

its implications. Lukács revised Marxist theory to argue that ideas and power were as important as economics in determining revolutionary development. Obviously stimulated by the experience of the Bolshevik revolution, where 'voluntarist' factors like leadership had exerted a determining effect on outcomes, Lukács laid bare the profound essence of the theoretical shift signified by Bolshevism, although Lenin himself was reluctant to embrace the theoretical consequences of his own thinking. Lukács understood the immanence of Stalinism in Bolshevik rule, and thus became the theorist of Stalinist voluntarism. His comment, cited below, that 'The party is divided into an active and a passive group in which the latter is only occasionally brought into play and then only at the behest of the former' in effect became the slogan of numerous oppositions. Lukács was too explicit in drawing out the nature of party leadership and was censured by the Soviet authorities when his essays were published in the early 1920s.

If the Menshevik parties are the organised form of the ideological crisis of the proletariat, the Communist Party is the organised form of the conscious approach to this leap and hence the first *conscious* step towards the realm of freedom . . . Above all one thing must be made clear: freedom here does not mean the freedom of the individual . . . The *conscious* desire for the realm of freedom can only mean consciously taking the steps that will really lead to it. And in the awareness that in contemporary bourgeois society individual freedom can only be corrupt and corrupting because it is a case of unilateral privilege based on the unfreedom of others, this desire must entail the renunciation of individual freedom. It implies the conscious subordination of the self to that collective will that is destined to bring real freedom into being and that today is earnestly taking the first arduous, uncertain and groping steps towards it. This conscious collective will is the Communist Party. And like every aspect of a dialectical process it too contains the seeds, admittedly in a primitive, abstract and undeveloped form, of the determinants appropriate to the goal it is destined to achieve: namely freedom in solidarity.

The unifying factor here is *discipline*. Only through discipline can the party be capable of putting the collective will into practice, whereas the introduction of the bourgeois concept of freedom prevents this collective will from forming itself and so transforms the party into a loose aggregate of individuals incapable of action. More importantly, even for the individual it is only discipline that creates the opportunity of taking that first step to the freedom that is already possible even though it is freedom of a very primitive sort, corresponding as it does to the stage of societal development. This is the freedom that works at overcoming the present.

What was novel in the formation of the Communist Parties was the new relation between spontaneous action and conscious, theoretical foresight . . . This conflict between individual and class consciousness in every single worker is by no means a matter of chance. For the Communist Party shows

itself here to be superior to every other party organisation in two ways: firstly, for the first time in history the active and practical side of class consciousness directly influences the specific actions of every individual, and secondly, at the same time it consciously helps to determine the historical process . . .

Corresponding to this is the necessary appearance simultaneously of two complementary but equally false views of the course of history: the voluntaristic overestimation of the active importance of the individual (the leader) and the fatalistic underestimation of the importance of the class (the masses). The party is divided into an active and a passive group in which the latter is only occasionally brought into play and then only at the behest of the former. The 'freedom' possessed by the members of such parties is therefore nothing more than the freedom of more or less peripheral and never fully engaged observers to pass judgement on the fatalistically accepted course of events or the errors of individuals. Such organisations never succeed in encompassing the total personality of their members, they cannot even attempt to do so. Like all the social forms of civilisation these organisations are based on the exact mechanised division of labour, on bureaucratisation, on the precise delineation and separation of rights and duties. The members are only connected with the organisation by virtue of abstractly grasped aspects of their existence and these abstract bonds are objectivised as rights and duties.

Really active participation in every event, really practical involvement of all the members of an organisation can only be achieved by engaging the whole personality. Only when action within a community becomes the central personal concern of everyone involved will it be possible to abolish the split between rights and duties, the organisational form of man's separation from his own socialisation and his fragmentation at the hands of the social forces that control him . . .

Flexibility, the ability to change and adapt one's tactics and a tightly knit organisation are just two sides of one and the same thing. The whole trajectory of this, the deepest meaning of the communist form of organisation is rarely grasped in its entirety even in communist circles. And this despite the fact that both the possibility of right action and the Communist Party's inner capacity for development depend on it.

Source: Georg Lukács, 'Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation', September 1922, in *History and Class Consciousness* (London, Merlin Press, 1971), pp. 314, 315–16, 317–18, 318–19, 320, 335.

#### Document 4.7 The Declaration of the Twenty-Two

The Workers' Opposition continued the struggle against the NEP, which they insisted represented a betrayal of the working class, by appealing above the heads of the party leadership in Soviet Russia to the Comintern.



Dear Comrades:

We have learned from our newspapers that the International Conference of the Communist International is considering the question of the 'united Workers' front', and we consider it our Communist duty to make it known to you that in our country things stand unfavorably with the united front, not only in the broad sense of the term, but even in applying it to the ranks of our party.

At a time when the forces of the bourgeois element press on us from all sides, when they even penetrate into our party; whose social content (40% workers and 60% nonproletarians) favors this, our leading rentiers are conducting an unrelenting, disruptive struggle against all, especially proletarians, who allow themselves to have their own judgment, and against the expression of this within the party they take all kinds of repressive measures.

The effort to draw the proletarian masses closer to the state is declared to be 'anarcho-syndicalism,' and its adherents are subjected to persecution and discredit.

In the area of the trade-union movement there is the very same picture of suppression of the workers' independence and initiative, and a struggle using every means against heterodoxy. The combined forces of the party and trade-union bureaucracies, taking advantage of their position and power, are ignoring the decisions of our congresses about carrying out the principles of workers' democracy. Our [Communist] fractions in the unions, even the fractions of entire [trade-union] congresses, are deprived of the right to express their will in the matter of electing their centers. Tutelage and pressure by the bureaucracy lead to the members of the party being constrained by the threat of expulsion and other repressive measures to elect not those whom these Communists themselves want, but those whom the higher-ups, ignoring them, want. Such methods of work lead to careerism, intrigue, and toadying, and the workers answer this by quitting the party.

Sharing the idea of a united workers' front . . . we turn to you in the sincere hope of ending all the abnormalities which stand in the way of the unity of this front, above all within our Russian Communist Party . . .

*Source: 'Declaration of the Twenty-Two Members of the Russian Communist Party to the International Conference of the Communist International', February 1922, in Daniels, Communism in Russia, pp. 146-7.*

#### Document 4.8 Appeal of the 'Workers' Truth' Group

The 'Workers' Truth' group of Gavriil Myasnikov drew on the thinking of both Machajski and Bogdanov, condemning the exploitation of the workers by the new 'state capitalist' regime made up of the intelligentsia and 'organisers'. This group, like others of the type emerging at this time

condemning the 'new exploitation of the proletariat', was ruthlessly crushed by the GPU.

*Message to the Revolutionary Proletariat and to All Revolutionary Elements Who Remain Faithful to the Struggling Working Class:*

. . . The working class of Russia, small in numbers, unprepared, in a peasant country, accomplished in October 1917 the historically necessary October revolution. Led by the Russian Communist Party, it has overthrown and destroyed the power of the ruling classes; during long years of revolution and civil war it has firmly resisted the pressure of international and Russian reaction.

In spite of the unprecedentedly heavy losses sustained by the working class, the October revolution remains a decisive and heroic event in the history of the struggle of the Russian proletariat. The Russian October revolution has given the struggling international proletariat an experience of tremendous value for its struggle against capital.

As a result of the October revolution all the obstacles in the path of economic development were eliminated; there is no longer any oppression by the landlords, the parasitic tsarist bureaucracy, and the bourgeoisie, which relied on reactionary groups of European capitalists. After the successful revolution and civil war, broad perspectives opened before Russia, of rapid transformation into a country of progressive capitalism. In this lies the undoubted and enormous achievement of the revolution in October.

But what has changed in the position of the working class? The working class of Russia is disorganised; confusion reigns in the minds of the workers: are they in a country of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', as the Communist Party ceaselessly reiterates by word of mouth and in the press? Or are they in a country of arbitrary rule and exploitation, as life tells them at every step? The working class is leading a miserable existence at a time when the new bourgeoisie (i.e. the responsible functionaries, plant directors, heads of trusts, chairmen of executive committees, etc.) and the Nepmen [capitalist entrepreneurs] live in luxury and recall in our memory the picture of the life of the bourgeoisie of all times. And again long and difficult years of the struggle for existence lie ahead. But the more complicated the circumstances, the more clarity and organisation are necessary for the struggling proletariat. To introduce class clarity into the ranks of the working class of Russia, to aid in every way the organisation of the revolutionary powers of the struggling proletariat - this is our task . . .

The Communist Party, which during the years of the revolution was a party of the working class, has become the ruling party, the party of the organisers and directors of the governmental apparatus and economic life on capitalistic lines, with the general backwardness and lack of organisation of the working class. The party has more and more lost its tie and community with the proletariat. The soviet, party, and trade-union bureaucracies and



organisers find themselves with material conditions which are sharply distinguished from the conditions of existence of the working class. Their very well-being and the stability of their general position depend on the degree to which the toiling masses are exploited and subordinated to them. All this makes a contradiction between their interests and a break between the Communist Party and the working class inevitable.

The social existence of the Communist Party itself inevitably determines the corresponding social consciousness, interests and ideals, which contradict the interests of the struggling proletariat.

The Russian Communist Party has become the party of the organiser intelligentsia. The abyss between the Russian Communist Party and the working class is getting deeper and deeper, and this fact cannot be glossed over by any resolutions or decisions of the communist congresses and conferences.

Source: 'Appeal of the "Workers' Truth" Group', 1922, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 31 January 1923, pp. 12–14.

## The Formation of the USSR

The structure of the multinational state became the most contentious constitutional issue facing the country. During the Civil War a number of countries had enjoyed various periods of independence (e.g. Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia), and it was clear that some concessions had to be made to their aspirations for sovereignty. While Lenin had earlier condemned federalism, he now accepted that this was the only realistic way forward. Stalin, however, who as Commissar of Nationalities headed the commission responsible for drawing up a plan for the new state structure, favoured 'autonomisation', the enlargement of Soviet Russia as a unitary state while allowing significant 'autonomy' for national groups. Lenin came to favour a federal solution, a view confirmed in his mind by the behaviour of Stalin and other Moscow leaders with regard to the leadership of the Georgian Communist Party. In the event, Stalin's plan, by limiting the sovereignty of national units and thus rejecting the principle of ethno-federalism, might have avoided the break-up of the Soviet state in 1991.

### Document 4.9 Autonomisation versus Federalism

The kernel of Stalin's autonomisation plan of August–September 1922 sought the 'adhesion' of Belorussia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR). In other words, what were hitherto in form independent states would join Russia as autonomous republics and become subordinated to the Russian federation government and its institutions. Its Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom would take over responsibility for the enlarged country. Although the Politburo commission responsible adopted the

plan on 24–5 September 1922, only Armenia and Azerbaijan were in favour. On 26 September 1922 Lenin wrote to Kamenev to pass on to the Politburo his views on the shape of the future union.

Comrade Kamenev! You will no doubt have received from Stalin the resolution of his commission concerning the incorporation of the independent republics in the RSFSR. If you have not yet received it, please collect it from the secretary and read it immediately. I have already discussed it with Sokolnikov, spoken about it today with Stalin and will be seeing Mdivani (the Georgian communist suspected of *nezavisimstvo* [seeking independence]) tomorrow.

In my opinion, the question is of enormous importance. Stalin is in rather too much of a hurry. You must – since you did at one time intend to take up the question and have even studied it to some extent – think about it seriously and Zinoviev likewise. Stalin has already agreed to make a concession, that of replacing the term 'adhesion' to the RSFSR in paragraph 1 by 'formal union with the RSFSR within the framework of a Union of the Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia'. I hope the significance of this concession is clear: we recognise that we are equals in law with the SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] of the Ukraine etc., and join it on an equal footing in a new Union, a new Federation, the 'Union of the Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia'.

In this case, paragraph 2 must also be altered to create, parallel with the sessions of the VTsIK [Central Executive Committee] of the RSFSR, something in the nature of a 'federal VTsIK of the Union of Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia'. If the first organisation is to meet once a week and the second similarly (or even if they meet every two weeks), it will not be very difficult to combine their activities. It is important not to give grist to the mill of the *nezavisimtsy*, not to destroy their independence, but to establish a new echelon, a Federation of Republics with equal rights.

Source: Lenin, 'Ob obrazovanii SSSR' ('On Forming the USSR'), PSS, vol. 45, pp. 211–13.

### Document 4.10 Amended Plans for the Union

Stalin was forced to make concessions, and on 6 October 1922 he submitted a revised project to the Central Committee incorporating Lenin's amendments. This became the cornerstone of the final agreement of the new union. Ukraine, Belorussia, the Transcaucasian Federation (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), and the RSFSR were to create a new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, each with the right to secede from the 'alliance'. A new Central Executive Committee and other state and governmental bodies were to be created. This was not the end of the matter, however, and although debilitated by sickness, Lenin was forced to return to the question. The debate over the shape of the union became bound up with a



created, I consider it not only my right, but my duty to make known the true state of affairs to every member of the Party whom I consider sufficiently prepared, matured and self-restrained, and consequently able to help the Party out of this blind alley without factional convulsions.

Sources: Trotsky, *Letter of 8 October 1923*, Documents of the 1923 Opposition (London, New Park Publications, 1975), pp. 2–3; *Izvestiya TsK*, no. 5, 1990, pp. 165–73.

#### Document 4.18 Declaration of the Forty-Six

A few days after Trotsky had sent his letter, forty-six leading Bolsheviks set out their own platform criticising the policies of the triumvirate. The platform was presented to the Politburo on 15 October 1923. The immediate demand was for the convocation of a special conference of the Central Committee and the opposition to deal with the issues disturbing the party. While many of the criticisms of the forty-six coincided with Trotsky's, there was no prior consultation.

*To the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party*

The extreme seriousness of the situation compels us (in the interests of our party, in the interests of the working class) to state openly that a continuation of the policy of the majority of the Politburo threatens grievous disasters for the whole party. The economic and financial crisis beginning at the end of July of the present year, with all the political, including internal party, consequences resulting from it, has inexorably revealed the inadequacy of the leadership of the party, both in the economic domain, and especially in the domain of internal party relations . . .

Similarly in the domain of internal party relations we see the same incorrect leadership paralysing and breaking up the party; this appears particularly clearly in the period of crisis through which we are passing.

We explain this not by the political incapacity of the present leaders of the party; on the contrary, however much we differ from them in the estimate of the position and in the choice of means to alter it, we assume that the present leaders could not in any conditions fail to be appointed by the party to the outstanding posts in the workers' dictatorship. We explain it by the fact that beneath the external form of official unity we have in practice a one-sided recruitment of individuals, and a direction of affairs which is one-sided and adapted to the views and sympathies of a narrow circle. As a result of a party leadership distorted by such narrow considerations, the party is to a considerable extent ceasing to be that living independent collectivity which sensitively seizes living reality because it is bound to this reality with a thousand threads. Instead of this we observe the ever increasing, and now scarcely concealed, division of the party between a secretarial hierarchy and the 'quiet folk',

between professional party officials recruited from above and the general mass of the party which does not participate in the common life.

This is a fact which is known to every member of the party. Members of the party who are dissatisfied with this or that decision of the Central Committee or even of a provincial committee, who have this or that doubt on their minds, who privately note this or that error, irregularity or disorder, are afraid to speak about it at party meetings, and are even afraid to talk about it in conversation, unless the partner in conversation is thoroughly reliable from the point of view of 'discretion'; free discussion within the party has practically vanished, the public opinion of the party is stifled. Nowadays it is not the party, not its broad masses, who promote and choose members of the provincial committees and of the Central Committee of the RCP. On the contrary, the secretarial hierarchy of the party to an ever greater extent recruits the membership of conferences and congresses, which are becoming to an ever greater extent the executive assemblies of this hierarchy.

The regime established within the party is completely intolerable; it destroys the independence of the party, replacing the party by a recruited bureaucratic apparatus which acts without objection in normal times, but which inevitably fails in moments of crisis, and which threatens to become completely ineffective in the face of the serious events now impending.

Source: *'The Platform of the 46'*, 15 October 1923, in E. H. Carr, *The Interregnum* (London, Macmillan, 1954), pp. 374, 375–6.

#### Document 4.19 Trotsky, *The New Course*

The triumvirate appeared to acknowledge the validity of some of the criticisms, and on 7 November Zinoviev announced that the pages of *Pravda* would be thrown open for the discussion. Following vigorous exchanges, Kamenev, Stalin and Trotsky appeared to reach agreement on a 'new course' for intra-party 'workers' democracy' and economic planning, outlined in a Politburo resolution of 5 December. Three days later, however, Trotsky elaborated on this resolution in a letter to party meetings that he could not address personally through illness. His assault now went much further than simply attacks against the bureaucratic 'old guard' in the party, and compared the current degeneration with that of the pre-war German Social Democratic Party, one of the most offensive analogies he could have devised.

The centre of gravity which was mistakenly placed in the apparatus by the old course, has now been transferred by the new course, proclaimed in the resolution of the Central Committee, to the activity, the initiative and the critical spirit of all the party members, as the organised vanguard of the proletariat. The new course does not at all signify that the party apparatus is charged with decreeing, creating or establishing a democratic regime at such and such a date. No. This regime will be realised by the party itself.



To put it briefly: *the party must subordinate to itself its own apparatus* without for a moment ceasing to be a centralized organisation.

In the debates and articles of recent times, it has been underlined that 'pure', 'complete', 'ideal' democracy is not realisable and that in general for us it is not an end in itself. That is incontestable. But it can be stated with just as much reason that pure, absolute centralism is unrealisable and incompatible with the nature of a mass party, and that it can no more be an end in itself than can the party apparatus. Democracy and centralism are two faces of party organisation. The question is to harmonise them in the most correct manner, that is, the manner best corresponding to the situation. During the last period there was no such equilibrium. The centre of gravity wrongly centred in the apparatus. The initiative of the party was reduced to the minimum. Thence, the habits and the procedures of leadership, fundamentally contradicting the spirit of revolutionary proletarian organisation. The excessive centralisation of the apparatus at the expense of initiative engendered a feeling of uneasiness, an uneasiness which, at the extremities of the party, assumed an exceedingly morbid form and was translated, among other things, in the appearance of illegal groupings directed by elements indubitably hostile to communism. At the same time, the whole of the party disapproved more and more of apparatus-methods of solving questions. The idea, or at the very least the feeling, that bureaucratism threatened to get the party into a blind alley, had become pretty general. Voices were raised to point out the danger. The resolution on the new course is the first official expression of the change that has taken place in the party. It will be realised to the degree that the party, that is, its four hundred thousand members, will want to realise it and will succeed in doing so . . .

The application of workers' democracy cannot be made dependent upon the degree of 'preparation' of the party members for this democracy . . . It is not necessary to speak of the immense authority of the group of party veterans, not only in Russia but internationally; that is universally recognised. But it would be a crude mistake to regard it as absolute. It is only by a constant active collaboration with the new generation, within the framework of democracy, that the old guard will preserve the old guard as a revolutionary factor. Of course, it may ossify and become unwittingly the most consummate expression of bureaucratism.

History offers us more than one case of degeneration of 'the old guard'. Let us take the most recent and striking example: that of the leaders of the parties of the Second International . . . We saw that on the eve of the war, the formidable apparatus of the Social Democracy, covered with the authority of the old generation, had become the most powerful brake upon revolutionary progress.

Before the publication of the decision of the Central Committee on the 'new course', the mere pointing out of the need of modifying the internal party regime was regarded by bureaucratic apparatus functionaries as heresy,

as factionalism, as an infraction of discipline. And now the bureaucrats are ready formally to 'take note' of the 'new course', that is, to nullify it bureaucratically. The renovation of the party apparatus – naturally within the clear-cut framework of the statutes – must aim at replacing the mummified bureaucrats with fresh elements closely linked with the life of the collectivity, or capable of assuring such a link. And before anything else, the leading posts must be cleared out of those who, at the first word of criticism, of objection, or of protest, brandish the thunderbolts of penalties before the critic. The 'new course' must begin by making everyone feel that from now on nobody will dare terrorise the party.

Source: Trotsky, 'The New Course (A Letter to Party Meetings)', 8 December 1923, in *The New Course*, annotated and translated by Max Shachtman (London, New Park Publications, 1956), pp. 76-7, 78, 79-80.

#### Document 4.20 The End of the 'New Course'

Meeting in the week before Lenin's death in January 1924, the Thirteenth Party Conference voted overwhelmingly to denounce the opposition – Stalin's behind-the-scenes manipulation of delegate selection triumphed. Note how the ban on factions imposed by Lenin at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 was now being used by Stalin to silence criticism within the party. It should be stressed, however, that the critique by Trotsky and the left by no means included an extension of democracy to society; indeed, they tended to oppose the concessions granted by NEP, with its associated emergence of a rich class of 'Nepmen' and growing inequalities.

The opposition, headed by Trotsky, advanced the slogan of smashing the party apparatus, and sought to shift the focus of the struggle against bureaucratism in the governmental apparatus to 'bureaucratism' in the party apparatus. Such wholesale criticism and direct attempts to discredit the party apparatus cannot objectively lead to anything other than the emancipation of the governmental apparatus from party influence upon it, to the separation of governmental institutions from the party . . .

All shades of the opposition have revealed a completely un-Bolshevik approach to the question of party discipline. The actions of a number of representatives of the opposition represent a clear violation of party discipline, reminiscent of the period when Lenin had to struggle against the 'anarchism of the intellectuals' in organisational questions and defend the foundations of proletarian discipline in the party.

The opposition clearly violated the decision of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party [March 1921] which prohibited the formation of factions within the party. The opposition has replaced the Bolshevik view



of the party as a monolithic whole with the view of the party as the sum of all possible tendencies and factions. These tendencies, factions and groupings, according to the 'new' view of the opposition, must have equal rights in the party, and the Central Committee of the party must not so much lead the party as act as a simple secretary and intermediary between the tendencies and groupings. This view of the party has nothing in common with Leninism. The factional work of the opposition cannot but become a threat to the unity of the state apparatus. The factional moves of the opposition strengthened the hopes of all enemies of the party, including the West European bourgeoisie, for a split in the ranks of the Russian Communist Party. These factional moves again sharply pose before the party the question of whether the Russian Communist Party, since it is in power, can allow the formation of factional groupings within the party.

*Source: 'On the Results of the Discussion and on Petty Bourgeois Deviation in the Party', Resolution of the Thirteenth Conference of the RCP, 18 January 1924, KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh, vol. I, pp. 780-2.*

### Creating 'Stalinism'

Lenin's theory of the smashing of the bourgeois state was accompanied by the denigration of the autonomous status of law: from this perspective law was no more than a manifestation of the class struggle and would wither away together with the state. Stalin himself consciously sought to assume the mantle of intellectual leadership, recognising that in the Bolshevik context claims to power were couched in the idiom of knowledge about the real needs of the movement and interpretations of the nature of the historical epoch. To this end Stalin launched a number of theoretical innovations. Despite attempts by Trotskyists to portray Stalin as an intellectual dullard, in fact he had a remarkable intuition in understanding the authoritative components of political rule.

### Document 4.21 Soviet Law – Pashukanis

Evgeny Pashukanis, one of the leading authorities in Soviet legal science in the 1920s, took up the themes of Marx's 'On the Jewish Question' and Lenin's 'The State and Revolution' to devise a critique of the role of law in capitalist societies from the historical materialist perspective. Pashukanis was one of the leading exponents of the early Soviet 'legal nihilist' tendency; he recognised the need for law in the new system but no longer defined as a set of absolute norms but as a flexible set of standards. In his major work, published in 1924, he outlined the dominant view of law at that time.

In bourgeois society, jurisprudence has always held a special, privileged place. Not only is it first among the other social sciences, but it also leaves its

mark on them. Not for nothing did Engels call the juridical way of looking at things the classical world view of the bourgeoisie, a kind of 'secularisation of the theological', in which 'human justice takes the place of dogma and divine right, and the state takes the place of the church'.

By destroying the bourgeois state and overturning property relations, the proletarian revolution created the possibility of liberation from the fetters of legal ideology. 'The workers' lack of property' – wrote Engels in the piece quoted from above – 'was matched only by their lack of illusions'.

But the experiences of the October Revolution have shown that even after the foundations of the old legal order have collapsed, after the old laws, statutes and regulations have been transformed into a heap of waste paper, old mental habits still exhibit an extraordinary tenacity. Even now, the struggle against the bourgeois legal view of the world represents a task of pressing importance for the jurists of the Soviet Republic today . . .

The constitutional state [*Rechtsstaat*] is a mirage, but one which suits the bourgeoisie very well, for it replaces withered religious ideology and conceals the fact of the bourgeoisie's hegemony from the eyes of the masses. The ideology of the constitutional state is even more convenient than religious ideology, because, while it does not entirely reflect objective reality, it is still based on this reality. Power as the 'collective will', as the 'rule of law', is realised in bourgeois society to the extent that this society represents a market . . .

A certain discrepancy between legal truth and the truth to which historical and sociological research aspires is unavoidable. This is due not only to the fact that the dynamic of social life overturns rigidified legal forms and that, as a result, the jurist is condemned always to complete his analysis far too late; even if he does remain up to date with the facts in his assertions, he renders these facts differently than the sociologist. For, so long as he remains a jurist, he starts from the concept of the state as an autonomous force, set apart from all other individual and social forces. From the historical and political point of view, the resolutions of an influential class or party organisation have a significance as great, and sometimes greater, than the decisions of parliament or of any other state organisation. From the legal point of view, facts of the first kind are, as it were, non-existent. In contrast to this, one can, by ignoring the legal standpoint, see in every parliamentary resolution not an act of state, but a decision reached by a particular group or clique . . .

Coercion as a protective measure is an act of pure expediency, and as such, can be governed by technical regulations . . . The concepts of crime and punishment are, as is clear from what has been said already, necessary determinants of the legal form, from which people will be able to liberate themselves only after the legal superstructure itself has begun to wither away. And when we begin to overcome and to do without these concepts in reality, rather than merely in declarations, that will be the surest sign that the narrow horizon of bourgeois law is finally opening up before us.



Source: *Evgeny B. Pashukanis, Law and Marxism: A General Theory: Towards a Critique of the Fundamental Juridical Concepts (London, Pluto Press, 1989), pp. 33, 146, 147, 187, 188.*

For Pashukanis, law was no more than a reflection of the commodity relations of bourgeois society. He thus gave no autonomy either to law or the state, reflecting the materialist reductionism already marked in the works of Marx and Engels. There was no room here for morality or the autonomy of politics in any form other than Bolshevik voluntarism. Pashukanis sought to root his legal nihilism in Marxist theory; for Stalin, this was not enough, requiring subordination not to abstract theory but to Bolshevik practice – as interpreted by Stalin. Consequently, Pashukanis in 1937 fell victim to the system he had helped create.

#### Document 4.22 Stalin – on Leninism, the Party and Dictatorship

Following Lenin's death on 21 January 1924 the struggle was on not only for the organisational dominance of the party, but also for its ideological leadership. In formal terms, Alexei Rykov replaced Lenin as chairman of Sovnarkom, while Stalin (still controlling the party Secretariat) and Zinoviev dominated the party. To establish himself as the heir to Lenin's mantle as chief theoretician, Stalin delivered a series of lectures in April 1924 on 'Leninism'. The very notion of 'Leninism' paved the way for 'Stalinism'.

Leninism was born and developed in conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions in capitalism reached their extreme point, when the proletarian revolution became a directly practical question, when the old period of the preparation of the working class for revolution was consolidated and grew into the new period of the direct assault against capitalism . . .

The party is not only the *vanguard* detachment of the working class. If it really seeks to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the organised detachment of its class. The party's tasks under capitalism are immense and diverse. The party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat in retreat when the situation calls for retreat to ward off the blows of the powerful enemy; it must imbue the millions of unorganised non-party workers with the spirit of discipline and order in the struggle, with the spirit of organisation and endurance. But the party can fulfil these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organisation, if it is itself the *organised* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no question of the party genuinely leading the multi-million mass of the proletariat. The party is the organised detachment of the working class . . .

But the proletariat needs the party not only to achieve the dictatorship, it is even more necessary for the maintenance of the dictatorship, to strengthen and develop it for the complete victory of socialism . . . The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party strong by virtue of its cohesion and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and unconditional unity of action of all members of the party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of differing views within the party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but assumes criticism and differing views within the party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be 'blind'. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a contest of views has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all party members are the necessary conditions without which neither party unity nor iron discipline in the party are conceivable . . .

It follows from this that the existence of factions is incompatible either with the unity of the party or with its iron discipline. It hardly needs proving that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centres, and the existence of a number of centres signifies the absence of a single centre in the party, the destruction of the unity of will, the weakening and disintegration of discipline, the weakening and disintegration of the dictatorship . . .

The source of factionalism in the party is its opportunist elements. The proletariat is not an introverted class. It is constantly replenished by the influx of peasants, petty bourgeois and intellectuals proletarianised by the development of capitalism . . . All these petty-bourgeois groups enter one way or another into the party, spreading there the spirit of wavering and opportunism, the spirit of disintegration and unsureness . . . Therefore, the merciless struggle with these elements, their expulsion from the party, is the preliminary condition for the successful struggle against imperialism . . . The path of development and strengthening of proletarian parties lies in purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-pacifists . . .

Leninism is a school of theory and practice producing a distinctive type of party and state worker, creating a distinctive Leninist style of work. What are the characteristic features of this style? What are its distinctive features?

It has two distinctive features: (a) Russian revolutionary sweep, and (b) American efficiency. The style of Leninism is a combination of these two distinctive features in party and state work.

Russian revolutionary sweep is an antidote to inertia, routine, conservatism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancestral traditions. Russian revolutionary sweep is the life-giving force which stimulates thought, impels



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