Russia itself. According to Trotsky, the required strength can *only* be found 'in the area of the world proletarian revolution'. But what if the world revolution is fated to arrive with some delay? Is there any ray of hope for our revolution? Trotsky offers no ray of hope, for 'the contradictions in the situation of the workers' government . . . can *only* be resolved . . . in the arena of the world proletarian revolution'. According to

this plan, there is only one prospect left for our revolution: to vegetate in its own contradictions and rot away while waiting for the world revolution . . .

'Permanent revolution' is not merely an underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the peasant movement. 'Permanent revolution' is an underestimation of the peasant movement which leads to the *repudiation* of Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Trotsky's 'permanent revolution' is a variety of Menshevism . . .

Studying imperialism, particularly during the period of war, Lenin devised the law of uneven and combined economic and political development of capitalist countries . . . In the light of this the victory of socialism in one country, even if this country is less developed than the capitalist ones and with the retention of capitalism in other countries, even if these countries are more capitalistically developed, is quite possible and feasible . . .

The second distinctive feature of the October revolution is that this revolution represents a model for the practical application of the Leninist theory of proletarian revolution. Those who have not understood this distinctive feature of the October revolution will never understand either the international nature of this revolution, or its colossal international strength, or its distinctive foreign policy . . .

Trotsky's 'permanent revolution' is the denial of Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution; and conversely, the Leninist theory of proletarian revolution is the denial of the theory of 'permanent revolution'. Lack of faith in the strength and possibilities of our revolution, lack of faith in the strength and possibilities of the Russian proletariat, that is what lies at the root of the theory of 'permanent revolution' . . .

In what way does Trotsky's theory differ from the customary Menshevik theory that the victory of socialism in one country, and in a backward one at that, is impossible without the prior victory of the proletarian revolution 'in the principal countries of Western Europe'? Essentially, there is no difference. There can be no doubt. Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution' is a variety of Menshevism.

Source: Stalin, *'Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i taktika russkikh kommunistov'* (*The October Revolution and the Tactics of Russian Communists*), *Voprosy Leninizma*, pp. 99, 101, 102, 103–4, 109–10.

Document 4.24 Stalin – 'Socialism in One Country'

The long-standing Bolshevik belief that the Russian revolution could not survive unless it spread to the more developed countries encountered the reality that the revolution could survive on its own. What, then, was to be done? At the heart of 'Stalinism' was the belief that the building of socialism could not only *begin* in Russia, but that it could be *completed* using internal resources alone. Here Stalin says it was 'possible' to build socialism in one country; later he would insist that it was

'necessary'. The slogan of 'socialism in one country' suggested stability, especially when contrasted with Trotsky's notion of 'permanent revolution' (although at this time Trotsky modified his position), and identified the cause of socialism with Russia's developmental tasks.

What do we mean by the *possibility* of the victory of socialism in one country?

We mean the possibility of solving the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry with the aid of the internal forces of our country, the possibility of the proletariat assuming power and using that power to build a complete socialist society in our country, with the sympathy and the support of the proletarians of other countries, but without the preliminary victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

Without such a possibility, the building of socialism is building without prospects, building without being sure that socialism will be built. It is no use building socialism without being sure that we can build it, without being sure that the technical backwardness of our country is not an *insuperable* obstacle to the building of a complete socialist society. To deny such a possibility is to display lack of faith in the cause of building socialism, to abandon Leninism.

Source: Stalin, 'On the Problems of Leninism', 25 January 1926, Problems of Leninism (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), pp. 159–60.

At the root of the conflict between Trotsky and Stalin lay important theoretical issues. The same cannot be said of the swirling currents of the intra-party struggle for power, usually dressed up in fancy theoretical language. Having defeated Trotsky, in 1925 the triumvirate split, and Kamenev and Zinoviev (and with him the Leningrad Party Organisation, which he headed) went into opposition against the majority led by Stalin, Bukharin and Rykov. At the Fourteenth Party Congress in December 1925 Zinoviev warned of the dangers of 'state capitalism', while Kamenev denounced the trend towards the emergence of a *vozhd* (Führer, or leader) in the party, condemning the fusion of political and organisational functions in the hands of the Secretariat. The two defeated oppositional groups (Trotskyist and Zinovievite) came together in 1926 to form the United Opposition. Accused of factionalism, they argued that the growth of bureaucracy was the problem and called for accelerated industrialisation to develop state industry and to undermine what they saw as the growing predominance of the 'rich peasants' (*kulaks*) in the countryside. It was impossible to disentangle the political and developmental debates.

The End of NEP

Two main developmental strategies were advanced in the party at this time. From the left came Yevgeny Preobrazhensky's argument that, given the lack of investment funds, only the systematic exploitation of the small-scale producer (i.e. primarily

peasant) sector could provide the resources for industrialisation. It was this strategy of 'primary socialist accumulation', shorn of its nuances, that was later implemented by Stalin. On the right, Bukharin became the main defender of a gradualist 'growing into socialism', allowing a healthy peasant sector to develop and then taxing its reserves for investment. At first, needing his support in his struggle against the various oppositions, Stalin sided with Bukharin in the great developmental debate. At the Fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927 the opposition leaders were defeated, most of them removed from their posts and the leaders expelled from the party. Zinoviev and Kamenev soon after recanted and were temporarily re-admitted to the party while the Trotskyists were exiled to Siberia, with Trotsky himself being sent out of the country altogether in February 1929. With his hands freed, Stalin began to question the viability of the NEP. A trial of 'specialists' (the Shakhty case) signalled the beginning of a wave of arrests of the old intelligentsia. For Stalin 'The Shakhty case represents a new serious offensive by international capital and its agents in our country against Soviet power. This is economic intervention in our internal affairs' (PSS, vol. 11, p. 63).

Document 4.25 Preobrazhenskii, 'Primary Socialist Accumulation'

Preobrazhenskii's view was elaborated in a paper delivered to the Communist Academy in August 1924 entitled 'The Fundamental Law of Socialist Accumulation'.

As we have seen, primary capitalist accumulation took place on the basis of feudalism, but primary socialist accumulation cannot take place on the basis of capitalism. It follows that if socialism has its prehistory, it only begins with the assumption of power by the proletariat. The nationalisation of large-scale industry is the first act of socialist accumulation . . . Socialist accumulation, in the real sense of the word, i.e., accumulation on the technical-economic base of a socialist economy, already developing all of its inherent characteristics and advantages, can only begin after the Soviet economy has passed through the phase of primary accumulation . . . In these conditions to rely only on accumulation within the socialist part of the economy means risking the very existence of the socialist economy or risk extending to infinity the period of preliminary accumulation . . . In any case, the idea that the socialist economy can develop on its own, not touching the resources of the petty-bourgeois economy, including that of the peasantry, is undoubtedly a reactionary petty-bourgeois Utopia.

Source: E. A. Preobrazhenskii, 'Osnovnoi zakon sotsialisticheskogo nakopleniya', in Puti razvitiya: diskussi 20-x godov (Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1990), pp. 57, 58, 66.