

The Change from Leninism to Stalinism and its Implications on the Collaboration between the USSR and the KPD

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Introduction

Introduction

On May 25th, 1922, Lenin suffered the stroke that almost completely paralysed the right side of his body, thus starting the fierce battle over the leadership of the USSR and caused major changes USSR's policy-making. From one moment to the other the country shifted from using a World Revolution theory to that of Socialism in One Country (Nimtz, 2009, p.461; Van Ree, 2010, p.143). This change greatly influence the Comintern policy-making and the attitude of the USSR towards foreign communists (Jianhua, 2015, p.25; McDermott, 1995, p.423). In this thesis, a focus will be placed on the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). In particular, I will look into the cooperation between the KPD and the USSR, and how the change affected their foreign policy (Haro, 2011, p.564). Based on this reasoning I came to the following research question: How did the change from Leninism to Stalinism influence the Comintern policy on collaboration of the Soviet Union (USSR) with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD)?

Significance & Argument

This research question is believed to be significant as scholars within the field still debate whether the change from Leninism to Stalinism constituted a continuation or a change in the policy of the USSR (Flewers, 2011, p.278). In particular, this study will focus on foreign policy-making between the USSR and another Communist party, in this case the KPD, as significant changes can be perceived between 1917 and 1939 (Chossudovsky, 1974, p.1; Birt, 1993, p.611). The inclusion of the KPD was based on three arguments. Firstly, Germany was the first state in which a communist revolution (1918) was attempted after the Russian Revolution (Rürup, 1968, p.109). Secondly, during the interbellum Communism enjoyed considerable popularity in Germany (Hoppe & Keck-Szajbel, 2009, p.501). Finally,

many German Communists were prominent members of the Comintern, e.g. Willi Münzenberg, Wilhelm Pieck, Ernst Thaelmann and Klara Zetkin (Gruber, 1965, p.210). As a consequence, the USSR, led by Lenin, came to work closely with the KPD, in order to kick-start a German Communist Revolution. This is because Lenin believed in the slogan -workers of the world unite-, encouraging all foreign communists to start a communist revolution in their country. In Germany this approach seemed to pay off, as several attempts were made to overthrow the bourgeoisie, including: the German Revolution of 1918-19, the Ruhr uprising, the March Action and the Hamburg Uprising. However, all these attempts failed, after which some members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), with Stalin among them, started to doubt about the usefulness of Lenin's theory on World Revolution. One of these members was Stalin. After Lenin's first stroke, Stalin immediately set up a new foreign policy, that of Socialism in One Country, which was based on the idea that the interests of the USSR were above the interests of the KPD and any other foreign communist parties. In fact, all those in the KPD who opposed this policy were purged and replaced by workers and bureaucrats who were completely loyal to Stalin, making the KPD an extension of Stalin's totalitarian rule.

Definitions

This thesis specifically discusses the concepts of Leninism and Stalinism. The former can be interpreted as the practical implementation of Marxism by Lenin. Initially, during the October Revolution, this entailed the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, the peasantry, and the revolutionary bourgeoisie (Ryan, 2011, p.258). However, after the Russian Civil War (1917-1922), Leninism came to be defined by a vanguard party (CPSU). This party consisted of class conscious workers, who were the only ones conscious enough about their class to lead the still unconscious part of the proletariat in the struggle against capitalism.

Their core values were democratic centralism, self-determinism of communist countries and the spread of World Revolution (Murgul, 2016, p.66).

Stalinism relates to a totalitarian form of government implemented by Joseph Stalin (Dallimore, 2014, p.21). Under Stalin's reign, Lenin's theory on World Revolution was replaced with the theory of Socialism in One Country, which meant creating a strong USSR to ensure the survival of communism. This was done by rapid industrialisation and collective farming. The creation of a strong USSR led to the subordination of the interests of foreign communist parties to the interests of the CPSU (Van Ree, 1998, p.103).

Thesis Outline

This thesis will consist of five chapters. Opening with the literature review, in which, the existing literature relevant to the topic will be presented, focusing on three points: the change from Leninism to Stalinism, the use of the Comintern and the Narkomindel as foreign policy instruments and the origins of German Communism.

In the second chapter I will explain the conceptual framework which can be used for the empirical analysis of data. Three theories will be used to explain the impact of leaders on foreign policy, which are political psychology, social constructivism and foreign policy analysis.

The third chapter will analyse the period of Leninism, from 1917 till 1922. Followed by the fourth chapter, focussing on the transitional period from 1922 until 1929. Chapter five will close with a discussion on the period of Stalinism, which lasted from 1929 till 1939. Finally, I will conclude, and provide an answer to the research question.

Chapter I: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will discuss literature relevant to the research question on the basis of three key themes: the change from Leninism to Stalinism; the use of the Comintern and Narkomindel as foreign policy instruments and the origins of German Communism.

From Leninism to Stalinism: Continuation or Change

It is important to consider whether the transition from Leninism to Stalinism actually brought with it a change in overall policy when attempting to find out what influenced the Comintern's policy on collaboration and how this influence was exerted. The following section will provide an overview of the different perspectives.

Leninism and Stalinism: A Continuation

It may be suggested that Stalinism is, in fact, a continuation of Leninism and that the transition from one period to the next did not bring about any change, which will make my research question invalid. One can use two arguments to argue this point. Firstly, Lenin and Stalin both used terror to pursue their way to power and to enforce their policy. Lenin did so by getting rid of the Mensheviks during the Russian Civil War, in what is now called the Red Terror. During which the Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police, killed thousands of people (Eidelman, 2012, p.21). Stalin used terror to get rid of his political opponents within the party as well as anyone who opposed him, also known as the Great Purge. In this case, the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, killed almost one million people (Flewers, 2011, p.272). This all started with the Moscow Trials, where Stalin's biggest political opponents had to undergo a show trial confessing to their counter revolutionary actions. This method was used so that they could not become martyrs in the eyes of the public (Flewers, 2011, p.282).

Secondly, Lenin and Stalin both did not tolerate contradiction to the party line. This was shown during Lenin's rule through the dominance of democratic centralism, which

determined that after a policy has been established the CPSU would not be permitted to contradict this policy (Lin & Lee, 2013, p.150). Stalin, on the other hand, built a bureaucratic system populated by loyal civil servants and workers, who would not contradict his policies (Laqueur, 1990, p.164- 165).

Leninism and Stalinism: A Change

However not all scholars agree with this notion, instead Medvedev (1989), Service (2004), Bullock (1992) and more argue that Stalinism is does not represent a continuation from Leninism ,but a change, thus supporting the assumption made in the research question. Several arguments favour this rhetoric. Firstly, Lenin and Stalin had different ideas about foreign policy, which is the core focus of this . Lenin believed strongly in the theory of World Revolution, implying that capitalism would be defeated all over the world if revolutions were started by the working class. He believed that after the Revolution in Russia, more countries would follow and overthrow their capitalists regimes. Through the creation of the Comintern, an international communist organization, he hoped to help other communist parties to work towards revolution (Nimtz, 2009, p.461). Stalin, however, supported the theory of Socialism in One Country, which was based on the idea that the USSR should focus on strengthening itself, because all efforts to start communist revolutions in Europe had been defeated. This development represented a change in the foreign policy of the Comintern which now focussed on the defence of the Soviet Union (Van Ree, 2010, p.143).

Secondly, Stalin was not concerned with the communist cause at all. He was simply a man hungry for power, who aimed to improve his own position, whenever he saw fit, as was often the case in chaotic times (Medvedev, 1989, p.596; Service, 2004, p.338). This may further be confirmed by the fact that he saw conspirators and traitors everywhere and even delivered members of the CPSU to the secret police, which was something that no one had

ever done (Bullock, 1992, p.105). These two points were further enhanced as Stalin regarded the Old Bolsheviks with great suspicion. He was afraid that they would criticize him because they were his equals and not his subjects (Bullock, 1992, p.386). Consequently, he was anxious that the Old Bolshevik were trying to overthrow him, and decided that he must eliminate all of them (Deutscher, 1967, p.372). Yet, due to their prestige this could not be done overnight, which is why he created the Moscow Trials. This would position him as a hero and would cast the Old Bolsheviks as traitors instead of martyrs (Deutscher, 1967, p.374). After removing the Old Bolsheviks, he built up a bureaucratic system where his own followers could not contradict him (Laqueur, 1990, p.164- 165).

A cause for this cold and sadistic behaviour could be his childhood, as he was brought up in poor socio-economic standards by an alcoholic father who beat him. In a village in Georgia with corrupt and authoritarian police officers who intolerance towards poor people (Flewers, 2011, p.286). As an adolescent, he fled from his village and joined the communist cause to find a better life. He slowly climbed up until he became General Secretary of the CPSU, but that was not enough. He wanted to be as respected as Lenin, yet he was not. Which made him feel insecure, so much so that he projected this insecurity on his enemies which he accused of his crimes (Tucker, 1973, p.429).

The Rebuttal of the Continuation of Leninism through Stalinism

This section will argue that change can be perceived. After all, Lenin only used terror against the Mensheviks and not the Bolsheviks. Furthermore, he believed this terror to be temporary until the transition to communism was completed (Eidelman, 2012, p.21). Stalin, on the other hand, used terror against his own party members and believed that it was necessary to keep using terror to eliminate -counter revolutionaries-, which referred to virtually anyone who disagreed with him (Flewers, 2011, p.272).

Moreover, Lenin did not tolerate contradiction to the party line, but he, however, did believe that it was important to discuss certain policy with his fellow comrades, so that nobody could disagree once the decision had been made (Lin & Lee, 2013, p.150). Stalin, on the other hand, did not allow any contradiction to his policy. As a matter of fact he surrounded himself with loyal servants whose career was dependent on him (Laqueur, 1990, p.164- 165).

The Real Foreign Policy: Comintern or Narkomindel?

This section will discuss two key instruments of Soviet foreign policy: the Comintern and the Narkomindel. This is important for the research question because it makes clear why this study focuses on the Cominter rather than the Narkomindel. Both institutions will be discussed below.

The Narkomindel, the ministry of foreign relations, was an organisation that dealt with diplomatic relations between the USSR and capitalist states. The main goal of this organisation was to make sure that the capitalist states did not invade in the USSR while it was weak. They did so by arranging non-aggression pacts, such as the Brest- Litovsk treaty, giving the USSR time to regain its strength, in order to keep pursuing the World Revolution (Haslam, 2006, p.640).

The Comintern, on the other hand, was an international organisation that consisted out of communist parties from all over the world. The main goal of this organisation was to create a World Revolution by spreading propaganda to the proletariat through its different foreign sections. Furthermore, they held several congresses to get ready for the World Revolution. In the First Comintern Congress, they set up Twenty-One Conditions, an agreement that all members of Comintern had to obey to. This agreement specified how all parties should be structured, which, in practice simply meant that they should implement

democratic centralism, and split with the social democrats. This way it would prove easier to start a revolution. Over the course of the years, this policy changed a couple of times from aggressive pursuance of the revolution to passive pursuance of the revolution, depending on, the international situation at that moment (Haslam, 2006, p.636).

In this thesis a focus was placed on the Comintern as it provides a better way of investigating foreign policy on collaboration with the KPD, as it was the organisation that dealt with the pursuit of the World Revolution. Moreover, the changes within the Comintern were parallel to the changes in the CPSU meaning that it portrays the change from Leninism to Stalinism best (Haslam, 2006, p.636).

The origins of German Communism

This section will discuss the origins of German Communism, thus highlighting why the KPD was chosen as the subject for this thesis. German communism originated in 1905, in the same year as, the first Russian Revolution. Even though this revolution was unsuccessful, it showed the potential of mass action of the proletariat. Before the revolution, Russian communists largely depended on the German socialists, but after the revolution the German socialists were inspired by the Russians. This caused a split within the German Socialist Party (SPD), which led to the creation of the KPD. The left-wing of the party believed that the bureaucracy within the party prevented mass action and that the German proletariat was not ready to do the same as the Russian communists. The leader of this group was Rosa Luxemburg, one of the founders of the KPD. She argued that regulation by labour parties or trade unions was unnecessary and undesirable; a mass strike of the workers which would start a struggle all over the country was all that was needed. For a while she was able to convince Karl Kautsky, the leader of the central section of the party, to join her. When the time for a mass strike came, however, Kautsky backed out due to practical disagreements, causing a

definite break between the left-wing and central elements of the SPD. The complete break with the SPD came about when the party decided to support World War, which ran counter to the ideology of the KPD, which was unwilling to fight a war for imperialist powers. After the split, Rosa Luxemburg created the Spartacus League, which joined the Comintern to pursue World Revolution. The Spartacus League started the Spartacus uprising in 1919, and is one of the first attempts at a communist revolution after the Russian Revolution in 1917. The Spartacus League later changed its name to KPD in 1918 (Schurer, 1961, p.459).

Chapter II: Conceptual Framework & Methodology

This chapter will discuss the conceptual tools that will be used to analyse the secondary literature, originating from three main theories about the formation/ influence of leaders on foreign policy: political psychology, social constructivism and foreign policy analysis.

Political Psychology: The Succession of Leadership

The theory of political psychology will be touched upon as it explains why a successor will continue or change a specific policy of an incumbent leader. The first stage is the succession context, which can be defined as the institutional rules and the informal political criteria for the replacement of a leader. The interaction between these formal and informal criteria and external events determine whether the replacement of a incumbent leader becomes an issue (Bynander & 't Hart, 2006, p.709).

The second stage is role choices, which relates to the choices made by the incumbent leader and the possible strategies promoted by the successor during succession. The incumbent leader can choose various tactics, such as denial and resistance or acceptance and cooperation. The successor can also choose between different tactics e.g. announce candidacy or not, continue the policy of the incumbent leader or not and innovate the policy or not (Bynander & 't Hart, 2006, p.712).

The third stage is the succession process. This concept discusses the attitudes, actions, interactions and decisions regarding the succession from the moment that the succession is put on the agenda until the moment that the succession is off the agenda. There are three different factors to measure the succession process. These are the speed of succession, the amount of conflict about the succession and the formality of the process (Bynander & 't Hart, 2006, p.726).

The last stage is the succession impact. This can be defined as the political, personal and policy consequences of the succession. This can be measured on the basis of how much authority a leader has within the party (Bynander & 't Hart, 2006, p.720).

Social Constructivism: The Identity of the State

Social constructivism can be defined as the relationship between actors and structures and how these influence and limit each other. In social constructivism the concept of identity of the state is central. The identity of the state is formed by assigning a certain identity to a certain state while at the same time reproducing the identity of one's own state through daily social practice (Hopf, 1998, p.172).

Social Constructivism: Where is it Constructed on?

Before discussing the main assumptions of social constructivism, it is important to note that this approach is directly applied on the secondary data. Data collection will be discussed at a later point in this chapter. First of all, social constructivists try to denaturalize the social world, meaning that they demonstrate that institutions, customs and identities are not natural, but are a product of human action. In other words, they are a social construction. Subsequently, in order to better understand the world, scholars believe that more knowledge about the intersubjectivity of reality and its meanings is necessary. Next, they argue that data must be placed in the context in which it is collected and situated in the social world in order to discover its meaning. Furthermore, they recognize that knowledge is power. This means that the actor who determines the way in which the world should be viewed holds the power to form the world in any way they want. Additionally, they assume that the agency is granted to the human individual. Last but not least, it is emphasized that possibility exists that an actor can change a structure and that a structure can change an actor through interaction between each other (Hopf, 1998, p.181).

Models of Foreign Policy Analysis

Rational Policy Model

The rational policy model originated from the rational choice theory. Which perceives the state as a massive unitary actor. Within the rational choice model the interaction between states is analysed. States make rational decisions based on cost-benefit analysis to optimize their value. They do so by first setting their goals and ranking which of them is the most important and then consider all their options and the related consequences to reach these goals. At last, they choose the option which maximizes profit. This model can also be applied on a state's leader, and then discusses how they make their decisions about foreign policy. This means that a leader their decision is completely based on value maximization (Allison, 1969, p.691).

Organizational Process Model

In the organization process model the state is perceived as a giant machine with different parts working in the way they supposed to. At the top of this bureaucracy stands the leader. However, because they cannot do everything themselves they rely on different departments to give them the information they needs or delegate tasks to others. These departments work the way they supposed to because they agreed on certain standard operating procedures (SOPs). Every department has his own SOP to handle situations in certain ways. In this model the leader still stands on top of the organization and chooses what has to be done. However, these tasks will be delegated to different departments who have certain SOPs which are very hard to change. This can cause a certain rigidity in policymaking (Allison, 1969, p.698).

Bureaucratic Politics Model

In the bureaucratic politics model the state is seen as a giant battlefield between different political actors within the bureaucracy. They all fight for their own goals which relates to increasing their funding and importance. This can be achieved by being the key decision maker on a certain foreign policy problem. In this model the gains for one department means the loss for another department. Moreover, the leader is just one of the political actors on the battlefield. This means he has to fight for power just like the others. However, he has one major advantage he is the biggest authority on the battlefield (Allison, 1969, p.707).

Research Design

Based on the conceptual framework, I came to the conclusion that a qualitative research design would be most suitable. In particular, a literature review will be used. This method incorporates contemporary knowledge, as well as conceptual and methodological additions to a specific subject (Lamb, 2014). The specific literature used in this study is secondary literature on the foreign policy of the USSR towards the KPD, during the periods of Leninism and Stalinism. I opted to use secondary literature because the primary literature is mostly written in Russian or German. The focus on the KPD can be explained, first of all, but the fact that it was one of the largest communist parties during Leninism and Stalinism (Hoppe & Keck-Szajbel, 2009, p.501). Secondly, German Communists were the first to attempt a communist revolution after the Russian Revolution (Rürup, 1968, p.109). Lastly, many members of the KPD were also important members of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (Gruber, 1965, p.210).

In this thesis, three periods will be investigated: the period of Leninism, the transitional period and the period of Stalinism. The first period is the period of Leninism

which lasted from 1917 (October Revolution) until 1922 (Lenin's first stroke). The second period is the transitional period which lasted from 1922 (Lenin's first stroke) till 1929 (Trotsky's exile) (Fel'shtinskii, 2004, p.45; Getty, 1986, p.24). The third period is the period of Stalinism which lasted from 1929 (Trotsky's exile) until 1939 (Non-Aggression Pact) (Getty, 1986, p.24; Aronsfeld, 1989, p.193). The Trotsky's exile was chosen as an intersection point, because from this moment onwards Stalin's path towards leading the CPSU was free (Getty, 1986, p.24). The Non-Aggression Pact between Nazi-Germany and the USSR was chosen as a cut-off point as it signified the moment when Stalin and Hitler agreed not make any military interventions in the other state, signalling the total destruction of the KPD (Aronsfeld, 1989, p.193). All periods will be analysed through the scope of political psychology, social constructivism, and different models of foreign policy analysis, as was discussed previously in this chapter.

Limitations

While I believe that this study has the potential to add to the available literature, some limitations should be taken into account. Firstly, there is not enough time to read all the literature about the subject in question. An extensive amount of literature is available, yet it would take multiple years to read all of it. Consequently, I had to choose what source to include and which to leave out. I attempted to read as much as possible, in order to conduct a comprehensive overview, but there is much still to read.

Secondly, I as well as authors discussing primary sources may have conscious or subconscious biases. This means that the analysis will always be affected by one's perspective in some shape or form. One form of research bias is confirmation bias, where a scholar consciously or subconsciously will try to find information that confirms their views. Consequently, a scholar may stop searching for information when they find ideas and

concepts that substantiate their own views (Heshmat, 2015). Additionally, scholars and myself may also suffer from a cultural bias, entailing that events, literature or policies may be interpreted based on specific cultural background. As a consequence, a scholar may not understand or will even condemn a certain event, policy of article because it does not align with own their cultural standards. In this study, an effort has been made to avoid cultural bias by including researchers with different nationalities. So not only Western scholars as well as Russian and Eastern European scholars were included (Sheth, 2017).

Chapter III: The Theory of World Revolution

During Leninism, the USSR closely cooperated with the KPD. The reason this which was Lenin's support of the theory of World Revolution. Lenin believed that after the Russian Revolution, workers of the world would unite and start a revolution against the imperialists and the capitalists. However it would not be possible to start a revolution in every country at the same time, as this would depend on the situation in each country. However, Lenin thought that German workers would be the first ones to start a revolution. In the hopes of to achieving this, he supported the KPD via the Comintern. This impact was caused by several developments, such as the Twenty-One Conditions, the inclusion and exclusion of the left communists, the United Front Policy. This resulted in several attempts at revolution (Nimtz, 2009, p.461).

The Twenty- One Conditions

The Twenty-One Conditions were suggested by Lenin in 1919, which shaped the communist parties to prepare them for a revolution. He thought that these conditions were necessary as the communist revolution in Germany remained absent due to the loosely organized nature of the communist and socialist parties. Consequently, he established a list of requirements to which every party who wanted to be member of the Comintern had to obey to. One of the more important conditions was that reformist and centrist parties had to be purged. The same was said for members who did not agree with the conditions. This is shown by the split of USPD, this was a centrist socialist party. It broke down in a left-wing which merged with the KPD and a right-wing which rejoined the SPD (Morrill, 1971, p.80). Another important condition is was that of democratic centralism, which implied that every decision made by the party leadership was binding upon its members. The seriousness of this

requirement became clear when Paul Levi, the head of the KPD, was removed due to disagreements regarding the March Action (Levi, 2009, p.146).

The Use of Left-Wing Communism as an Instrument for Revolution

Before delving into the contents of this paragraph, it should be noted that Lenin used the inclusion and exclusion of the left-wing within the KPD as an instrument to pursue a communist revolution. The KPD consisted of several factions one of which supported left-wing communism. This grouping believed that there was only way to create a communist state, and this was through an immediate revolution of the proletariat. From 1917 until 1920, Lenin believed that Germany was ready for a communist revolution. As a consequence, he influenced the left-wing communists in order to get rid of the reformist section of the party. After which they could organize a revolution. Yet, regardless of the efforts made, all attempts at a revolution failed. This, in combination with the persecution and imprisonment of many communists caused support for the KPD to decline among the German workers. To increase support again Lenin decided to pursue a United Front Policy with other socialist parties. This led to the suppression of the interests of the left-wing communists who did not like to cooperate with the established workers organization (Gerber, 1988, p. 186).

United Front Policy

By the end of 1921 it became clear that a German revolution would not happen any time soon, as the German workers did not believe in the communist cause anymore. Several reasons can explain this development. Firstly, the KPD obtained a bad reputation because of their hit and run tactics. Secondly, their popularity declined due to the persecution of the KPD by the Freikorps, a rightist militant organization. Which led to a significant number of German workers to join the SPD, because they plead for building socialism within the established organization. As a result, Lenin started to argue in favour of a United Front

Policy. This policy led to a cooperation with the SPD and other socialist parties. Not with the purpose of forming a coalition, but in order to be able to reach a larger base of German laborers. The German laborers would then be convinced of the communist cause through propaganda. Which would allow the KPD to grow again (Gruber, 1967, p.366; 419).

The German Communist Revolutions

Several German communist revolutions such as the Spartacist uprising, the Ruhr Uprising and the March Action will be discussed, as these show the impact of the changing political tide in Germany on the possibility of a communist revolution. It all started with the November Revolution in 1918, where a socialist revolution overthrew the imperial government. Lenin had hoped that this would lead to a new Soviet state in Germany. However, he was proved wrong when the social democratic government started working together with the old regime. This betrayal to the socialist cause started the Spartacist uprising in 1919 which was brutally crushed by the Freikorps (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.11). In 1920, the Kapp-Putsch, a rightist coup, mobilized German workers to go on a strike. Even though, the coup ended, German workers did not stop with the strike. However this uprising was yet again crushed by the Freikorps (Radunović, 2017, p.86). These defeats led to a loss of confidence among the German workers which led to the disastrous revolutionary attempt in 1921, the March Action. This revolution came into being as the police came to occupy the mining district of Mansfeld. The police was welcomed with armed resistance. by the Rote Fahne, an agency of the KPD. On March 24th, the KPD called for a general strike. However, this call for action was ignored by the SPD. As a result, this attempt at revolution failed yet again. This caused the Comintern to abandon their offensive policies and adopt the United Front Policy. The KPD came to the conclusion that it was impossible to attempt a revolution as long as they did not have the support of all workers. In response to this

realisation, Paul Levi came to critique the March Action, which led to his expulsion from the party (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.28).

Chapter IV: Turmoil within the Comintern and the KPD

After Lenin's first stroke a power struggle would emerge which tremendously influenced the Comintern policy of collaboration between the USSR and KPD. The Stalinist way of thinking led to four major developments, which clearly indicate the change between the Leninist and Stalinist rhetoric. These developments are the German October, Lenin's speech during the Fourth Comintern Congress, the bolshevization of the KPD, and the focus of the Comintern on the East.

The German October

In 1923, three developments took place that created new opportunities for an attempt at a revolution. Firstly, the French had occupied the Ruhr. Secondly, the German workers finally started to resist the occupation. Finally, the government was in crisis and the country suffered from hyperinflation. Both of these later points can be related to the situation in the Ruhr region. As a consequence, it became possible and desirable to once again attempt a revolution. The USSR and KPD leaders worked together to start this revolution in the Saxony and Thuringia regions. There were, however, disagreements between the USSR and KPD leadership on whether or not this was a good idea. The argument against the revolution was substantiated by the failure of the KPD to secure enough munitions. Moreover, they did not have the support of the SPD to start a revolution. However, this decision to pre-emptively stop the revolt reached Hamburg too late (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.37- 38).

This failure led to a struggle within the Comintern. On the one side was the Stalinist coalition, and on the other the Trotskyist opposition. The latter received the blame for the failed revolution as they put too much faith in the SPD and the United Front Policy (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.44-45). Moreover, this failure was also used to argue in

favour of for Stalin's theory of Socialism in One Country (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.215).

Lenin's Speech at the Fourth Comintern Congress

During his speech at the Fourth Comintern Congress will be discussed, Lenin had an . epiphany explaining the failure of the revolutions in Germany. At this meeting Lenin stated that the agreements made in the previous congresses had to be made invalid, as they were too Russian in nature and did not apply to the KPD. He pleaded for a rethinking on how to best convey the Bolsheviks experience on for example the KPD. He could not do this himself because he already had his first stroke and would soon die. Yet his heirs, Zinoviev and Stalin, did not listen to his plea and continued to support the policy agreed upon during the Third Comintern Congress (Drachkovitch, 1966, p.177; Jianhua, 2015, p.33).

Lenin was not the first person to notice the inapplicability of the Bolshevik experience on the German situation. In 1921 Clara Zetkin, a German revolutionary, wrote Lenin a letter in which she requested him to recommend the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) to give general guidelines to the KPD instead of strict regulations. She argued that those regulations did not take into account the different circumstances in Germany compared to those in Russia. The same applies to Paul Levi in his criticism of the March Action (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.25).

Bolshevization of the KPD

In practice this meant a centralised, disciplined Leninist organization devoted to the CPSU majority and its battle against the opposition. This process of Bolshevization had to be implemented immediately. For the KPD this meant the replacement of Brandler and Thalheimer, who were accused of being Trotskyist, by the leftist Maslow, Fischer and Thälmann (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.46). However, the rightist were not the only

members of the KPD who were at risk of being ‘cut off’ from the KPD. Between 1924 and 1928 the Comintern changed their tactics multiple times, and this could harm both the leftist and rightist faction of the KPD. In 1924 the Comintern shifted its tactics to the left, in 1925-26 it shifted back to the centre and in 1927-28 it moved back to the left again. Every time a shift was announced a change in leadership occurred. For example in 1925, Maslow and Fischer were removed from the KPD leadership, as they allegedly associated with the United Opposition (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.57). Moreover, the Bolshevization did not only occur from above, but it was also implemented from below. This due to the changing environment in Germany (Weitz, 1990, p.294).

The Comintern Shift from West to East

After the disaster of the German October insurgency, the hope of a communist revolution in Germany was lost. As a consequence, the Comintern shifted its focus from the West towards the East. This all started in 1926, when they started to collaborate with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Over a short amount of time the Comintern was able to become an influential partner, and came to determine the policy of the CCP. They quickly introduced the United Front Policy among the CCP and the Guomintang, revolutionary nationalists. The groupings were chosen as the Comintern believed that it could use the Guomintang until the imperialist powers were completely overthrown and destroyed. However, this did not work out as planned, in april 1927 the Guomintang army entered Shanghai were the CCP members were advised to bury their weapons. What followed was the total annihilation of the CCP members in Shanghai. The United Opposition used this failure against Stalin but it was in vein. The beginning of the Stalinist era was a fact (Drachkovitch, 1966, p.182).

Chapter V: Socialism in One Country

Once the power struggle over the Soviet leadership ended, Stalin was able to introduce his theory of Socialism in One Country, which strongly influenced the collaboration between the USSR and the KPD. Especially, considering that Stalin considered the interests of the KPD less important than the interests of the USSR. Moreover, the theory of Socialism in One Country supports the building and protecting of one strong socialist state to serve as counterbalance of capitalist states. Consequently, it seemed logical to make the KPD's interests subordinated to those related to the survival of the USSR. Four major developments in the Comintern policy clearly shows this tendency. These are the Third Period, the purging of the KPD, the Popular Front Policy and the Nazi- Soviet Pact.

The Third Period

Until 1928 the Comintern followed the United Front Policy, but during the Sixth Comintern Congress this policy changed. This was the beginning of the Third Period in which the condemnation of rightist deviations, social fascism and intellectuals were central. As a consequence, the CPSU became more and more leftist, and this led to a break of the KPD with the SPD, because the latter were social fascists (Haro, 2011, p.564). It also meant that all rightist members, e.g. the followers of Brandler and Thalheimer, were removed from the KPD. As they were accused of organizing an anti-Leninist party. Also, permitting a rightist faction within the party was punishable (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.84). The last implication of this policy was that intellectuals could easily be replaced, those who were not obedient but clever, were fired in lieu of bureaucrats and workers, which were obedient. In the KPD this was evident, as the survivors of the purge, Wilhelm Pieck and Ernst Thälman, which were both workers (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.88).

The Purging of the KPD

Ever since the Fifth Comintern Congress, Stalin was actively trying to politically side-line his opponents. Firstly, the Bolshevization of the KPD caused Brandler and Thalheimer to be removed from leadership, as they were perceived as rightists/ Trotskyist (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.46). Secondly during the Third Period, Fischer and Maslow were 'cut off' due to their alleged association with the United Opposition (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.57). However, during the Great Terror in 1937-38, politically side-lining became insufficient to Stalin, and definitive elimination of the opposition became the new standard. The consequences for the KPD were immense, (ex) party leaders, such as Eberlein, Neumann and Remmele, were shot or sent to Gulags. In fact, more leaders of the KPD were killed by Stalin than by Hitler (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.146). The victims of the purge were depicted as enemies of the state but, in reality they simply fell victim to Stalin's desire to rid the party of the old-guard communists when they were replaced by Stalinist bureaucrats (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.155).

The Popular Front Policy

In 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power, and this caused a significant problem for the KPD, because of its results on the German labour movement. On top of this, the KPD was also accused of burning down the Reichstag, which led to the arrests of thousands of communists. As a result, the KPD was declared illegal. Very slowly and with a significant amount of resistance, Stalin and the Comintern realized that they had to let go of policies established during the Third Period, and instead had to implement a Popular Front Policy, which presented a united front against the fascists (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.120-121). However, this was not an easy feat, because of the anti-SPD campaign promoted by the KPD in previous years. Additionally, the Great Terror purged every KPD member that had ever

cooperated with SPD members. This contributed to the failure of the Preparatory Committee for a Popular Front in Germany in 1936. Altogether, it proved impossible for the KPD to form a Popular Front (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.156).

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

On August 23rd 1939, the foreign ministers of the USSR and Nazi-Germany, Molotov and Ribbentrop, came together in Moscow to sign the death warrant of the KPD. This was called, the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Through this agreement the USSR and Nazi-Germany promised each other that they would not attack one another. Moreover, this document also indicated the division of Poland. As a result, Stalin denounced the Popular Front Policy with the argument that there were two sides to this imperialist war, the bourgeois states and the fascist states, and both had to be denounced by the communist party. In practice, this meant the abandonment of the anti-fascist policies, because Stalin had traded the KPD demolition with the survival of the USSR (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.191-194). It can be argued that this trade off was already planned in 1937, as it explains why he purged a large number of the KPD members who would have been opposed to a deal with Nazi-Germany (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.155). The Nazi-Soviet Pact raised a lot of resentment towards the USSR and Stalin because it went against the theory of World Revolution and strengthened the theory of Socialism in One Country (McDermott & Agnew, 1996, p.197).

Conclusion

Finally, I will answer the following* research question: How did the change from Leninism to Stalinism influence the Comintern policy on collaboration of the Soviet Union (USSR) with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD)? During Leninism, the USSR worked closely with the KPD, because Lenin believed in the theory of World Revolution. This is why, Lenin founded the Comintern in 1919, of which the KPD became member. In order to meet membership criteria, the party had to adhere to Twenty-One Conditions, which were meant to rid the party of social democrats and to structure the party. As a consequence, the left-wing members of the USPD split off and formed the KPD. Another condition relates to democratic centralism, meaning that one cannot object to the party line. This caused the removal of Paul Levi as leader of the KPD, because he objected the March Action. The KPD also had a division between the rightists and the leftists factions. Lenin clearly used this division to his advantage, during revolutionary times he likely chose a leftists leader whereas during calmer periods he opted for a rightists leader. Moreover, when a revolution was not likely Lenin implemented the United Front Policy. This policy encouraged the KPD to work together with the SPD. Yet, not to form a government, but to convince the German workers to support the KPD. These developments and the influence of the Russian Revolution caused communist uprisings in Germany: the Spartacus Uprising, the Ruhr uprising and the March Action. However, all these attempts failed.

In 1922 Lenin had a stroke which forced him to hand over some of his authority. This created a power struggle within the CPSU between Stalin and Trotsky. In 1923, the KPD together with the CPSU organized an uprising, the German October, which yet again failed. Stalin, who had his doubts about the rightness of the theory of World Revolution, used this in his struggle against Trotsky, who remained in favour of the German October. Instead, Stalin

called for the Bolshevization of all parties which meant that the rightists/ Trotskyists were purged from the party. Within the KPD, this meant that Brandler and Thalheimer were expelled. During the Fourth Comintern Congress, Lenin explained that according to him the revolution had failed. Because the experience of the Russian Revolution was not applicable to Germany. So, the job of the CPSU was to find a way to make it applicable on other countries. However Stalin ignored this, which was made evident by his attempt at a Chinese Communist Revolution.

In 1928, Stalin had eliminated all his opponents, which meant that he could implement the theory of Socialism in One Country. This began with the Third Period, where an extended version of Bolshevization was promoted, in which case loyalty to the USSR was prioritized. For the KPD leadership, this led to the removal of both leftists and rightists from the party. During the Great Terror, this tendency became of a more permanent nature, as Old Bolsheviks were killed and replaced by loyal servants. As a result, a Popular Front Policy could not be implemented in Germany, which also led to an inability of the KPD to defend itself against the Nazis. So, to ensure the survival of the USSR, Stalin made a pact with Hitler to not intervene in each others countries, which caused the total destruction of the KPD. This changed the KPD from an equal partner in the pursuit of the World Revolution, to a pawn in the foreign policy game of the USSR.

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