Resistance to Military Reform: Russian Path Dependency

This Master of Research (MRes) thesis is presented to Department of Security Studies

and Criminology

Faculty of Arts – Macquarie University

Sydney N.S.W. Australia

By - Naim Nadir Firat

2020

Abstract

Since the late 2000s the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation have embarked on a series of reforms, initiated by the so called Serdyukov reforms of 2008. The Russian strategy and security community and scholars interested in the Russian military are in agreement that these reforms were necessary and long overdue. One reason for delayed reforms often cited by scholars is the military's resistance to change. However, the details of such resistance has not yet been further investigated. This thesis, relying on the theory of historical institutionalism will demonstrate that the policy decisions made in the early days of the establishment of the Red Army led to path dependency that provided the military establishment with autonomy over its own affairs with no external oversight. This thesis will further demonstrate that even after the dissolution of the Red Army and the establishment of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, these incentives stayed intact and the fear of losing these was the main factor in the military's resistance to change.

Statement of the Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) _____   Date: 03 December 2020

Acknowledgements

Corrections and Amendments

The thesis, when first submitted, lacked clear connections between the empirical and theoretical aspects. This detachment did not allow for clear demarcations and a coherent presentation of the arguments. Thanks to the valuable insight provided by Tom Waldman, Vladimir Rauta and Bettina Renz, additional paragraphs were added to the chapters 1 to 4 in order to provide the reader with clear signposts and better explanation of the data via the theoretical framework. I am grateful for their valuable contributions which helped me to explain my ideas and argument better to the reader.

INTRODUCTION

Institutions are invisible structures that surround individuals and regulate their behaviours. Even though they are the creations of the social interactions of individuals, institutions become substantive and have a separate existence with their own agency.

This thesis explores how some of these institutions established in the first ten years of the USSR had on long term and far-reaching impact between the interaction of civilians and the military even after the dissolution of the Union. It will claim that the revolutionary period following 1917 allowed for the establishment of new military institutions. In conjunction with the Marxist-Leninist ideology and its practical implementation by agents such as Mikhail Frunze and Joseph Stalin, this allowed for the establishment of an institutional path that stayed intact, ultimately giving the Russian military unparalleled autonomy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union this autonomy was the central factor for military to resistance to change

The Puzzle

Since the late 2000s, the Russian military is going through arguably the most comprehensive transformation of its armed forces in decades. Much has been

written on what is dubbed the Serdyukov reforms (after the Minister of Defence at the time, Anatoly Serdyukov) of 2008.

The scholarly literature on the Serdyukov reforms can be divided into two categories. The first category comprises the significant share of scholarly work done on the subject and concerns itself only with the extent and the structure of the reform.[1] This literature either does not mention or only briefly discusses the mechanisms and dynamics of the reform, before moving on to analyse the structure of the changes and other formal aspects. It could be said that this literature has understanding in its aims rather than explaining.

The second category comprises the relatively smaller section of the literature and analyses the dynamics that allowed the reforms to be actualised.[2] This

---

[1] See for example: Aleksey Gayday, "Reform of the Russian Army," *Russia's New Army*, 2011, 9–32; Irina Isakova, "Russian Defense Reform: Current Trends" (Strategic Studies Institute, 2006); Bettina Renz, *Russia's Military Revival* (Polity, 2018), https://www.amazon.sg/Russias-Military-Revival-Bettina-Renz/dp/1509516158; Margarete Klein, "Towards a 'New Look'of the Russian Armed Forces? Organizational and Personnel Changes: Margarete Klein," in *The Russian Armed Forces in Transition* (Routledge, 2012), 45–64; Bettina Renz, "Russian Military Capabilities after 20 Years of Reform," *Survival* 56, no. 3 (May 4, 2014): 61–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2014.920145; Athena Bryce-Rogers, "RUSSIAN MILITARY REFORM IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2008 RUSSIA-GEORGIA WAR.," *Demokratizatsiya* 21, no. 3 (2013); Dale R. Herspring and Roger N. McDermott, "Serdyukov Promotes Systemic Russian Military Reform," *Orbis* 54, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 284–301, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2010.01.004; Gregory P. Lannon, "Russia's New Look Army Reforms and Russian Foreign Policy," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (February 28, 2011): 26–54.
[2] Jacob W. Kipp, "Russian Military Reform: Status and Prospects (Views of a Western Military Historian)" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign MIlitary Studies Office), accessed September 12, 2020, https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/202362; Alexander M. Golts and Tonya L. Putnam, "State Militarism and Its Legacies: Why Military Reform Has Failed in Russia," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 121–58; Carolina Vendil Pallin, *Russian Military Reform: A Failed Exercise in Defence Decision Making* (Routledge, 2008); Dale Herspring, "Russia's Crumbling Military," *Current History* 97, no. 621 (1998): 325–328; PK Baev, "Reforming the Russian Military: History and Trajectory," in *Russian Military Reform and Russia's New Security Environment*, ed. Y Fedorov and B Nygren (Swedish National Defence College, 2003); Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (April 1, 1998): 83–134, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.22.4.83; Christopher Locksley, "Concept, Algorithm, Indecision: Why Military Reform Has Failed in Russia since 1992," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 14 (March 1, 2001): 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040108430467.

proportional disparity of scholarship is surprising as many previous reform attempts during the Soviet and later the Russian times failed to make an impact, and this should be more compelling for scholars to explain the success of the 2008 reforms. This thesis locates its puzzle with in this "explanatory" literature.

One question that appears repeatedly in the explanatory literature is "why were the reforms delayed?". There was a clear need for change in the Russian Armed Forces after the demise of the Soviet Union, and yet most reform attempts failed even before they began.[3] Therefore, in order to account for the success of the 2008 reform, it becomes imperative to locate the impediments in the way of previous reform and explain the dynamics that allowed for overcoming this impediment in 2008. Three different answers are suggested by scholars.

First, the financial backing, or lack of it, is seen as the reason for the rationale of failing and succeeding reforms.[4] These arguments point to the stagnating economy of the Russian Federation after the collapse of the Soviet Union during the 90s. They claim that the state lacked funds to start any reform programme and see it through. But as Vendil Pallin argues, the financial situation was not the main impediment in the way of military reform. Even with adequate budget allocations for any reform attempt, the military still insisted "to wear a costume that was too

---

[3] Charles K. Bartles, "Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (2011): 55–80; Zoltan Barany, *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 113–15.

[4] Kipp, "1998-06-11 Russian Military Reform"; Herspring, "Russia's Crumbling Military"; Jan Knoph, "Civilian Control of the Russian State Forces: A Challenge in Theory and Practice" (Stockholm: FOI, 2004).

large for its present needs".[5] In other words, the Russian military thinking was still dominated by Soviet threat and strategic perceptions. Even if they were hypothetically provided with unlimited financial means, they were not planning to change the force structure or their thinking on warfare.

The second potential reasons cited is that the old guards in the military were disinclined towards relinquishing their perceptions of military matters.[6] The above mentioned threat perception and strategic concerns were still prevalent and even the collapse of the Soviet Union and shocks of the events such as ethnic conflict, terrorism and the Chechnya Wars was not enough to alter their understanding of how the military should be restructured.

The third argument outlines the lack of political will on behalf of the civilian leadership to change the military.[7] For multiple reasons, such as political turf wars, lack of knowledge in military matters and lack of mechanisms to put pressure on the military for change, the civilian leadership failed to instigate any military reform.

Previously scholars preferred to utilise one of these arguments as the causal factor for the failure and later success of the military reforms. Recent scholarship is more

---

[5] Pallin, *Russian Military Reform*, 17.

[6] PK Baev, *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles* (London: Sage, 1996); Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia," 107; Jakub M. Godzimirski, "Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis," *European Security* 9, no. 4 (December 1, 2000): 73–91.

[7] Baev, "Reforming the Russian Military: History and Trajectory"; Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia," 112–13; Locksley, "Concept, Algorithm, Indecision."

inclined towards multi-causal explanations and believes that the confluence of all three led to the success of the 2008 reform.[8]

All three explanations at their essence posit the assumption that the Russian military is intrinsically stagnating, obstinate and resistant to change. However, no explanation for this assumption is provided. The resistance from the military towards the change and the form of this resistance is treated as an established fact. The evidence provided to show the manifestations of military resistance to change only proves the existence of such resistance but does not give us any explanation for the reasons for this stagnant behaviour.

Organisational theory provides some explanation for the rigidity of large organisations. Complex organisations need to develop procedures and rules in order to standardise the behaviour of their members. These rules harden in time and stop organisations from innovating. The more centralised and hierarchical an organisation becomes, the more it avoids innovation.[9]

Military organisations as hierarchical, tradition-based, and discipline focused organisations, are prime examples of complex organisations which are resistant to change.[10]

---

[8] Klein, "Towards a 'New Look'of the Russian Armed Forces?"
[9] Harvey Sapolsky, Benjamin Friedman, and Brendan Green, *US Military Innovation since the Cold War: Creation without Destruction* (Routledge, 2009).
[10] Edward L. Katzenbach Jr, "The Horse Cavalry in the Twentieth Century," *Public Policy* 8 (1958): 120–149.

Theory suggests that for drastic change, like reforms, to take place, some major exogenous events must occur in order to enforce the organisation. Budget cuts or critical organisational failures should in theory force the organisation to innovate irrelevant of its size and its complexity.[11]

The establishment of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation took place in 1992, amidst political, social and financial chaos. The collapse of the Soviet Union, resulting financial downturn and the budget cuts related to it; multiple local wars and defeats; the changing strategic environment where an entirely new set of neighbours suddenly popped up, could be seen as major endogenous shocks. However, none of these events led to any major changes until 2008 and the resistance of the military to change remained firm during these events.

The Russian military change studies fail to explain the reasons behind the military resistance to change, and whilst organisational explanations may be valid in other cases, do not adequately explain why the resistance to change was insurmountably strong.

This study seeks to explain the reasons behind the resistance to change in the Russian military. Specifically looking from historical institutionalism perspective, the study argues that institutional path dependency was providing incentives and autonomy for the Russian military and this was the reason for resistance to change.

---

[11] Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, vol. 327, 729.1 (Little, Brown Boston, 1971), 172.

Theory

In order to account for the resistance to change by the Russian Armed Forces, I will be relying on New Institutionalist (NI) theory, and especially its sub research tradition of Historical Institutionalism (HI). In this section I will be providing the theoretical framework for the research starting with explaining NI and moving to HI. I rely heavily on a distinct form of HI, which positions "Knightian uncertainty" and the constructive value of ideas in the centre.

New Institutionalism:

New Institutionalism research tradition emerged as a reaction to the dominant approaches of behaviouralism and rational choice theory in the political science discipline in the 1970s. Both behaviouralism and rational choice theories have methodological individualism as the main tenet and are "devoted to dismissing the formalism of politics - institutions, organisational charts, constitutional myths and legal fictions".[12] The only actor in the political arena, according to both theories is the individual.[13] Therefore, the only things that are worth investigating are the individual and their behaviour. Institutions on the other hand are just a collection of individuals that have no agency of their own. For behaviouralism,

---

[12] Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, "Political Science: The Discipline," *A New Handbook of Political Science*, 1996, 11.

[13] B. Guy Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019), 13.

institutions are a cluster of individual learned responses. For rational choice theory, institutions are the culmination of the utility-maximising behaviour of individuals.

Believing that "the organisation of political life makes a difference"[14], new institutionalism surfaced as an alternative to the undersocialised character of both theories. March and Olsen, criticised behaviouralism and rational choice as reductionist. For March and Olsen, institutions are autonomous "political actors in their own right".[15] The institutions are "collections of standard operating procedures, and structures that define and defend interests".[16] Even though they are human constructions, by virtue of their social regulative powers, the institutions have their own agency and impact on the individual's behaviour.

New institutionalism distinguishes institutions from organisations. Organisations with their organisational charts, offices, etc.. are tools that have no agency and are gatherings of people to achieve a certain purpose. However, the institutions are the set of rules that determine the behaviours of individuals in these organisational settings in a "stable, recurring pattern".[17]

---

[14] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *The American Political Science Review*, 1984, 747.
[15] March and Olsen, 738.
[16] March and Olsen, 738.
[17] Robert E. Goodin, "Institutions and Their Design," *The Theory of Institutional Design* 28 (1996): 22.

Peter Hall, offered the concept of 'standard operating procedures'(SOP), the specific rules of behaviour that are acknowledged by the individuals and followed by them under certain circumstances. [18] Institutions generate resilient SOPs through formal, informal and cognitive rules. Formal regulations facilitate the behaviour of individuals via written rules and physical punishment or incentives. Informal arrangements like norms are not written but have social regulative powers. The informal rules rely on punishments such as shaming, or deeming members outcast. Finally, the cognitive regulations are created by cultural narratives and discourse and limit the behaviour of individuals by their cognitive impact. [19] For example, no football player will go out into the field wearing pyjamas. This is not because of the fear of getting kicked out of the game or shamed by other players and spectators but because it would not occur to them in the first place as a reasonable thing to do. The cultural setups such as the a football game create a taken for granted reality and limit the other potential ways of thinking. Of course, all these regulations can be altered or avoided by certain individuals at times, but they hold true for the majority.

These rules do not work unidirectionally. As institutions embody "values and power relations" there is a constant interaction and feedback loop between the individual and institutions. [20] Even though, the institutions are persistent

---

[18] Peter A. Hall, "Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France," 1986.

[19] Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts, *Why Institutions Matter: The New Institutionalism in Political Science* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013), 46–76.

[20] Vivien Lowndes, "The Institutional Approach," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 62.

structures, the individuals are the actors who need to apply the rules into real life. Therefore, individuals interact with the institutional rules in a manner that allows for these rules to change in time.[21]

The questions of how institutions emerge, persist, affect human behaviour and finally change, led to the emergence of a variety of institutionalist research traditions. Different scholars have attempted to classify and categorise these variants. The classifications vary between three main categories up to eleven depending on the scholar.[22]

Historical Institutionalism:

Historical institutionalism is one of the major branches of new institutional theory. As a research tradition, it studies how temporal processes influence the origin and evolution of institutions, thus the term "historical".[23] The simple premise of historical institutionalism is that a policy choice made at a certain juncture of time will have sustained and strong implication over future policies.[24] The theory relies

---

[21] Sven-Erik Sjöstrand, "Institutions as Infrastructures of Human Interaction," *Institutional Change: Theory and Empirical Findings*, 1993, 10.

[22] Peter A. Hall and Rosemary CR Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 936–957.

[23] Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falleti, and Adam Sheingate, "Historical Institutionalism in Political Science," *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*, 2016, 2.

[24] Theda Skocpol, "State Formation and Social Policy in the United States," *American Behavioral Scientist* 35, no. 4–5 (1992): 559–584; Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science*.

heavily on analytical tools such as path dependence and critical juncture to understand long term institutional resilience.

Path Dependence: As a borrowed concept from economics, path dependence has a substantial place in historical institutionalist analysis. Powell and DiMaggio indicate that some "...procedures and forms may persevere because of path-dependent patterns of development in which initial choices preclude future options...".[25] For some scholars, path dependence not only accounts for the persistence of institutions, it also explains why they continue to exist even after they stop having no use for individuals.[26]

The concept of path dependence indicates that some policy decisions embark upon a path that generates inertia and reversing a path once it is established becomes harder in time. Positive feedback is the causal mechanisms behind the establishment of the path. According to the theory when a policy decision becomes a source for increasing returns and prompts a flow of positive feedback, it becomes harder for the individuals to divert from the path.[27]

Critical Junctures: Another important concept is critical junctures as they represent the initial stage of path dependence. Collier and Collier, defined critical juncture

---

[25] Walter Powell, "Expanding the Scope of Institutional Analysis," *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis, Chicago*, 1991, 192.

[26] Fioretos, Falleti, and Sheingate, "Historical Institutionalism in Political Science," 10.

[27] Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton University Press, 2011).

"as a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies".[28] In other words, critical junctures are periods of time where the institutional constraints over the agency of individual are relaxed for reasons that can be explained by temporal and spatial reasons. This period allows free agency for individuals to create new institutions, or alter the old ones.

Capoccia and Kelemen argued that these junctures are relatively short periods of time where the influence of agency is free to act before the return or re-establishment of institutional constraints. Therefore, for the analysis of critical junctures, according to Capoccia and Kelemen, it is essential to determine permissive conditions and the role of agency during these periods.[29]

Soifer further dissects the concept and argues that there are two conditions essential to critical junctures.[30] First is the permissive condition where the institutional constraints are loosened on agency. The second is the productive conditions, that give rise to change. He explains these two conditions in his case study of the emergence of import substitution industrialisation in Latin America. In his study, he attributes the permissive conditions (relaxing institutional

---

[28] Ruth Berins Colliers and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991), 29.

[29] Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (2007): 348.

[30] Hillel David Soifer, "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 12 (2012): 1572–1597.

restraints) to the Great Depression and the Second World War, as for the production conditions, he proposes nationalist economic ideas.

Uncertainty and ideas: Mark Blyth, in *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change,* argues that "Knightian uncertainty" plays the key role during the critical junctures.[31] Drawing from Frank Knight, Blyth argues that during events (crises) that are considered unique by the contemporary agents, decision-making becomes more than a probability distribution calculation.[32] Unlike their routine decision-making processes, in a crisis the agents have no precedent to compare their contemporary experience with, so they cannot estimate the probable outcomes of their decisions. Neither their previous experiences nor the institutional constraints that are in place are adequate to provide guidance during times of crisis. The permissive condition of a critical juncture according to Blyth is this Knightian uncertainty in which institutional constraints are relaxed as they do not provide guidance.

During these periods of Knightian uncertainty, agents resort to ideas to make sense of the world. Ideas help the agents to develop "an interpretive framework" by defining the elements of reality and the proper and improper interrelations.[33] By providing a worldview, ideas reduce uncertainty for agents, help them with

---

[31] Mark Blyth, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[32] Frank Hyneman Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*, vol. 31 (Houghton Mifflin, 1921).

[33] Blyth, *Great Transformations*, 11.

decision-making and create new institutions. Thus ideas become an essential productive condition for institutional development during critical junctures.

Furthermore, ideas allow for another productive condition, collective action and coalition building. With the formation of the worldview, the agents can determine what their interests are and can go back to probability distribution calculations. A common understanding of reality promotes a specific solution to the crisis. It allows for the agents to gather around one solution that they see as more beneficial for themselves compared to others. This legitimises collective action and coalitions to increase returns.[34]

When the policy decision is made and new institutions emerge, ideas continue to be used as tools to provide institutional stability. They continue to generate conventions that help with coordinating agents' future expectations. Therefore, they contribute to the path dependency and stability of institutions.

Thesis Structure

This thesis project is structured to follow a historical progression. The first chapter will discuss the early years of the Russian revolution which created a Knightian uncertainty and allowed for the permissive conditions that gave a free hand to agency. The next three chapters will explain the productive conditions of ideas, agency and collation building that generated the path dependency. The next

---

[34] Blyth, 38–39.

chapter will then present the thickening path dependency process from Stalin to

the 2008 reforms. Finally, the last chapter will summarise the findings.

Chapter I - Rising Uncertainty

This chapter will be presenting the historical context that allowed for a critical juncture. The 1917 revolution was a result of the World War and presented the Bolsheviks with an opportunity to ride the wave of war-weariness and political and social upheaval. However, when the Bolsheviks found themselves as the nominal rulers of the country after their October 1917 coup, these grim realities that had helped them to seize the power became problems for them to resolve and the military was at the centre of them all. How to solve the issue of organising violence and defending themselves in the future brought about a Knightian uncertainty for the Bolsheviks.

The Birth Of The Red Army.

During the early days of March 1917, mass protests erupted in the streets of Petrograd, then the capital of the Russian Empire. The motive for protests at the surface was the food rationing, however, the actual reason was a culmination of war resentment, the declining living conditions, long term social conflict. Before long, the mutinous Petrograd garrison joined the protestors and eventually the four hundred years old rule of the Romanov family collapsed with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, bringing an end to the Russian Empire.

A brief interregnum followed this February Revolution. In due course, two separate political actors emerged as contenders for the control of the government and the state power. The ensuing eight months called the era of "dual power" (dvoyevlatiye) witnessed administrative upheaval and the erosion of state power.[35]

The first contender during this period was the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers', which was established ten days after the abdication of the Tsar. The Soviet (lit. council) claimed to be the representative body of the capital's proletariat and soldiers and had control over the crucial aspects of daily life and economy such as the trams, factories and railways.

Three days after the establishment of the Petrograd Soviet, the second contender, the official Provisional Government, was formed by the representative chamber of the parliament as the legitimate government of Russia. The primary task of this second contender for power was to oversee the organisation of elections and transition to a permanent government. Regardless of its transitional nature, the Provisional Government also had to deal with the social and economic turbulence and the ongoing war effort.

It did not take long for the news of the abdication and collapse of authority in Petrograd to reach the war-weary multi-million peasant army stationed at multiple fronts. The first reaction of the rank-and-file was to rejoice over the

---

[35] Rex A. Wade, *Red Guards and Workers' Militias in the Russian Revolution* (Stanford University, 1984), 35.

abdication and new freedoms. At first the officers were impressed by the tranquil reception of the news. This tranquillity, however, proved to be temporary. As a consequence of disillusionment of the protracted war, years of harsh disciplining and the social status difference between the commanding officers and their men. created a gulf between these two parties. With the breaking of the regular chain of command, the soldiers started to reveal their real sentiments. Soon the men turned against the unpopular officers, asking for them to be removed from command, and even be arrested. Many officers with disciplinarian attitudes or German-sounding names were arrested or had to go through other humiliation at the hands of their subordinates.[36]

Whilst the discipline of the front units started to crumble with the soldiers discovering new political rights, the Petrograd Soviet issued its infamous "Order No. 1.".[37] In its essence the Order was most likely a response to the chaotic situation ensuing in the capital. The main intention of the Order was to discipline the troops stationed in Petrograd, make them return to their garrisons and hand over the weapons they confiscated which they were freely displaying around the city in the vehicles they randomly commandeered.[38] However, contrary to its intentions, the document had a universally destructive impact on the overall army organisation. The Order demanded election of representative committees in all army and naval units from amongst the rank and file. These elected committees

---

[36] John R. Boyd, "The Origins of Order No. 1," *Soviet Studies* 19, no. 3 (2007): 359–72, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136808410599.
[37] Francesco BenvenutiZ, *The Bolsheviks and the Red Army, 1918-1922* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5.
[38] John R. Boyd, "The Origins of Order No. 1," *Soviet Studies* 19, no. 3 (1968): 359–372.

from then onwards were responsible for the control of all arms including "rifles, machine guns, armoured vehicles and others" and under no circumstance would issue these to officers. The men no longer had to salute or stand at attention when they were off duty, but had to follow the "strictest discipline" when conducting their service responsibilities. The exalted titles of the officers were abolished by the Order and it was prohibited for officers to use the informal "you" (ty) when addressing the soldiers.[39] The military hierarchy, rules and norms and harsh punishments were not the only sources of the legitimate authority of the Russian officer; it also depended on the social status of his being elevated above his subordinates. The Order No. 1. was a deadly threat to all these sources of authority of the officer.

The soldiers still held their positions against the enemy offensives, and were happy under the command of popular officers. Ways of mutual existence established between the officers and the committees and much like the rest of the country the 'dual power' became the norm in the military. At first the Provisional Government held some credibility amongst the rank and file, however, in time soldiers started to associate themselves more with the Petrograd Soviet. Even after this stabilisation of the situation, lynching of officers (mainly at the rear) and mass desertion still remained a threat to military unity. Desertion numbers were around

---

[39] Allan Wildman, "The February Revolution in the Russian Army," *Soviet Studies* 22, no. 1 (1970): 13–15.

100,000 to 150,000 men during March and this number increased during and after the July offensive.[40]

In the meantime, not trusting the military, the Petrograd Soviet was busy debating the establishment of their paramilitary units drawn from the class conscious workers. After long and arduous deliberations and debates, the Petrograd Soviet failed to establish a centralised paramilitary force. Concurrently, the local Soviets took the initiative, establishing their own local Red Guard units around the country. The Bolshevik dominated Vyborg District Soviet was one such example, and their model became a blueprint for the later Red Guard formations.[41]

In the middle of the chaotic dual-power era, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Kornilov, attempted to a carry out a military coup against the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet. The September attempt fell through resulting with breaking of the last bond between the officers and soldiers, and mass desertions. The socialists interpreted Kornilov's failed coup attempt as the long anticipated military counter-revolution, and the preservation of the revolution became a major concern. The Kornilov affair helped with the mobilisation of the workers and Bolsheviks played an important role after that moment in organising the Red Guard and giving it a prominently Bolshevik character.

---

[40] Wildman, 17.
[41] Wade, *Red Guards and Workers' Militias in the Russian Revolution*, 80–100.

IN early morning of the 7th of November 1917, the Bolsheviks initiated their plan for seizing power and becoming the sole ruler of the country. With the help of the Kronstadt Sailors and Red Guards, they managed to raid the seat of the Provincial Government headed by Krensky, at the Winter Palace.[42] The capital fell with little resistance to Bolshevik control. Taking control of the rest of Russia proved to be only slightly harder. The armed resistance in Moscow lasted only a few days. Kerensky's attempt to retake the Petrograd with the help of General Krasnov and his Cossacks was repulsed by the Red Guard and other Bolshevik loyalists

Even though the Bolsheviks renamed the country Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) as soon as they came to power, the actual power consolidation process took time. In this period, the Red Guard and the other pro-Bolshevik forces like the Latvian Rifle Regiment and Kronstadt Sailors proved more than enough to fight against any internal resistance. Although there were local attempts of resistance coming from the military, there was no unified reaction, as at this stage the military barely existed as a unified body of force.

As the Bolsheviks, in their bid for power, promised to withdraw from the unpopular imperialist war, another wave of mass desertion followed their ascension to power. The soldiers did not want to continue fighting for a cause that even their own government did not believe in anymore. The new government named itself Soviet of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) and made its intentions

---

[42] D. N. Collins, "A Note on the Numerical Strength of the Russian Red Guard in October 1917," *Soviet Studies* 24, no. 2 (1972): 270–80.

of withdrawing from the war clear by issuing the Decree on Peace one day after seizure of power. Two weeks later, on the 23rd of November, the government issued another decree declaring the commencement of gradual demobilisation of the army. In less than a month, Russia signed an armistice with the Central Powers, and started the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk.

There were other reasons for the hasty withdrawal from war and the disbanding of the army. The Bolsheviks still had deep concerns about the officers, and potential counterrevolutionary action from the army. Additionally, the army represented everything they stood against as an imperialistic apparatus of suppression. The old Ministry of War was renamed the People's Commissariat For War and one of its first acts was to appoint a Bolshevik ensign, Nikolai Krylenko as the head of the military.[43] This symbolic gesture itself was enough to explain the Bolshevik resentment of the officer class.

While dissolving the old army, there was an expectation amongst the Bolsheviks that a Europe wide revolution was around the corner. The proletariat of other developed countries, impressed by the Russian example, was going to rise against the ruling classes and construct socialism. Whilst waiting for the worldwide revolution to come, they slowly realised that, until then, the revolution needed to defend its gains in Russia against domestic and foreign enemies. The old army barely existed and was unreliable so in order to accomplish this task there was a

---

[43] Roger R. Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991* (Routledge, 2002), 7.

need for a new sort of military organisation, a 'Socialist army'. At the 3rd All-Russian Congress of Soviets, Lenin advocated for the need for the establishment of a new "Socialist army" as the Red Guard units would not be sufficient for the task of defending the revolution.[44]

In the meantime, the ongoing negotiations with the Central Powers reached a stalemate because Germany was demanding broad territorial concessions from Russia. Germany was also backing its demands with force and threatening that if the Russian side refused the concessions, Germany would resume its advance.

The Bolsheviks were in no position to resist a German assault as they had virtually no military organisation left to fight with. The new Socialist military that Lenin was arguing for was hastily formed under these threatening conditions. On 28th January, 1918, the Bolshevik government signed a decree that instituted their new military organisation, called The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (RKKA). This Socialist army was to be a voluntary organisation based on democratic principles. The army was only open to the most class conscious workers and peasants. The soldiers were to elect their unit commanders, the committees were to carry on with representing the collective rights of the enlisted men and there was to be no rank system.[45] The pro-Bolshevik remnants of the old military and the Red Guard units

---

[44] John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941* (Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 19.
[45] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti. T. I. 25 Oktabra 1917 g. – 16 Marta 1918 g*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1957), 352–58.

were combined with the new volunteers in a make-shift manner in a very decentralised organisation.

Still expecting a world revolution, the Bolsheviks tried to delay the negotiations with the Central Powers. They were especially betting on the internal instability of Germany. With the aim of delaying negotiations, Trotsky delivered the famous "no war, no peace" ultimatum and left the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. Germany countered this ultimatum by initiating a full-scale offensive towards inland Russia. The Bolshevik attempts to slow down the German advance were futile and soon the capital was in reach of the German army. With drastic measures of transferring the capital from Petrograd to Moscow, the Bolsheviks tried to gain time. Nevertheless without the expected revolution starting in Germany, the hopeless Bolsheviks finally capitulated and accepted the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3rd of March 1918. The RSFSR forfeited 60 percent of Russia's European territory, including the entire Ukraine, Poland and Baltic provinces.[46]

The losses of territory, industry and population were devastating for the new republic. This devastation also brought an end to the Socialist military experiment of a volunteer army composed of class conscious workers based on democratic principles.

---

[46] Condoleezza Rice, "The Making of Soviet Strategy," *Makers of Modern Strategy* 657 (1986): 649.

The Trotsky Restoration

The reliability of the Brest-Litovsk treaty was questionable, and there was still a strong likelihood that Germany would behave aggressively towards the new Russian Republic. There were also indications that the Allied Powers were not happy with the withdrawal of Russia from the war and were considering interventions to topple the Bolshevik government.

The Bolsheviks were quick to realise the dire circumstances they were in. The Red Army needed restructuring and strengthening if the Soviet government wanted to stay in power. One day after the ratification of the treaty, Sovnarkom established the Supreme Military Soviet as the first step towards the centralisation of the operational command of the Red Army. During the 7th Party Congress, Lenin stated that the new peace treaty provided the Bolsheviks with breathing-space, and it was essential to utilise this time to discipline troops and give the masses military training.

Within ten days Trotsky left his post as the Commissar for the Foreign Affairs and became the People's Commissar for Military Affairs taking over the colossal task of moulding out a centralised and disciplined fighting organisation from the disorganised Red Army. During his speech at the Moscow Soviet meeting on March 19, Trotsky declared the need of a "well-organised military" as the "conditions unheard in terms of difficulty surrounds us".[47] The move towards a

---

[47] Leon Trotsky, *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1923), 25.

disciplined, unified force entailed changes that were against Bolshevik principles and sounded more like the old Imperial Army. However, the Bolsheviks had to compromise in the face of necessity. In the first two months of Trotsky as the Commissar, torrent of decrees were issued that were indeed considerable compromises. The previously implemented democratic practices such as election of officers and representative committees were immediately revoked. Regional Military Commissariats were organised to centralise the command and streamline the lines of authority. At all levels of the military structure, the authority was handed over to the commanders. To fix the quantitative and qualitative shortcomings of the volunteer system, compulsory military training of civilians and compulsory conscription was instigated. The military training was universal ta all males between the ages of 18 and 40 and place outside work hours. But the draft was still not open to all sections of the society; only workers and poor peasants (no rich, labour hiring peasants - 'kulaks') were conscripted. Poor or not, the conscription of the peasants was a compromise, as the number of workers was not sufficient for manning the military. The Bolsheviks were aware that they could not rely on the peasants to fight for them as much as they could rely on the workers.

The first push for conscription between June and August mobilised 540,000 men.[48] By the end of 1918 this number increased to 800,000 men. The following year the Red Army had more than three million men under arms. Around 75 percent of the

---

[48] Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience*, 12.

army was composed of peasants, and this percentage remained high for years to come. Equally high were the concerns for the reliability of these peasants. There was often a tense relationship between the proletariat soldiers, NCOs, officers and their peasant comrades in arms. Desertion remained a problem during the Civil War. Most peasants had concerns about their lands and agricultural activities like harvest and sowing. This was another reason for low level trust in the peasants.[49]

Arguably the most controversial decision the most far-reaching effect was the call for the tsarist officers to take command positions. It was possible to create units of armed men by conscription, but there was still the problem of training these men during peacetime and commanding them during combat. The need for people with knowledge and experience was a pressing one. Before the Red Army could train and deploy its own "Red commanders" (Kraskom) in sufficient numbers, the most expedient solution was to reach for the tsarist military professionals. The plan to recruit what Trotsky called the "military specialists" (voenspetsy) caused havoc within the Party. Even though in reality the officers of the Imperial Army were coming from divergent backgrounds, in the eyes of the Bolsheviks represented either bourgeoisie or aristocracy. The recruitment of ex-NCOs was more palatable because of their lower social class backgrounds. The resistance to this policy was strong and had a long-lasting impact in Soviet politics. Despite the vigorous resistance from the party, Lenin gave his personal support to this policy and Sovnarkom approved its implementation. With the Order No. 228.[Find the

---

[49] Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience*.

reference] mobilisation of ex-officers and NCOs started in mid-1918. By August 1920, the number of ex-officers serving in the Red Army was 48,409 and NCOs over 200,000. Many prominent names like Svechin, and Tukhachevskii were from the ex-Imperial officer stock and others like Budenny were ex-NCOs who were given an opportunity of promotion into junior command.[50]

The policy was implemented, but the concern for reliability of these officers remained an issue. The dual-command structure was issued to solve this problem of reliability. In this command structure, below the regiment level, a political officer called military commissar (*voennyi komissar*, *voenkom*) was assigned as a supervisor to the military specialist. Every order by the commander needed to be reviewed and approved by the military commissar to become official. At the front, and army levels, a Revolutionary Military Council (*Revvoensovet)* composed of two military commissars and one military specialist were to make joint decisions. All fronts were in turn were subject to the decisions of the Revvoensovet of the Red Army, established in September 1918 and chaired by Trotsky himself.[51]

Almost every aspect of Trotsky's restructuring of the Red Army was against the Bolshevik worldview. As we will see further, protests coming from within the party against the nature of this new military establishment and Trotsky's pragmatism ultimately gave birth to the 'Left' military opposition. However, this

---

[50] Reese.

[51] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*.

was the army that defended the Union and the Bolsheviks for the next three years during the Civil War against the White Army alliance.[52]

The Civil War

The Red Army was going through the restructuring process under Trotsky when the first major confrontations of the Civil War started in 1918 when the Czechoslovak legion revolted. It is beyond the scope of this study to detail the intricate history of the Russian Civil War, but it is essential to discuss some specifics of the conflict to develop a comprehension of the future events. The geography and social realities of Russia determined the character of combat operations during the Russian Civil War. The geography on which the conflict took place was vast. It covered multiple fronts that stretched for hundreds of kilometres. The sides of the conflict even at the height of their strength had trouble assembling enough force to stabilise the fronts. Besides its size, the geography lacked the features that can provide defensive positions for armies to fall back. On both sides, the majority of the troops were conscripts from peasantry, who lacked proper training and were devoid of supply. Most were more concerned about their families and homes, rather than the ongoing political struggle. As a result, the soldier's morale was persistently low. The combination of these factors led to mobile and fluid combat dynamics. The low troop to space ratio only

---

[52] Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Harvard University Press, 1979), 11.

allowed for sparsely manned fronts, and combined with the low morale of the troops it was easy for the fronts to collapse under offensive. As both the Red and White armies lacked reserves to spare, it was impossible to hold the line once a gap opened. There was no natural geographic feature that allowed the armies to regroup and be used as ramparts, therefore, in some instances once the front collapsed, the army in the offensive advanced for months and hundreds of kilometres.[53] Advances, however, came to a halt as the lines of communication stretched and armies exhausted. Then the adversary started their counterattack and the same dynamic took place, this time, however, in the other direction. This fluidity and the mobile character of the conflict had a remarkable influence on some sections of the Red Army leadership. The future debates over the changing character of the war and its necessities had the mark of Civil War.

These debates were already taking place during the war, especially in the 8th Congress in 1919, the 'military opposition' raised their voices against Trotsky's handling of the matters. Some Bolsheviks vehemently argued for replacing the military specialists with communists. Others argued against the harsh discipline. [54] It was Lenin's support that allowed for Trotsky to continue with his policies for the time being.

---

[53] David R. Stone, *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006), 21.
[54] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 46–47.

By the end of 1920, there were 5.5 million people in the Red Army.[55] The economy was in dire conditions and it was not possible to maintain an army of this magnitude. It was necessary to demobilise millions of troops and determine the principles for the further construction of military.

Conclusion

The First World War and the revolutionary period following the war shook the foundations of many institutions in Russia, and the military was not exempt from these disruptions. The decade long period of chaos created the permissive conditions, as defined by Soifer, where institutional constraints decayed and allowed for the new institutions to be established. The permissive conditions of this temporal stage made it possible for the Bolsheviks to change the institutional structure of the military and the defence apparatus.

However, the military was the frontline for the defence of the new nation and the future prospects of the new regime. Thus, it was imperative to make the right decision when restructuring these essential institutions. Whilst the permissive conditions created an opportunity for the Bolsheviks, this opportunity was high risk, high return. The right institutional configuration was to provide the security for the revolution and gain time for it to fully bloom; conversely, the wrong decision would mean the end of it and the loss of all gains. Furthermore, the unprecedented nature of the socio-economical and geopolitical conditions of the

---

[55] Vitaly Zharkov and Dimitry Malakhov, "Struktura Vooruzhennyh Sil v 1920-e Gg," *Jaroslavskii Pedagogicheskii Vestnik* 1, no. 2 (2014).

revolutionary times made it impossible for the Bolsheviks to calculate which institutional configuration for the military was best, as there were no similar historical example which they can compare their experience against and calculate the risks.

This was a situation of Knightian uncertainty for the Bolshevik decision-makers but as we shall see in the next chapter, Marxist-Leninist ideas created the 'productive conditions' and helped them to find their way in the darkness.

Chapter II - Ideology As A Guide

By 1921, the Bolsheviks mostly succeeded to crush the resistance of the White Army and other adversaries, and the Civil War nominally came to an end[56]. However, the end of the Civil War (1918-21) was not the end of Bolshevik troubles. Now they had to consider what they should do with the military force under their command.

For most Bolsheviks, a standing army with hierarchical command and discipline was against the tenets of socialism. On top of that the deployment of the 'military experts' in the ranks of the Red Army were an abomination. Now that the danger of internal armed opposition mostly averted, it was time to make decision on these matters.

This was a moment of Knightian uncertainty for the Bolsheviks. The future of their republic relied on the ability of the military to defend themselves against the prospective domestic and external aggressions. The abysmal performance of the Red Guard militia against the German advance in 1918 and the humiliation of Brest-Litovsk was still fresh in their memories. They now had a Red Army which

---

[56] Smaller armed confrontations lasted until 1922.

won the Civil War for them but resembled the most detestable Imperial Army. Also, in its current state, the Red Army was open to abuse by officers with Bonapartist ambitions. For the Bolsheviks at that moment there was no certainty over how the organisation of violence should take place. The old institutions were not providing a framework for decision-making. Under these permissive conditions, the Marxist tradition with its Leninist interpretation, provided some Bolsheviks with an explanation of the world that would help them to find a way out of the uncertainty.

From Hegel To Marx, Conflict:

It is often suggested that Marx was deeply influenced by the Hegelian dialectics.[57] The particular inspiration for Marx, while developing his own analysis of social change, was the master-slave dialectic proposed by Hegel. In an early section of *Phenomenology*, Hegel narrates a conflictual relationship between two self-consciousnesses through what is called the 'master-slave dialectic'.[58]

His basic premise relies on the idea that self-recognition is only achieved through mutual recognition of another. In the master-slave story, two consciousnesses have no self-recognition until they come into contact with each other. Prior to that point, each accepted themselves as the sole measure of all things and their observations as the standard of the objective truth. Ensuing their encounter each

---

[57] Jean Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel* (London: Heinemann., 1969), 29; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (London: Routledge, 1958), 237.

[58] G. W. F. HEGEL, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. MILLER (Oxford University Press, 1977).

consciousness recognised that there are other standards of objective truth beyond themselves. This acknowledgment is the genesis of self-consciousness as once one discovers other subjective claims for objective truth, then and only then one apprehend their subjectivity.

With the genesis of the self-consciousness following this first encounter, a struggle to death starts between the two opposing self-consciousnesses. The reason for this conflict is the desire to be the one and only measure of objective standard by each self-consciousness. The desire to be recognised as the unique self-consciousness, however, stops the victor of the conflict just short of killing the vanquished adversary. In order to get the satisfaction of recognition, the victor still requires the existence of the vanquished.

With the conclusion of the conflict, the victor becomes the master and the vanquished the subjugated slave. From that moment onwards, the master gets the instant satisfaction of receiving recognition as the measure of the objectivity from the slave. In return, the slave becomes an object that provides labour in order to satisfy the insatiable needs of their master. The slave recognises their fragility in life and their dependence on the whims of the master for their survival. Even though the master seems like the winner at that stage, the dialectic does not end there, and progresses towards another stage via the slave. The labour prompts a new level of recognition in the self-consciousnesses of the slave. Through their labour, the slave realises that they can extend their self-consciousness to their creations. Their ideas find an objective independence in the chair they build or the

food they cook. In the course of their work, the slave starts to recognise the objects produced by them are actually externalised versions of themselves and independent of the master's objective standards. The slave gains more knowledge about the material world and shapes it in his reality. Whilst the slave is developing themselves, the master lacks the knowledge of the world. Slowly the slave starts to shape the master's reality through their labour. Eventually, both the master and the slave become aware of the fact that the master depends as much on the slave to survive. The cycle of dialectic ends with the slave and master having a new setup of power relations.

For Hegel the progress of history towards the betterment of human kind was the product of this dialectic. Accordingly, for Marx a similar dialectic was propelling history. In his case the conflict ridden master-slave dialectic ultimately reaches an insurmountable level and generates revolutionary wars.

Marx approached the master-slave dialectic from a materialistic perspective and introduced the key concept of alienation. In an early treatise, *The German Ideology,* co-authored with Engels, they suggest that the private ownership of the means of production is the origin of alienation of the master and slave from each other.[59] As the master owns the means of production, they lose their touch with the labour and the world whilst collecting almost all the gains of the slave's labour. On the other hand, the slave gets to become the expert of labour, but receives almost

---

[59] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 19–21.

nothing for it. Both parties become alienated from each other, as they understand each other less over time. Both parties also clash with each other to protect their interests in the class struggle.

For Marx, this alienation and class struggle has existed in each epoch of history, culminating in revolutions, disposing of the master and progression of history. In the capitalist economic era, the mass means of production and the desire of the bourgeoise to reap maximum amount of surplus value from the workers, causes the worker to alienate from the products of their labour. Unlike Hegel's narrative, in the capitalist era the product is not the extension of the self-consciousness of the slave but the design of the master. Therefore in capitalism, the labourer cannot realise their self-consciousness. The only way the worker can realise their potential is to become a self-conscious proletariat and ultimately via a revolution gain the control over the means of production. In Marx' view of history, the conflict is an essential and a progressive element of human existence. This dialectic process repeats itself over time, the last instance of which had been the French Revolution when the progressive forces tore down the feudal means of production.

In Marxian understanding, war in its essence is a vile thing that needs to be eradicated. In many instances the ruling class instigate wars for the purpose of protecting their class interests. [60]To fight for their "unjust" wars, the ruling classes swindle the exploited classes such as the case of the nationalist war between

---

[60] Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France," in *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, vol. 22 (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), 307–59.

France and Prussia in 1871. For the eradication of this evil, history needs to progress and culminate in a classes society (a society with no private ownership of means of production) and the path to this progression paradoxically requires progressive armed struggle waged by the exploited classes. The only way to achieve progressive results is through the self-actualisation of the proletariat and to fight a "just" war against the exploiting class. Only then can the slave overcome the master, and progress to next and the final stage of history where no private ownership and master exists.

How To Organise Violence?

Conflict being a necessary element for the progression of humanity, not surprisingly, brought up the question of how violence should be organised. Two schools of thought emerged amongst the socialists in their search for a response. The first believed in regular military formations as a way of organisation and the second argued for citizen militia formations.

Engels and the regulars: It is famously declared by Peter Vigor that Marx and Engels had a division of labour on the matters of military. Whilst Marx wrote about the political and economic causes of warfare, Engels penned works of differing lengths on the technical aspects of war. [61] The first school of thought on the form of military is sourced from his words.

---

[61] Peter Vigor, *The Soviet View of War, Peace and Neutrality* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

Engels considered himself a military expert based on his (rather short) military service and work as a war correspondent. He actually had extensive knowledge and interest in the technical aspects of militaries of his time, and a clear foresight for the future aspects of warfare.[62] For Engels the 'industry of death' was the optimal arena to observe the interaction between material progression, change in technology and social structure.[63]

In *Anti-Dühring* he argued that elements like armaments, composition and tactics of a military all depend on the level of production and communications.[64] According to him, material realities and the social change give birth to a new type of fighter and thus, dictate how the militaries behave.

Based on his own experiences and his analysis of the material and social realities of his time, Engels challenged the viability of a militia army. He harboured contempt for the amateur soldier which he deemed an incapable fighting force. Discussing the militia armies of the Union and Confederacy in the American Civil War, he articulated his belief that accepting these armies as a blueprint for the future of military was absurd. Engels argued that either army could be easily

---

[62] Martin Berger, "Engels' Theory of the Vanishing Army: A Key to the Development of Marxist Revolutionary Tactics," *The Historian* 37, no. 3 (May 1, 1975): 422–25.

[63] Friedrich Engels, "Anti Dühring," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 25 (Moscow: Progress Publishing, 1975), 289.

[64] Engels, "Anti Dühring."

defeated by a well trained professional standing army.[65] For him the amateur soldier learning his trade at work, in the battlefield, was a recipe for disaster.[66]

For Engels, a standing army populated with soldiers who have gone through lengthy and extensive training was the only viable fighting organisation at the time. However, this kind of a military force had its own problems. When discussing the Prussian standing army, he postulated that it was designed as a force for the ruling class to suppress the democratic opposition at home. With this intention; the officer corps was kept as a professional class; the pedantic and antiquated drills were imposed on citizen soldiers; and any discipline was provided by the harshest means possible.[67] Other than being a tool to oppress the progressive forces, a standing army of this composition could always have been used by the ruling classes to wage wars of aggression where the subjugated classes perish. The possibility of the military deciding on its own to gain control of politics by military coups was also amongst the possible risks.

As a cure for militarisation, Engels believed in universal military service by citizens. A universal service was to bring the rebellious elements into the army.[68] Because of the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds, universal

[65] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, vol. 32 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 20.

[66] Friedrich Engels, "The Prussian Military Question and the (German Workers' Party)," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 20 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975).

[67] Friedrich Engels, "The Armies of Europe," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 14 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 401–70.

[68] Friedrich Engels, "The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 10 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 147–239.

service was much like universal suffrage.[69] In the service of protecting their own interests, soldiers would raise their voices and stand against any aggressive war or military coup attempt and eventually democratise the military itself. As an additional benefit, more workers would get accustomed to military tactics and technology. This would provide the basis for the armed revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. When the working classes reach a true consciousness "the armies of princes become transformed into armies of the people; the machine refuses to work, and militarism collapses by the dialectic of its own evolution".[70] Engels believed that the social and material state of the world made it essential to have a standing army that has universal military service. When the current situation changed through the progressive force of dialectics, and the societies were organised and educated in communist lines, it would then be possible to rely on militia organisations.

Proponents of militia: The second school of thought was arguing for militia rather than standing army. Being inspired by the pacifist movements of the late 19th century, the belief in militia and resistance to the idea of standing army was wide spread amongst the socialists in early 20th century. The belief in militia was so prominent that the party platform adopted by the Social-Democratic Worker's Party of Germany under August Babel's leadership, the so called Gotha

---

[69] Engels, "The Prussian Military Question and the (German Workers' Party)."
[70] Engels, "Anti Dühring," 158.

programme, had the dissolution of the standing army in favour of a people's militia as one of its aims.

Jean Jaurés, prior to the First World War, advanced the idea of creating a purely defensive militia organisation. The majority of the militia force would remain as reserves and the frontier guards would keep their arms at home.[71]

Karl Liebknecht wrote extensively on militarism. The army in the capitalist setup served double purposes according to him. The mainly promoted purpose of the military was to provide protection against the external enemy. However, this supposed purpose only serves the interests of the ruling capitalist classes, and the interests of the proletariat presupposes an anti-military stance. Militarism as a second purpose is a tool for the ruling class to defend themselves against the internal enemy. By appealing for notions like 'military spirit' and the use of uniforms or harsh rules of discipline and punishment, the workers are decoupled from their class identities. This process of alienation ultimately moulds soldiers who are ready and eager to fight against their own brothers. As an antidote to militarism, Liebknecht promoted a lengthy program of anti-militarism which would eventually lead to international disarmament.[72]

Lenin was also a supporter of the militia. In 1903 he proposed that "a standing army is an army that is divorced from the people and trained to shoot down the

---

[71] Jean Jaurès and G. G. 1858-1947 Coulton, *Democracy and Military Service; an Abbreviated Translation of the "Armée Nouvelle"* (Palala Press, 2015).
[72] Karl Liebknecht, *Militarism And Anti-Militarism* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2011).

people."[73] Like Liebknecht, the inhumane drills imposed on the soldiers made them turn against their own. So if "[a] standing army is not needed in the least to protect the country from attack by an enemy; a people's militia is sufficient."[74] The protection of Russia can be provided if all its citizens are armed, and no more needed the control of the military clique who were a burden on the people.

Theory of Imperialism

Theory of Imperialism and militarisation: As we have previously discussed, many Bolsheviks related themselves with the anti-militarist and militia school. Until the early years of the First World War Lenin was also in this group and argued for the superiority of the militia. What changed their mind in due course was the theory of imperialism which allowed them to come to terms with the standing army as it was proposed by Engels.

The Austrian Marxist, Rudolf Hilferding has developed his theory of financial capital in the early 20th century. The economic resurgence during the last quarter of the 19th century in the Austria-Hungary Empire gave rise to a highly cartelised economy. [75] This economic environment was Hilferding's inspiration for developing his theory of finance.

---

[73] V. I. Lenin, "To the Rural Poor," in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 399.

[74] Lenin, 399.

[75] Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (Routledge, 1998), 361.

In *Finance Capital: A Study in the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development*, Hilferding proposed that capitalism had undergone structural changes during the last quarter of the 19th century.[76] These structural changes, by deteriorating the competitive aspect of liberal capitalism, increased centralisation of the capital. The fundamental feature of this new stage, according to Hilferding, was the expanding ties between banking capital and industrial capital which was the genesis of financial capital. With the birth of financial capitals, monopolies and the concentration of the banking sectors became a dominant economic actor. The role of banks transformed during the last quarter of the 19th century. The centralisation of banking capital during this period shifted banks from being institutions that issued short term credits into long term creditors. Consequently, the banks started to become involved in the matters of management of their debtors to guarantee the return of their investment. Through this involvement and power to issue and withdrawal credit from industry, banking capital got to dominate the industrial capital. The shareholders of banks increasingly established control over both banks and industry and became financial tycoons. These tycoons lobbied extensively for protectionist policies domestically in order to increase the profits for monopolies under their control. However, the limited nature of the domestic markets and the need for capitalist industries to increase the surplus value compelled the finance capital to extend its influence beyond domestic markets into non-industrialised ones. For the purpose of domestic protectionism and accessing

---

[76] Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital: A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

49

foreign markets, finance capital advocated for increasing the role and power of the state. The increasing influence of finance capital therefore coincided with the growth of state and its military power. Domestically, a stronger state secured protectionist policies and hindered the domestic market being taken over by foreign industrial products and finance capital. Furthermore, externally it assured the optimum way to broaden the market and acquire cheap raw materials necessary for industrial production, by colonial expansion into non-industrialised areas of the world. Accordingly, finance capital advocated for increasing military spending and imperialist expansionism. According to Hilferding, this militarisation of industrialised societies to protect the interests of finance capital, would end with devastating conflicts amongst the imperialist powers. The disputes over colonial market share would inadvertently kindle these conflicts. The augmented reliance on military by imperialist powers in order to protect their interests would undoubtedly transform these conflicts into major wars. The resulting devastation would be the catalyst for all exploited classes to join proletariat forces in a revolution toppling finance capitalists.

Hilferding's finance capital and its imperialist reflections was a powerful theory that found supporters in the socialist circles around the world. The revolutionary conclusions of Hilferding's imperialism was especially valuable for them. The idea of a revolution was no longer a distant ideal the proletariat had to wait for. Thanks to the finance capital, the over-accumulation of capital which Marx had foreseen as the dissolution of capitalism, was rapidly taking place. Simultaneously, through

imperialism, capitalist societies were racing towards a catastrophe which would speed up the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Rather than docile waiting, it was now the duty of the proletariat to oppose imperialism and explain its ills to the other classes, as only by this activism could they form a wide enough base that would support them after the devastation.

Austrian Marxist theoretician Karl Kautsky was one of the supporters of the theory of finance capital and imperialism. However, his conclusions were more optimistic on the possibility of capitalists coming to an agreement rather than fighting a cataclysmic war. Just before the eruption of the First World War, Kautsky penned his article *Ultra-imperialism* where he concurred with Hilferding on imperialism being the final episode of capitalism.[77] However, for him, imperialism had stages in itself. In the next phase of imperialism, it was possible for the imperialist powers reach to an agreement to establish a super 'trust'. This global trust would decelerate militarisation and thus a global imperialist war would be avoided.

Lenin, Imperialism And War

Prior to the First World War, matters of military were not of major interest to Lenin. He published very little on the subject and on those works, he argued for the sufficiency of militia as a defensive force. However, with the outbreak of the First World War, socialist internationalism disintegrated. The European proletariat, rather than standing together against the war, joined the ranks of the

---

[77] "Karl Kautsky: Ultra-Imperialism (1914)," accessed October 7, 2020, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1914/09/ultra-imp.htm.

bourgeoisie in a reactionary war.[78] This incident forced Lenin to reconsider the internationalist tenets of socialism and reevaluate his opinions on war and military. At that point the theory of imperialism provided a lifeline for him to reinterpret the future role of the proletariat and possibility of revolution.

Drawing heavily from Hilferding and liberal economists such as Hobson, he published his analysis of imperialism in his famous article titled *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.[79] There, Lenin vehemently argued against Kautsky's prediction of peaceful future for imperialism. Unlike Kautsky, he believed war was inevitable because of the structural dynamics of capitalism. His main theory was that the economic contradictions of capitalism only allowed for unbalanced economic growth. This was valid not only for the asymmetry of development between non-industrialised and industrialist nations, but also for the economic development of rivalling industrialised imperialist countries. Because of this uneven economic growth, the hierarchy amongst the imperial powers was destined to continuously fluctuate. In such circumstances, any agreement between two or more imperialist powers could only be temporary truces rather than a permanent state of affairs. The change in the power balance sourced from economic development assured for the disturbance of equilibrium between the

---

[78] V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and War," in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 295–338.

[79] V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 667–766.

allies and their being forced to constantly turn against each other. Thus, no global trust and ultra-imperialism was possible, and the only possible future was conflict.

The ongoing Great War was a representative case of imperialist confrontations. In reference to Clausewitz's famous maxim, Lenin declared that the war was a continuation of politics by other means. However, for him it was essential to understand that these politics were determined by the dominant classes. In the case of the Great War, the politics that were pursued by other means were determined by the capitalist class. Therefore, the Great War was the continuation of the same imperialist policy the capitalists had been pursuing albeit in a different form. In its essence the current war was a class struggle and the European social democrats and proletariat failed to grasp this.

The collaborative attitude of the European working class with capitalists in the war made Lenin look to other areas of the world for support for the revolution. For him imperialism, by extending capitalism beyond Europe and integrating non-industrialised areas into its economic structure, increased the number of possible allies of the proletariat. The uneven development of the economy was causing resentments against the capitalist classes around the world. Prior to this, the revolution was expected to take place in industrial Europe as it had a strong working class. This revolution was then to spread through the world. Nevertheless, with the imperialist expansion, reaction against capitalist classes and their interests became universal. The resentful progressive forces like peasants in non-industrialised countries where the proletariat class was insignificant, and

their nationalist liberation struggles, could now be considered allies. From that moment onwards the Social Democrats should appeal to the national liberation movements in colonial countries and integrate them into the international class struggle. It was time to recognise the policing action in colonies by colonisers as wars of subjugation and part of class struggle.

The uneven development theory also allowed Lenin to propose that a universal proletariat revolution was not necessary anymore. Because of different levels of economic development, it was possible for countries to be in different stages of history. The revolutionary victory of socialism was therefore possible in only one or a few capitalist countries at first.[80] Once the proletariat established their dictatorship and organised their means of production, it would then be possible for them to stand up against the rest of the (capitalist) world. The proletariat of such a country should unite the oppressed classes of the rest of the world, instigate uprisings and even use its military force against exploiting classes Previous Marxist analysis accepted the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in a more localised manner, specific mostly to Europe. The revolution was meant to take place in industrial countries with the joint supranational effort of the proletariat. The theory of imperialism with his own alterations allowed Lenin to extend the borders of the class struggle to cover the whole world. Whilst globalising the class struggle, his theory also allowed for localised revolutions.

---

[80] V. I. Lenin, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe," in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 339–43.

Following the revolution for the Bolsheviks, the new Soviet Republic became the fulfilment of this possibility of local revolution. However, their republic was surrounded by imperialist countries who were, as Lenin warned, more than ready to use violence to achieve their political goals (the interests of their ruling capitalist classes). A coexistence of their system alongside the imperialist countries who were dividing the world between themselves was unthinkable. A proletariat dictatorship was a nuisance for imperialists as it blocked the market and raw material access to the regions under its control. It also represented a classless society which was a threat to the bourgeoise in other countries. In due course imperialists would turn against the Soviets and a clash was inevitable. From the dialectics of Hegel to Marx conflict was at the centre of development. For Bolsheviks, the only way to end conflict was to abolish the class struggle and demilitarise. The idea of a people's militia was an appealing idea in pursuit of the ultimate good and it appealed to their democratic sensibilities. Following their seizure of power, the years of crisis instigated uncertainty amongst their ranks about the issues of a military. Lenin's theory of imperialism came to their help and became the light that illuminated the path ahead. It was Lenin's ideas that reduced uncertainty, made collective action and coalition building possible and which institutionalised the Red Army. In other words these ideas were the first set of productive conditions that created the building blocks of the new military institution. Lenin's ideas shaped the Bolshevik threat perception by sowing the seeds of inevitable war between them and imperialism. They triggered an alarmist

perspective that necessitated a large standing force, in a state of constant readiness

to defend the nation against the inevitable imperialist aggression.

Chapter III - The Debate Over the Structure

This chapter will be exploring how the Marxist-Leninist ideas found place in the debate over how the military should be organised and led to formation of coalitions.

Debate Over the Organisation of the Military

The end of the Civil War restarted the debate over the ideal structure of the Red Army. Contrary to the standards he set as the head of the Red Army during the Civil War, Trotsky himself did not believe that a standing army resembling the Tsarist military was the way to go for the future of the Soviets. His theory of 'permanent revolution' insisted that without socialist revolutions taking place in other countries, it would be almost beyond the bounds of possibility for a single country of workers to stand against imperialism. The only way for a socialist state to fulfil this nearly impossible task was to resort to coercion and militarisation. This was a petrifying prospect as these two would only conclude in a dictatorship of the state elites.[81] Avoiding such a prospect depended on two things: First, the maturity of the revolutionary movements outside of Russia, especially in Europe, and the establishment of socialism in other countries; and second, staying away from militarisation. As a solution, military form he envisaged closely resembled

---

[81] Rice, "The Making of Soviet Strategy," 660.

Jourés' ideas. For Trotsky, the necessity to repulse internal and external class enemies immediately after the revolution compelled the Bolsheviks to organise a standing army but it was only a temporary solution. If the historical conditions allowed, a more "organic" path of organising a workers' and peasants' militia would have been followed. In his thesis *Our Policy in Creating the Army* submitted to the 8th Party Congress in 1919, Trotsky presented the details of this organic path and thus his actual vision for the army of the Soviets.[82] In his thesis, Trotsky argued for the party to dedicate themselves to gradually transforming the Red Army into a territorial militia.

He argued that the militia should be designed so its organisation would coincide with the work environment and conditions of the workers. The military training would be moved out of the barracks and become part of the daily work universally. The workers would be trained in their work environment, and the military units composed of them would mirror their work organisation. For example, a factory workshop where the daily productive activities of the workers takes place will also become a military training ground. This factory workshop will then organically develop their own military unit (company, platoon etc..) according to the size of its members. Each workshop will be contributing towards the larger unit formation of the whole factory, and the factories towards the larger regional units. The commanding officers, rather than being centrally appointed,

[82] Leon Trotsky, "Nasha Politika v Dele Sozdania Armii," in *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*, by Leon Trotsky, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1923), 186–98.

will be elected by the units themselves out of their own units. The materiel and other needs of the militia units would be produced by the regional factories. Trotsky was essentially proposing for the means of production to represent itself diametrically in means of protection. The current state of the Soviet industry only allowed for a gradual transition towards a militia system. Further development of the industry was necessary in order to convert the majority of the society from peasants into class conscious workers who would could then establish militia formations. However, this gradual transition towards militia was going to get exponentially faster. The standing army reduced production by keeping the workers out of their workplace for the duration of their lengthy military service. The militia system was providing a solution to this problem, thus contributing towards faster industrialisation and reducing the burden of military spending for the government. Trotsky's thesis was adopted by the 8th Congress. However, the new party programme acknowledging the unattainability of the militia system under current conditions, accepted it as the future aim. For the time being it proposed turning barracks into military-political schools and the establishment of close connection between military formations with industrial organisations and trade unions.[83]

The following year with the end of the Civil War in sight, Trotsky submitted the 9th Congress another thesis arguing that it was time to reconsider the military

---

[83] *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza v Rezolyutsiya Resheniya S'ezdov Konferentsii Plenumov TsK - 1917-1922*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1983), 79–80.

organisation of the Red Army.[84] The 1920 thesis was similar to the previous one in spirit and content albeit with more practical elements. This year he proposed for a gradual demobilisation of the Red Army whilst keeping the best cadre elements and allocating them to territories along the country to administer the militia. To allow for the gradual replacement of these cadre units by locally elected militia administrators, he argued to establish regional command courses. The 9th Congress adopted this thesis and the Field Staff of the Red Army drafted a plan for demobilisation of the standing army and reorganisation of militia not by the central government but by the local Soviets in the spirit of Trotsky's proposal.

This plan was perceived by some military experts as a threat to their professional position. Alexander Svechin, a former tsarist officer, was amongst the most senior military experts that opposed the scheme. Svechin argued that all classes of society was going to be present in a militia system and thus it was not a stable organisation for the proletariat to fall back on. The individual selected from amongst the members of society would not possess enough authority over the units they are commanding, thus these units would be unreliable both during war and peace times. He argued that the barracks, by its "wonder-working" power of moulding individuals into the soldiers which the Red Army requires, is the only feasible option for the future. Svechin was attempting to solidify the future position of officers and thus the military experts. Trotsky did not take this opposition from Svechin kindly and vigorously attacked him in a response article. Trotsky

---

[84] Leon Trotsky, *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1923).

chastised Svechin and other academic critics for existing in a state of "political blindness" and not understanding the lessons of the revolution.[85] The Red Army was not going to produce cannon-fodder in the barracks like the tsarist military had done before. Another group that the militia system threatened was the military commissars. In a militia system, there was no need for the commissar, or a central political administration, as the workers with their class consciousness were meant to be their own political commissars. The opposition of the Political Administration came from the head of the PUR. During the December 1920 Second All-Russian Assembly of Political Workers, Smilga vehemently argued against the militia system.[86] His disagreement with the scheme was based on two main points. The predomination of the peasants compared to workers was his first point. If the transition to a militia system took place under these conditions, it was only a matter of time for the minority of workers to be isolated by other class elements. His second point was based on the backward state of the industry and communications in Soviet Russia. These were not providing enough of a base for efficient and timely mobilisation and later for providing the needs of a militia in the face of an offensive. These two points convinced the assembly to adopt a resolution accepting that the most sensible form of organisation for the military was a standing army of smaller numbers.

---

[85] Trotsky, 2:127.

[86] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*.

Tenth Congress

The need for a large army reduced with the end of the confrontations of civil war. On 12th of January, 1921, Central Committee announced partial demobilisation of the military. The demobilisation escalated the argument on what form the new military should take. Six days later, the Moscow Party Committee issued a resolution, clearly demonstrating reservations about a militia structure. The recommendation was the establishment of experimental militia units and only in the industrialised areas.[87]

The Tambov peasant insurrection of 1920-21, and the Kronstadt mutiny of February 1921 raised further questions over the feasibility of the proposed system. Opposition to a militia system was growing slowly but in a disorganised manner. Two prominent Bolsheviks, Gusev and Frunze, who served as Red Commanders during the Civil War instigated the first act that would unify opposition in the future, by submitting a thesis of 22 propositions on the future of the military.[88] In their theses, the two argued that the Civil War was only the first stage of the war between the imperialist block and the proletariat. Undeniably influenced by Lenin's division of the world between two clashing forces, they suggested that the future war was going to be against the more formidable militaries of the imperialist nations. To be able to resist the inevitable aggression of the imperialists, the Red Army had to preserve its form as a standing army and urgently take

---

[87] Erickson, 119.
[88] S Gusev, *Grazhdanskaya Voina i Krasnaya Armiya* (Moscow: State Publishing House, 1923), 91–96.

precautions. The transition towards militia adopted by the 9th congress should be very gradual, as the militia would not be able to provide sufficient force to defend the borders and could easily become prey to territorial particularism. Conscription was meant to continue, and the barracks were to remain. However, the barracks should be transformed into military-political schools where broad masses of workers would receive both military and political education during their conscription. A network of military schools should train new command staff based on the experiences of the recent wars. The Political Administration was the only precaution against the Bonapartism, and thus the transition towards a unified command should be gradual. There was an urgent need for a programme of modernisation and procurement of new weapon technologies. The most significant contribution by Frunze to the theses was the call for a "unified military doctrine" (*edinaia voennaia doktrina*). Diverging from the territorially controlled unit formations, Frunze argued for a single body "welded from top to bottom", not only based on common political understanding but also "by the unity of views on the nature of military tasks facing the republic" and "ways of solving them".[89] With this call, he was arguing for a military that had a unified understanding of the contemporary war, its requirements and a unified theory for victory. The common basis for the doctrine was meant to be scientific analysis of Marxism and as such the final doctrine would be a scientific theory of war. The task of developing such a doctrine could not only be left to military specialists. The

---

[89] Gusev, 95.

political administration with military experience was meant to participate in the process of developing the doctrine. With this statement, Frunze was stating the need for a broad coalition of military experts, red commanders and other Bolsheviks. Trotsky, attacked the theses at the congress, suggesting that what they called as a unified doctrine of revolutionary strategy and tactics was no more than idealising the forms of warfare of the Civil War. The Gusev-Frunze theses was not adopted by the congress as Trotsky carried the day with the majority behind him. However, the final resolution of the congress had compromises. The final decision was to keep the standing Red Army in smaller numbers as the basis of the armed forces for the near future, and only a gradually progressing towards militia units. These militia units were to be first established as experiments in predominantly proletariat areas such as Moscow, Petrograd, and the Urals. [90] Based on these resolutions the Red Army started to go ahead with the militia programme albeit in a sluggish fashion. In the summer of 1921, the experimental first militia formation was established in Petrograd.[91] This territorial-militia rifle brigade became the precedent for the nine regular rifle divisions established in different regions of the country by 1923. Gusev and Frunze did not come out victorious in their attempt to change the organisation of the Red Army, but their theses appealed to many dissidents and opponents of Trotsky and the militia organisation.

---

[90] *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza v Rezolyutsiya Resheniya S'ezdov Konferentsii Plenumov TsK - 1917-1922*, 2:419.

[91] Б. Т. Ягловский, "Военная Реформа 1924 — 1925 Годов и Современность," *Ярославский Педагогический Вестник* 1, no. 19 (1999).

Debate over the doctrine

Gusev soon got distracted with the economic problems of the country and distanced himself from military matters. Frunze on the other hand, stood behind his unified doctrine. A few months after the congress, *A Unified Military Doctrine and the Red Army* article by Frunze was published simultaneously in two publications.[92] Presenting a revised version of his ideas, he tried to justify the need for a unified doctrine for the Red Army. Providing a historical review of the premodern and modern military conflicts, he suggested that in the previous epoch the outcome of military conflicts depended on a small section of society. Temporarily armed groups or professional soldiers were adequate to provide for such armed conflicts. In contrast the dawn of the modern era necessitated a joint effort by every member of the society. Additionally, the technological means were developing at a rapid pace and becoming more complex. In this new era, military art and science required a centralised cohesive administration that could coordinate mass armies and materiel requirements to achieve the political aims of the state. This cohesion required a close interaction between the civilian and military elements of the state. The civilians composing what he called the 'military-political' side of the equation had the duty to prepare the policy that determined the potential future aggressors in advance, and to proactively issue directions on the objectives of the military during armed conflict. The military representing the 'military-technical' side had to make the best organisational arrangements to fulfil

---

[92] М. В. Фрунзе, *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения"* (Москва: Воениздат, 1951), 137–59.

general state aims. The military had the obligation to develop a common view of the character of its tasks. In order to generate successful solutions to these tasks, it was the responsibility of the military to attain a unified view of military development, preparation of troops, and the methods of solving problems of armed conflict.

The unified military doctrine was formed by the combination of these military-political and military-technical aspects and should reflect the class characteristics of the nation. Frunze, with providing examples from several European countries like Germany, France and England, explained that each country had a unified military doctrine reflecting the class structure of them. For example, German doctrine had a distinctly aggressive spirit which permeated every aspect of the entire military organisation. From top to bottom, the solutions to operational problems, troop training, tactical solutions, structure and preparation of the military all reflected the offensive German military doctrine. It was not hard to grasp the reason behind this aggression once one applied class analysis. Social life in Germany was structured and administered in the interest of the bourgeoise. As a potent nation with bourgeoise interests at its centre, with the capitalist means of production shaping its society, Germany had imperialist aspirations. The predatory imperialist character of the bourgeoise, in the presence of strong competitors like France, mirrored itself in the military doctrine in an offensive manner.

After establishing the idea that modern warfare necessitated a unified military doctrine which should reflect the class nature of society, Frunze went on to explain his vision for the unified doctrine for the Red Army. Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was the only country that had the class interests of the proletariat at its core. The dictatorship of proletariat which was being established in RSFSR meant the demolition of capitalist means of production and overthrowing the bourgeoise. Presently the rest of the world was ruled by imperialism, which thrived on international capital, international connections and conservative petite bourgeois masses. Almost verbatim quoting from Lenin's 1920 pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder*[93], Frunze suggested that the only relationship between these two systems was "long, stubborn, desperate war to the death--a war, demanding colossal endurance, discipline, hardness, unwavering commitment, and unity of will."[94] The periods of war might be disrupted by periods of temporary peaceful coexistence, but these were not the norm, just exceptions. Every individual, from workers to party members, should recognise that the "country is in a state of siege"[95] Frunze at that point was putting the theoretical material provided by Lenin to practical use. Imbued in Lenin's version of Marxism, he argued that the fundamental consideration of the military-political half of the doctrine should be the isolation of the proletariat and the inevitable aggression of imperialism. Under these circumstances the exclusive

[93] V. I. Lenin, ""Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder," in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 17–118.

[94] Фрунзе, *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения,"* 146.

[95] Фрунзе, 148.

direction that the state could consider was to strengthen the military apparatus, provide for its needs and propagate the idea of inevitable clashes with class enemies, universally in the minds of citizens of the state. The military-technical side, under the purview of the military itself, also needed to analyse the class character of the nation and develop their part of the doctrine accordingly. The first act was to decide between two stances, defensive and offensive, during the armed conflict. Considering the 'active' nature of the proletariat which was striving to achieve a victory over class enemies and imperialism, it was unimaginable for the unified military doctrine of the Red Army to be defensive. The current level of industrial development, and economy may not allow for the pursuit of offensive actions, but it is the prerogative and the will of proletariat to seek opportunities for taking action when possible. It was not only the RSFRS that would be seeking for active struggle against imperialism, but depending on the level of maturity of the proletariat, there was possibility of revolution taking place in other countries. In moments like that, when the proletariat started its assault against capitalists, "its greatest weapon, the Red Army" [96] will be there to support them. To be prepared for this prospect was the duty of the higher staffs of the Red Army. They needed to recognise that the limits of fronts in future wars would be the entire world. In order to overcome the technological asymmetry between the imperialist nations and RSFRS, alongside developing technological means, the military must develop its own methods of warfare that would negate the asymmetry. High

---

[96] Фрунзе, 154.

morale and the energetic temperament of the working class was the biggest advantage that the Red Army had in its arsenal. This temperament displayed itself during the Civil War in the form of rapid manoeuvre operations. This experience was very valuable for analysing the character of revolutionary kind of warfare of the proletariat, and should be implemented as the foundation of the military-technical section of the doctrine. The future commanders needed to be trained to understand and apply these lessons during conflicts. Lastly, Frunze discussed the status of officers and discipline in the Red Army. He suggested at present it was impossible for the officers and rank-and-file to be equal. This equality required the arduous work of increasing the levels of production and propaganda. The reference here was to the predominance of the peasants in the Red Army, and before they could be transformed into class conscious workers, army needed a hierarchical structure for command and control. However, the class consciousness of its officers and soldiers was now central. Compulsion, punishment and drills were not the sources of discipline anymore; it was the voluntary dedication, the demolition of the social wall between officers and soldiers; and finally the work of the Political Directorate to educate the masses.

With the aim of preserving the Red Army, Frunze was drawing from Lenin's theory of imperialism: The clash of classes which was part of the social reality according to Marx, and with Lenin, an international total war between classes became an inevitability. For Frunze, for the proletariat to came out victorious in this struggle, it needed a well-tuned mass army that comprehends the threat,

works in a unified manner and responds aggressively to seize the initiative from the adversary. In the face of imminent adversity, military preparedness was a priority for the Red Army. However, knowing the strict limits of economic and social basis for military preparation at the time, Frunze suggested that the Red Army should rely on the revolutionary spirit of the workers and develop means of warfare that could utilise it. For the moment, the Red Army was meant to practice restraint and stay in strategic defensive, except in the case of an aggression against RSFRS. Whilst under attack, it should be ready to release the proletariat sprit and use offence as an operational and tactical mean. The officers were there to stay, but it was not a reason to be concerned as this was not the army of the tsar anymore. Now it was a proletariat military that had its origins in the dictatorship of the proletariat, rising on completely divergent means of production and thus had different political aims.

Trotsky hit back with the wittily titled *Military Doctrine of Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism.*[97] He was not happy with the formulation of warfare during the Civil War as a way of combat special to proletariat. The only thing that the Civil War demonstrated was the altruism and enthusiasm of the workers. Anything other than these two were common to both the forces of the Civil War. In reality, he claimed, the Red Army learned manoeuvre from the adversary and the war was predominantly a war of defence where retreat played an important role. To

---

[97] Л. Троцкий, *Военная Доктрина Или Мнимо-Военное Доктринерство.* (ПЕТРОГРАД: Политическое Управление Петроградского Военного Округа., 1922).

promote a doctrine based on the experience of the Civil War was only propaganda. Furthermore, later he argued in a speech, a unified doctrine would hinder the interaction of ideas and solidify military thinking.[98] The only doctrine necessary for the RSFSR was to stay alert, and resort to an eclectic approach between defence and offence depending on the circumstances. The current needs of the army was not a doctrine but finding solutions to mundane matters of day to day existence like teaching how to exterminate lice, shoot properly, or cook a good shchi (red cabbage borsch). These matters were the part of daily reality for soldiers and officers, and until they were addressed, the military was not going to be an efficient force. As a final salvo, Trotsky hit Frunze by revealing that the ideas of manoeuvre and offence had a prominent place in the military thinking and writings of the legendary General Suvorov, who fought against the armies of the French Revolution at the head of serf armies.

At a gathering of political commissars and officers of Crimea and Ukraine, on March 1922[99], just returning from his mission in Turkey where he contributed to the Turkish military effort against Greek army, Frunze gave a speech that further elaborated his ideas on unified military doctrine. This time, presumably intentionally he avoided using the word 'doctrine' and chose to replace it with worldview (*mirovozzrenie*). Trotsky's criticism clearly had an impact on this rephrasing. Another aspect of his thinking that Trotsky's criticism had an impact

---

[98] Leon Trotsky, *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1923), 57.

[99] Фрунзе, *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения,"* 174.

on was his view of revolutionary warfare. In his speech, Frunze accepted that it was also important to study positional warfare, albeit not as a substitute for manoeuvre but as an aid to it. Frunze concluded his speech by proposing fifteen points which were a summary of his ideas on unified military doctrine in his previous article stated above. His change of attitude on revolutionary war and the primacy of manoeuvre was the only difference. These fifteen points were submitted to the 11th Congress of the Party only a few months later by Kliment Voroshilov. Voroshilov, was another Red commander who served actively during the Civil War at the Southern Front, was a close ally of Stalin. Trotsky, once more, reacted to the thesis whilst applauding Frunze's new position on positional warfare. Once more, congress refused to adopt Frunze's ideas.

However, the mere fact of Voroshilov presenting the theses during the congress points to a growing coalition gathering around Frunze's ideas. For many Red commanders, being exiled in territorial militia posts was not a prospect to rejoice in.[100] What Frunze was offering them was a position where they could deploy their Civil War experiences to use. For military specialists, Frunze's arguments were a professional lifeline, as a mass standing army would need their expertise for a long time to come. More importantly Frunze's position, which was clearly dividing the world into two camps, had political uses and appeal for Bolsheviks like Stalin, Dzerzhinskii and Ordzhonikidze.[101] For the next year and a half, Frunze stayed in

---

[100] Rice, "The Making of Soviet Strategy," 665.
[101] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 140.

Ukraine. During this time his coalition grew stronger whilst Trotsky's political position regressed.

The first set of productive conditions based on Lenin's ideas discussed in the previous chapter was now giving birth to a second set of productive conditions. A new coalition was gathering around the idea of the need for a strong military establishment. This coalition had influential adherents amongst the politicians, bureaucrats and the members of the military and security establishment. The second set of production conditions were to be the product of the collective work of this coalition to impose their will and come to life in the reforms instigated by Frunze.

Chapter IV - Return Of Frunze

Return of Frunze and Setting the Path

On December 1922, Transcaucasian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian Socialist Republics[102], joined the RSFSR to create the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Whilst the new Union was being established, Lenin's health was declining and he had the first of a series of debilitating strokes in late 1922.[103] His relapse into illness triggered a succession struggle and split the political leadership into factions. For a long time, Trotsky looked like the heir apparent to Lenin's position. Such a prospect, however, forged an alliance between three powerful members of the Party against him. These three, Zinoviev, Kamanev and Stalin, publicly announced the existence of their troika during the 12th Party Congress in 1923.[104] The power struggle amongst the leadership turned policies, ideas and government posts into weapons for sides to strengthen their positions.

In early 1923, it was becoming clear to the Bolsheviks that their hopes for socialist revolution in Europe was not going to materialise. This realisation carried an immense importance for the future of the Soviet Union. The prospective socialist allies who Trotsky placed at the centre of the permanent revolution theory, were

---

[102] These were composed of countries like Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine which came under the Soviet invasion during the Civil War.

[103] He died in January 1924

[104] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 140.

not coming to the Soviet's help to break its isolation. This had ramifications for the political future of Trotsky. Stalin offered an alternative position of "socialism in one country". Presently, the only way the defend to revolution was for the Soviet Union to grow stronger. With no potential of external assistance it was imperative for the Soviet Union to arm and be prepared for inevitable imperialist aggression. This was not the optimal solution, as without a "ring of brother states"[105] the Soviet Union could not remain safe forever, but for now it had to rely on its own potential.

The sharply intensified threat perception, brought up concerns over the condition of the Red Army and its combat readiness. The machinations to shake Trotsky's position as the head of the Red Army combined with these concerns. On the 2nd of June 1923, a plenum of Central Control Commission of the Party adopted a resolution to instigate a thorough investigation into the condition of the Red Army. The mission was assigned to a special military commission headed first by Kuibyshev, and later by Gusev. The commission gathered a substantial amount of data from regular and militia units around the country and presented their findings on January 1924. They concluded that the "organisation of the command and control and training of the army, and the preparation of the republic for [its] defence was unsatisfactory."[106] There was no single body to regulate the supply of the army, mobilise reserves and direct the industrial effort in wartime. Both the regular units and militia had a shortage of command personnel, in some units

---

[105] J. V. Stalin, *On the Opposition, 1921-27* (Foreign Languages Press, 1974), 325.

[106] Илья Борисович Берхин, *Военная реформа в СССР: 1924-1925 гг* (Военное Изд-во М-ва Обороны Союза ССР, 1958), 56.

reaching up to 50%. Supply of weapons and equipment were insufficient and the ordnance that the army managed to receive had a high rate of malfunctioning.[107] These findings were damning for Trotsky's position as the head of the Red Army. By then, Frunze was already making public statements about the unfitness of the Red Army for combat missions.[108] The arrangements for ending Trotsky's control over the Red Army gained speed after the publication of the committee's findings. In mid-January, 1924, the Central Committee ordered the establishment of another committee, again headed by Gusev but this time including Frunze. The new committee was to report their findings in a month time which they did on early February at the plenum of Central Committee. The new report concurred with the previous one. The presentation of Gusev, backed by figures, suggested that the Soviet government satisfactorily provided the necessary items for the needs of the army, but the mismanagement at the highest echelons of the army itself disrupted the distribution and maintenance of these items. Frunze also spoke during the meeting and repeated his previous claims of the Red Army being unfit for combat. Because the post-Civil War demobilisation was done in a haphazard manner, the Red Army appeared to use "organisational patches"[109] The headquarters, lacking leadership, did not have time to focus on major issues instead focusing on trivialities. In his opinion, it was clear that the leadership needed a refresh. The refresh he asked for was delivered by the Central Committee, which appointed

---

[107] Берхин, 56–57.

[108] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 167.

[109] Берхин, *Военная реформа в СССР*, 63.

Frunze as Trotsky's deputy on the War Commissariat of Military and Navy Matters (NKVM). Voroshilov replaced Trotsky supporter Muralov as the commander of the Moscow Military District. The Revvoensovet staff was also replaced by the names close to the troika, like Bubnov, Budenny, S. Kamanev, Ordzhonikidze, Frunze and Voroshilov.

Frunze in Charge

Whilst Trotsky was being gradually removed from his position, one of the two military-political aspects of the unified doctrine was now relatively clear: The inevitable imperialist threat. In his new position, Frunze started implementing his ideas on the structure of the Red Army without delay, initiating what is labelled 1924-25 Military Reforms. During his leadership, the organisational structure, education, and command structure of the Red Army were redesigned based on his vision of a united military doctrine. Some of the policy decisions taken during this time established a path that institutionalised over the years, and became the source of the military's resistance to reform.

The Brain of the Army: The best place to start to mould the Red Army in the shape he imagined in the unified military doctrine was the staff of the Red Army. The more democratic and organic development of the military imagined by Trotsky did not require a prestigious, authoritative and central instrument like general staff to issue directives. This was the reason that during his tenure, the staff was mostly occupied with day to day administration of the army and was called Headquarters of the RKKA. For Frunze, the personnel of the headquarters was

overburdened by the amount of administrative work and was neglecting its primary duty of operational planning. Frunze described the state of the staff at the time saying it has "sewn itself up in work and was therefore unable to sew".[110] In his version of military organisation, a unified worldview needed to permeate through all of its layers. It was a top-to-bottom approach that required a central organ to think for the rest of the army. Therefore, the Headquarters of the Red Army had to become the "brain of the Red Army", not a clerk's office.[111] It was necessary to centralise the operational functions into a single command body. On the 28th of March, 1924, with Frunze's recommendation, Revvoensovet issued the order number 446/96, abolishing the Commander in Chief position. The position was established during the civil war for joint operational command and contrary to its war time purpose, was now complicating centralisation.[112] The same order rearranged the structure of the NKVM. The main plan was to reduce the burden of headquarters and delegate some of its functions to newly established directorates and inspectorates. With that aim in mind, combat training and inspection of the Army, Navy and Air Force was delegated to the Inspectorates of the RKKA. The newly established Office of the RKKA(later renamed Main Directorate), was to manage daily activities and administrative work. PUR remained in its role as the political administration of the army. Additionally, separate Supply, Sanitary and Veterinary directorates were established.[113] The

---

[110] Фрунзе, *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения,"* 154.
[111] Фрунзе, 155.
[112] Берхин, *Военная реформа в СССР*, 150.
[113] Берхин, 150–54.

Headquarters of the RKKA, relieved of the administrative work, could now become the organ responsible for comprehensive military preparation for a future military confrontation, and operational decisions.

The newly formed position of the staff was a reflection of Frunze's division of military matter into two distinct spheres. The military-political aspects of the doctrine were to be determined by the civilians of the Party, and according to the civilian leadership of the country, the isolation of the Union and the anticipated imperialist aggression was the military-political reality. It was the military's turn to understand the task it was issued with and do its half of the job. The military-technical aspects of the doctrine were waiting to come into being in the capable hands of the Red commanders. The brain selected to fulfil this important task was the Staff of RKKA. To boost its prestige, Frunze took over the role of the Chief of Staff and two prominent figures, Tukhachevskii and Shaposhnikov, became his assistants.

For Frunze, the work of the staff was not only limited to the boundaries of the military establishment. In the era of total wars, where every member of society and all of its resources contributed to the defence of the nation, the staff had to go beyond organising just the military to organising the totality of the resources available to the nation for a prospective military conflict. Therefore, the Headquarters "... must become not only the brain of the Red Army but also the military brain of the entire Soviet state, supplying those materials that form the

basis of the work of the Defence Soviet."[114] The responsibility of the Headquarters was to determine the character of the warfare and draw mobilization and operational plans for the defence of the state. However, the defence of the state should not be understood in the "narrow sense of the word, not exclusively from the military-operational point of view, in application only to the Red Army as a force acting in the theatre of military operations". It required a broader "point of view, taking into account all the possibilities - economic, political and strategic - that are at the disposal of the Soviet state"[115] The military leadership was responsible for the "(p)reparation to a quick and orderly transition of the country and its armed forces from a peaceful position to a military one."[116]

It took years before the Headquarters was renamed as the General Staff, and again some more years to solidify its position as the brain of the army (to some extent the brain of the Soviet Union). Nevertheless, Frunze's framing of defence planning and decision-making in to two distinct spheres of military-technical and military-political, ultimately allowed the military, relying on its technical expertise, to achieve immense bureaucratic power over the political, economic, and social life in the USSR and later in Russia. The General Staff ,being the centre of this technical expertise, had the most valuable position as agent.

The Mixed Military System: Ironically, against all his opposition to a militia system, a compromise between the standing army and militia was put in place

---

[114] Фрунзе, *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения,"* 155.

[115] Quoted in Матвей Васильевич Захаров, *Генеральный штаб в предвоенные годы* (Аст, 2005), 22.

[116] Фрунзе, *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения,"* 396.

during Frunze's leadership of the Red Army. On 1st of December, 1924, a plenum of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR adopted a resolution that determined the organisation of the Red Army on the basis of a mixed (regular-militia) principle.[117] In the face of the dire economic conditions the Soviet Union was in, this decision was the only possible solution to keep the standing portion of the army intact whilst augmenting it with militia formations who received minimal military training. For Frunze the ideal military strength of the Red Army was 1.5 million regular troops, which was patently too ambitious under the present conditions. Ultimately, the peace time manpower strength of the regular army was decided to be capped at 561,000 soldiers.[118] Accordingly, the generation of militia units gained momentum. They consisted a mere 17.2% of the military strength in 1923; by 1926 this number increased to a staggering total of 58.6%.[119] These percentages stayed relatively stable until the 1938 decision to fully convert the Red Army into regular formations. Territorial militia units constituted the majority of the rifle units: by the end of 1925, out of 77 rifle divisions, 46 were composed of militia.[120] The units that required technical knowledge or long periods of training such as cavalry, navy, air force and technical troops remained as regulars.[121]

---

[117] Захаров, *Генеральный штаб в предвоенные годы*, chap. 1.
[118] Ягловский, "Военная Реформа 1924 — 1925 Годов и Современность."
[119] В. В. Жарков, "Военная Реформа (1924-1928 Гг.) и Политическая Работа в Красной Армии," *Ярославский Педагогический Вестник*, 2004.
[120] Ягловский, "Военная Реформа 1924 — 1925 Годов и Современность."
[121] Ягловский.

The leadership of the military, including Frunze, proclaimed the mixed system to be a success and sufficient for the defence of the Union. However, in reality the problems with the system were clear to them. The limited military training that the militia members received was not adequate for establishing discipline or getting accustomed to the complex military technology. Another issue with the militia was its geographically distributed composition. The vast geography of the USSR, combined with its limited transportation network, did not allow for swift mobilisation and concentration of these units in the necessary theatre of operation.[122] These problems were well known, but for now the material limits of the country dictated the terms. Some members of the Party still assumed that the mixed system was the path towards the end of the standing army. However, in January 1925, during a plenum of the Central Committee, Stalin put an end to this belief forever. The militia establishment was only about peace time preparations. Soviet Union had formidable enemies, and therefore needed a strong military. The regular army was the core of this strong military, and the militia was only a supplement. [123] Same plenum also passed the defence budget proposal of Revvoensovet, which had a significant increase from previous year.[124] This was a sign that the political leadership was giving their support to the army and the regulars were here to stay.

---

[122] В. В. Жарков, "Реформирование Красной Армии в 1920-е Гг.," *Ярославский Педагогический Вестник*, 2009.

[123] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 209–10.

[124] Берхин, *Военная реформа в СССР*, chap. 5.

Education and Training: One of the main tasks of reform was to restructure the system of training of the officer corps. Much needed to be done in this field as the army had a considerable shortage of command personnel. A unified system of training of the officer corps was also crucial to unite the way the military thought and acted. There were two tasks at hand; first, increasing the political and military educational level of the commanders already doing their service; second, establishing a unified training system to raise highly qualified command personnel that could replenish the army. After long debate, a unified school plan was introduced in military schools around the country in November 1925. These schools were to provide the cadets with general training in military, political, scientific matters. The only specialist training was reserved for combat training for cavalry, infantry and others.[125]

The specialist training, staff training and further training for the combat personnel in higher levels were to be provided by the military academies. These education institutions were virtually taken over from imperial Russia and renamed after the revolution. The Military Academy (named Frunze Academy after his death) was the most prestigious of all the Academies with its focus on staff and higher command education. The others Academies were designed towards training specialists like engineers, artillery officers and others. The teaching staff was dominated not by the Red commanders but by military specialists. To reduce their weight in these institutions, out of the 777 teachers 177 were either forced into

---

[125] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 194.

retirement or relocated to other services.[126] Furthermore, the Institute for Junior Scientific Assistants was founded for its graduates to gradually replace the military specialists.[127]

Frunze self-appointed himself as the head of the Military Academy in October 1924. The education programme of this academy was vital for its focus on staff officers. Frunze introduced subjects like economy, management, and organisation of the rear. For the staff to become the brain of the Soviet defence, knowledge in military matters was not sufficient. They also needed to become well acquainted with the essentials of economy and production. In this context, Frunze was mixing military-technical and military-political matters and was insisting on the military experts becoming knowledgeable in both.

Standardisation of the education and other reforms taken in this direction helped to increase the overall quality of the officers over time. Frunze's education schemes and the desire to groom exceptional officers, especially for the staff, led the military to become a class in itself. His insistence on raising Red commanders that were qualified in both military-technical and military-political matters caused a separation between the military and civilians. Technical knowledge on military matters became a distinct area that was not available to civilians. In later years, civilian leadership became hostage to the 'expert trap' as their knowledge on military-technical matters was exceedingly limited. On the other hand, the officers

---

[126] Жарков, "Военная Реформа (1924-1928 Гг.) и Политическая Работа в Красной Армии."

[127] Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 194–95.

saw themselves qualified to speak their mind in military-political matters. Their respect for the civilian leadership grew smaller. This was why instances like Khrushchev's intervention in the matters of strategy were deemed hare-brained schemes by Marshal Zakharov.[128]

Military Commissars and the unified command: The final reform worth discussing is the position of the political commissars who had decision power in conjunction with the commanding officer. Frunze was a long-time supporter of the unified command. Considering his vision of the military being in charge of its affairs, and trust in the abilities of the commanding officers, this support was not surprising. Already, during his tenure as Commander of the Turkestan Front in 1920, Frunze ordered the abolition of dual command for the units under his command.[129] The reforms of 1924-25 allowed him to stretch this unified command structure Red Army wide. Frunze explained the need for the change as "We must have at the head of our units men, possessing sufficient independence, steadfastness, initiative and responsibility", therefore a unified command was "the essential element in strengthening our military might." [130] In June 1924, the Central Committee introduced two forms of command with the ultimate aim being to move towards a complete unified command.

---

[128] "Красная Звезда," February 4, 1965.
[129] В.А. Дороничев, "Становление и Развитие Института Единоначалия в Красной Армии в 1920-е Годы," *Вестник Балтийского Федерального Университета Им. И. Канта.*, Гуманитарные и общественные науки, 2007, 355.
[130] Quoted in Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*, 196.

In selected units, the operational and administrative decisions were delegated to the jurisdiction of the unit commander. In this first form the commissar was to remain as a position but only to conduct political work. The second form combined all three categories of operational, administrative decision making and political work under one commander, called "Commander-military commissars".[131] By April 1925, 40% of the corps commanders, 14% of division commanders and 25% of regiment commanders became Commander-military commissars. Just a year later, these numbers were 70% for the corps commanders, 45% for division commanders and 37% for regiment commanders.[132] This was a monumental step for the Red Army towards gaining more autonomy in its internal matters. However, the position of the commissars remained an issue of tension for long years.

Frunze's term as the head of the Red Army did not last long as he died whilst in routine surgery in October 1925. Rumours of foul play and Stalin's involvement in Frunze's death have persisted to today albeit without enough substantial evidence to support any certain conclusions.

The two production conditions discussed in the previous chapters, namely Lenin's ideas and the coalition built around these ideas eventually allowed for Frunze to formulate a new institutional setup for the Red Army. The policy decisions he took, became the institutional basis for the Red Army and had long lasting impact.

---

[131] Жарков, "Военная Реформа (1924-1928 Гг.) и Политическая Работа в Красной Армии."

[132] Ягловский, "Военная Реформа 1924 — 1925 Годов и Современность."

Frunze's practical implementation of Lenin's ideas, backed by the collective power of the coalition who believed in a strong military establishment, placed alarmism and the arbitrary division of labour between the civilians and the military at the centre of the new military institution and gradually transformed the military into a gargantuan bureaucratic power. The militarisation of the Soviet society triggered by this new institutional setup lasted until the collapse of the Union, and even further.

Chapter V – Stalin to Russia

This chapter will start by explaining how after taking over the political power, Stalin solidified the path set by Frunze. Later it will discuss the manifestations of this institutional setup between the Khrushchev era and the early years of the Russian Federation.

Stalin Era

By July 1926, Stalin was the ruler of the Red Army and, virtually the country, with the removal of Trotsky from the Politburo.[133] His tenure as the head of the Soviet Union was a complicated era for the Red Army. Under his control, the size, budget and prestige of the military increased with the exception of the 1937 purges. Frunze's ideas came into fruition during this era. The Headquarters of the Red Army was officially renamed the General Staff of the Red Army and its primary position in the military was hardened. The unified military command became universal and permanent. Stalin, whilst keeping the military under his control, allowed Frunze's policies to become institutionalised. The Red Army learned many lessons during this era, and right after Stalin's departure from the political

---

[133] Albert Seaton, *Stalin as Warlord*, 1st Edition (London: Batsford, 1976), 82.

arena, it fought aggressively over its primacy and authority in strategic decision-making, starting with the Khrushchev period.

During the early 1920's, Sokolnikov as the Commissar for Finance, argued for austerity. Red Army spending was kept limited. From the mid-1920s onwards, alarmism resurged. The list of countries from whom the political and military leadership was expecting hostilities was rather long. In the West the little entente of possible aggressors were Poland, the Baltic States, Romania and Finland. These were expected to be supported by the big entente of the United Kingdom, Germany and the USA. In the East, there was the fear of Chinese aggression and from the 1930's onwards, from the Japanese.

The Soviets reassessed their defence priorities from the perception of their assumed military weakness and the imminent external aggression. The decisions on defence spending, procurement and other military matters were decided by a committee established in 1925, the Defence Commission (Also called the Rykov's Commission after the name of its chair Aleksei Rykov). Later this commission was briefly renamed the Executive Session of Council of Labour and Defence (RZ STO), active between 1927-30 before reverting back to the Defence Commission from the 1930 onwards.[134]

---

[134] For a detailed review of this commission see: Николай Сергеевич Симонов, *Военно-промышленный комплекс СССР в 1920-1950-е годы: темпы экономического роста, структура, организация производства и управление* (РОССПЭН, 1996), chap. 2.

In December 1927, the 15th Congress approved the work to prepare the country for defence. Voroshilov as the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, gave a speech that outlined the all-round militarisation of the Soviet economy. In his speech, Voroshilov suggested that the industrialisation of the country predetermined the defence capability of the nation. The inevitable armed conflict made it necessary for a five-year plan to prioritise the organisation of material resources for that prospect. In conjunction with peacetime planning, there was a need for a comprehensive wartime economic plan.[135]

However, Rykov was a member of the so called "Right" opposition in the Party which centred around Bukharin, Rykov and Mikhail Tomsky. They argued for continuity of the market oriented economy policy of NEP (New Economic Policy) introduced by Lenin as a temporary measure after the Civil War to relieve the economic woes of the country. They also advocated for austerity in defence spending, and emphasised the development of civilian industry. Stalin, on the other hand, had other ideas and started to move against the Right after the exile of Trotsky in 1927. He was a proponent of centralised control of the economy, collectivisation, rapid and mass industrialisation, and more defence spending, and the Right was in his way. Through political machinations and reducing the influence of the Right in the media, by 1929, Stalin had managed to erode their power.

---

[135] Симонов, 62–63.

Until then, with Rykov in charge, military and defence industrialisation budgets, even though they were expanding, were not at the levels the Red Army desired. After 1929, with Stalin's personal involvement in military affairs, the Soviet economy started to militarise and more resources were allocated to the Red Army.[136] The Defence Commission established in 1932 was made up of loyal Stalinists and headed by the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Stalin himself.[137]

However, even before Stalin took over the reins completely, the First Five-Year Plan that was implemented between 1928-32 turned the Soviet military industry into one of the strongest branches of the country.[138] The share of the military production in the net industrial production of the country rose 2.6 percent to 5.7 percent between 1930 and 1932.[139] Defence spending, including military industry and the Red Army budget in 1932, became 17 percent of the government budget and remained roughly at that level for the rest of the 30s.[140] Military and civilian planners during this era considered long-term military demands in every major economic plan.[141]

The doctrinal debates freely raging amongst the military intellectuals created a coalition of officers who had a vision for the future of warfare. Officers such as

---

[136] David R. Stone, *Hammer and Rifle* (University Press of Kansas, 2000), 134.
[137] Stone, 159.
[138] Stone, 208.
[139] Stone, 212.
[140] Stone, 217.
[141] Lennart Samuelson, *Plans for Stalin's War Machine, Tukhachevskii and Military-Economic Planning, 1925–1941* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 83.

Triandafillov, Tukhachevskii and Isserson developed new theories like deep operations which culminated in the birth of operational art. Stalin finally agreed with Tukhachevskii on the need for mechanised force to carry out these modern operations. The grand vision of a mechanised mass military of Tukhachevskii further increased the military spending and increased the size of the military. In the meantime the industry was increasingly becoming militarised. The military spending and planning became government's most well-kept secret, even the members of the legislative branch, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, were not allowed to access defence related material. In the same way the industrial plans designed by the General Staff were beyond the scrutiny of the Gosplan which was responsible for the design and implementation of the entire five year plans.[142]

After Stalin's control over the country solidified, the Red Army was also provided with more autonomy in its own affairs. In 1934, Stalin ordered the dissolution of the Revvoensovet and replaced it with an advisory body allowing for Voroshilov (and the following Ministers of Defence) to have a wider autonomy. in the same year, the political commissar's control over commanders was completely abolished.[143] The next year, military ranks, which were abolished during the first days of the revolution, returned. To boost the prestige of military commanders the rank of "Marshal of the Soviet Union" was created.

---

[142] Samuelson, chaps. 5–7.

[143] David R. Stone, "Industry and the Soviet Army, 1928–1941," in *The Military History of the Soviet Union*, ed. Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2002), 72.

The Headquarters of the Red Army was renamed the General Staff of the Red Army in 1935, finally materialising Frunze's dream of a unified command. A new academy was established for the training of the staff officers, and to express its prestigious position it was named after Voroshilov. Stalin's interactions with the Chief of the General Staff, Shaposhnikov, indicates that he agreed with Frunze's assessment of the position and duties of the General Staff. During a conversation in which Shaposhnikov complained about the great workload of daily affairs, Stalin remarked that dealing with the daily affairs was not Shaposhnikov's job. Stalin suggested that Shaposhnikov sort out his tasks so they didn't take much of his day, and so he could return to his actual job of lying on the couch and thinking only about the future.[144]

In 1939, with the war scare, the USSR hastily began liquidating the last remnants of the old Bolshevik thought and started to turn militia units into regular formations. Adopted on September 1, 1939 at the 9th Extraordinary Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, universal conscription was introduced for the standing army.[145]

Also during Stalin era by the appointment of a career officer, Marshal Vasilevskii, as the Minister of Defence, the pattern of trusting the highest office in military matters to soldiers started.[146]

---

[144] Захаров, *Генеральный штаб в предвоенные годы*, chap. 3.
[145] Жарков, "Реформирование Красной Армии в 1920-е Гг."
[146] Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics*, 242–44.

The institutional setup established by Frunze reforms matured during the Stalin era which is evident in the formal, normative and cultural pillars of institutions. Formally a new administrative structure was established to control military procurement and the Red Army was given substantial control over these bodies. This new administrative structure became responsible for getting the Soviet industry and society onto war footing and was thus given control over vast resources of the nation. Another formal development was the establishment of the General Staff which was legally given primacy over military matters.

In the normative sense, the Ministry of Defence started to became a uniformed organisation rather than a civilian one. The norm of appointing a respected military commander as the minister started under Stalin. Stalin's style of management did not allow for the General Staff to be the brain of the Red Army, but the norm of respecting their technical expertise developed during this era.

Culturally, alarmism and the inevitability of a war between imperialism and communism became an unquestionable dogma. This cultural narrative not only allowed for increased military spending but also through the its paranoid essence allowed for increased formal and normative measures of secrecy. The legislative bodies of the state were cut out of the defence decision-making processes. The public discussion of military procurement or structure which characterised the previous era became impossible under Stalin. This provided the Red Army command with vast incentives as long they played along with Stalin's game.

Under these institutionalised conditions the Red Army grew prodigiously and almost received unlimited funding, away from public or political scrutiny. The Stalin era

therefore allowed the institutions established by Frunze to become concrete. After Stalin, the Red Army would come to blows with civilian leadership to protect these institutionalised benefits.

Kruschev Era:

The post-Stalin era commenced with a power struggle between Malenkov and Khrushchev. Khrushchev, by establishing an alliance with the Minister of Defence Marshal Zhukov, managed to oust Malenkov, and became the successor to Stalin. The Khrushchev era saw tense relations between the civilian and military leadership but ended up with proving the military's primacy on matters of defence.

Khrushchev himself was not a military man and received no military training. However, he spent an extensive amount of time as a political officer and an intermediary between Stalin and officers in different fronts during the Second World War. Based on his war experience, Khrushchev considered himself very well versed in military matters.[147]

From the beginning of his leadership, Khrushchev was aware of the fact that the defence spending was a heavy burden on the Soviet economy. As the institution responsible for defence planning, the military was determined to keep combat

---

[147] Ю.А Абрамова, "Незавершенная Реформа Н.С. Хрущёва: Преобразования Вооруженных Сил СССР в 1953-1964 Гг," *Вестник Московского Государственного Областного Университета*, no. 4 (2011): 18.

readiness at permanent levels. This required, according to Khrushchev, a substantial investment of "human energy, knowledge, ingenuity, skill" to fall into a "bottomless barrel" and "absorbed by growing weapons".[148] He was further convinced that if the military was not controlled and was given the opportunity to act according to "their own pleasure", the country would end up as a "budget coffin", without the need for an enemy to attack, the country "will perish".[149] His solution was a peaceful coexistence and competition only in the field of economy. For this, he needed to convince the world that the Soviet Union was not a military threat and in return make them reduce their own military spending and strength. Therefore, he initiated the policy of unilateral force reduction. Gradual reduction of the Red Army troop strength started right after the death of Stalin. During the last days of his life in March 1953, troop strength was close to 5.4 million[150] and by February 1956 this number was reduced down to 4.1 million.[151] Over 1.1 million troops including almost 120,000 officers and generals were decommissioned in that timeframe. The demobilised personnel were to be repurposed as workers and managers in the industry of the country. The government was to provide assistance for their employment and living arrangements.[152]

---

[148] Абрамова, 17.

[149] Абрамова, 17.

[150] The number quoted by Zhukov is 5,396,038. It is not certain if this was the actual number of troops, or the authorised amount. These two numbers always had discrepancies. For example, in February 1956, the authorised troop strength was 4,406,216 whilst the actual strength was 4,147,496. Владимир Павлович Наумов, "№ 21 ЗАПИСКА Г.К. ЖУКОВА И В.Д. СОКОЛОВСКОГО В ЦК КПСС О ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ СОКРАЩЕНИИ ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР," in *Георгий Жуков: стенограмма октябрьского (1957 г.) пленума ЦК КПСС и другие документы* (Международный фонд "Демократия," 2001).

[151] Наумов.

[152] Абрамова, "Незавершенная Реформа Н.С. Хрущёва: Преобразования Вооруженных Сил СССР в 1953-1964 Гг," 22.

At first the military was supportive of these reductions as it allowed them to have enough budget to develop a nuclear arsenal. In February 1953, the Defence Minister Zhukov and Chief of the General Staff Sokolovski indicated in their memo to the Central Committee that they were willing to reduce troop numbers by a further 420,000. The majority of the reductions they proposed were from the engineering and construction units, the scrapping of redundant ships, and the transfer of education institutions like music schools to the Ministry of Education.[153] The unit selection for reductions was clearly planned so that they did not have an impact on the combat readiness or capabilities of the army. This plan was approved by the central committee in March 1956.[154]

While the leadership was supportive of the reduction, there was increasing displeasure amongst officers. They were convinced that the Americans were not going to reduce their military strength and refused to acknowledge the "excessively optimistic" evaluation of the international situation by the Party leadership.[155]

Two months later a further reduction of 1.2 million men was announced by the government. The purpose of this announcement is still not clear. It is probable that

---

[153] Георгий Жуков, "№ 21 ЗАПИСКА Г.К. ЖУКОВА И В.Д. СОКОЛОВСКОГО В ЦК КПСС О ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ СОКРАЩЕНИИ ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР," in *Стенограмма Октябрьского (1957 г.) Пленума ЦК КПСС и Другие Документы*, n.d.

[154] Matthew Evangelista, "'Why Keep Such An Army?' Khruschchev's Troop Reductions," in *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2002), 98.

[155] С. Р. Арсланович, "РЕФОРМА ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР 1953–1964 ГГ.: ОСНОВНЫЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ И ПРОТИВОРЕЧИЯ РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ" (БРЯНСК, БРЯНСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ИМЕНИ АКАДЕМИКА И.Г. ПЕТРОВСКОГО, 2018), 132.

this was just a propaganda ploy to force other countries to take similar measures. Whatever the reasons, the announcement frustrated the military leadership. Several high ranking officers publicly criticised the endeavour as a rash decision that could harm the defensive capabilities of the nation.[156] For an unknown reason, this decision never materialised, and the armed forces retained its strength almost intact with only small reductions.[157]

The debates over the Red Army strength until 1960 do not provide substantial evidence to suggest the political fortitude of the armed forces in the Soviet Union. However, an announcement made by Khrushchev in January 1960 to the Supreme Soviet changed this situation. This time, Khrushchev claimed that the revolution in nuclear arms and missile technology allowed for the defence of the Soviet Union without the need for a mass military force. "If missiles are capable of defending us, then why do we need to keep such army?" he asked. He proposed a new doctrine based on the deterrence of nuclear weapons whilst limiting conventional forces to a minimum. At some point, he even argued for the feasibility of returning to militia formations. The new theory for victory relied on the firepower of strategic nuclear weapons. According to him, the firepower of these weapons was now capable of destroying any military formation, therefore the conventional combined forces had no place in the future battlefield. Since the mid 1950s, the Military intelligentsia had discussed the place of nuclear weapons in future

---

[156] Evangelista, "'Why Keep Such An Army?' Khruschchev's Troop Reductions," 98.
[157] It is possible that this was just a propaganda ploy to convince other nations to follow suit.

conflicts. After long deliberations in the General Staff, it had already been decided to establish Strategic Rocket Forces as an independent branch, created just a month before Khrushchev's 1960 speech. The General Staff were advocates for the primacy of the development of nuclear weapons, but unlike Khrushchev, they had no consideration of the reduced role of conventional forces.[158]

The Khrushchev announcement came as a shock to the military leadership. The frustration and unwillingness of the military in relation to the previous reductions now turned into outright resistance. A month prior to the announcement, during a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee, Chief of the General Staff Sokolovsky had already warned against further reductions as it meant the army would lose its combat capability. This sentiment was common to most high ranking officers, and was a cause for genuine concern.[159] Now, Khrushchev was not only asking for troop reductions, but also defining a new doctrine for the Red Army. The reduction proposals were acceptable to some extent, however, the military was adamant about protecting its professional autonomy. Khrushchev, by singlehandedly defining the doctrine, was transgressing into the military-technical expertise of the military. During the mid-1950s, the Soviet periodicals became a tool for political struggle. Articles in newspapers and magazines reflected the power struggle between Khrushchev and Malenkov, ending in victory for Khrushchev. After Khrushchev's 1960 speech, the same periodicals

---

[158] Kimberly Marten Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organisation Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 64.

[159] Oleg Alekseevich Grinevskiĭ, *Тысяча и один день Никиты Сергеевича* (Вагриус, 1998), 124–29.

started to reflect the struggle between political and military leadership. Pravda published many letters from officers like the one from a certain Captain Zavalsky who "from the bottom of" their "heart, approve of the proposal to reduce the Armed Forces".[160] Whilst these solidarity letters were being published, only days after Khrushchev's speech, the Minister of Defence Malinovvski said on Pravda that "it is impossible to solve all problems of war with one type of troops"[161] which was a rebuke of government policies. Malinovvskii defended his position repeatedly. His report to the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961 repeated this thought, which was published again in Pravda[162]

Periodicals of the Ministers of Defence churned out articles arguing against the "one blow" argument. Maj. Gen. Zhilin, writing on Kutusov's leadership during Napoleon's 1812 campaign against Russia, argued that Napoleon was mistaken by attempting to destroy the Russian army in one decisive battle. Kutusov on the other hand assessed the situation correctly and used multiple means available to him to defeat his enemy.[163] This view was the oppositional to everything Khrushchev was arguing for and found many champions in the Red Army. Even the Main Political Administration publications, which were the party extension of

---

[160] *Pravda*, January 16, 1960, 10.

[161] *Pravda*, January 15, 1960.

[162] *Pravda*, October 21, 1961.

[163] П.А. Жилин, "Полководческая Деятельность М.И.Кутузова в Отечественной Войне 1812 Года," *Военно-Исторический Журнал*, no. 7 (1962): 29–41.

the Party in the military establishment, published articles arguing for retaining conventional means.[164]

Khrushchev retaliated against the resistance, first by retiring Sokolovsky and appointing Zakharov to the position of Chief of the General Staff. Being determined that the bastion of the resistance was the General Staff, he made further efforts such as demoting the Voroshilov Academy (General Staff Academy) into a junior department of the Frunze Academy in March 1960. The newly appointed Chief of General Staff himself resisted this demotion and lobbied for a reversal of the decision, succeeding within less than a year.[165] The General Staff continued its resistance, especially after the 1961 Berlin and 1962 Cuban missile crises; it had no intention of accepting the new doctrine that ditched the conventional army. Khrushchev, dismissing Zakharov and appointing Birzuyov out of frustration in 1963, did not find the changes he asked for.

Even though there were minimal reductions after 1960, the numbers of the Soviet army were never brought down to the planned N.S. Khrushchev's level of 2,423,000 people.[166] In October 1964, a group of disgruntled Party members under the leadership of Brezhnev forced Khrushchev into retirement. During the plenum of the Central Committee in which the decision for retirement was taken, one criticism directed towards him was that "(h)e imagines himself a military theorist

---

[164] Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organisation Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991*, 65.

[165] Захаров, *Генеральный штаб в предвоенные годы*, chap. Addendum.

[166] Абрамова, "Незавершенная Реформа Н.С. Хрущёва: Преобразования Вооруженных Сил СССР в 1953-1964 Гг," 22.

and puts forward a number of ideas that are not supported by the military".[167] It was during the Khrushchev era the General Staff virtually became the brain of the Soviet defence, as Frunze had imagined.

In this era, the military establishment, based on its expertise, autonomously started to determine defence policies. Khrushchev's lamenting remarks to Eisenhower best sums up the relationship between the civilian leadership and the military at the time: Some people from our military department come and say, 'Comrade Khrushchev, look at this! The Americans are developing such and such a system. We could develop the same system, but it would cost such and such.' I tell them there's no money; it's all been allotted already. So they say, 'If we don't get the money we need and if there's a war, then the enemy will have superiority over us.' So we talk about it some more; I mull over their request and finally come to the conclusion that the military should be supported with whatever funds they say they need. Then I put the matter to the government and we take the steps which our military people have recommended."[168]

Following the ousting of Khrushchev, Marshal Zakharov returned to the position of Chief of General Staff. He referred to Khrushchev's schemes as "hare-brained" in the military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda and went on to explain the importance of the expertise of military science in deciding strategic matters.[169] This

---

[167] Абрамова, 19.
[168] Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Deutsch, 1974), 412.
[169] "Красная Звезда."

was the beginning of the Brezhnev era and the golden age of civil-military relations in Soviet Union.

During the Khrushchev era, the formal pillar of the institutional structure lost its importance as the normative and cultural pillars became more prominent. Legally, the civilian leadership was the ultimate authority, but in reality the division between civilian and military spheres allowed for a strong structure of norms to develop. The expert capacity of the military leadership and their self-perception as the brain of the Soviet defence shaped the normative behaviour. Even though this caused a clash with the formal structure of the institution, the norm became too strong to alter. From then onwards, the military had near total control over their own matters.

Brezhnev, Gorbachev And Russia

The transition of leadership from Khrushchev to Brezhnev was the dawn of what Jeremy Azreal famously called the "Golden Age" of civil-military relations in the Soviet Union.[170] The Khrushchev era was rife with conflict between civilian leadership and military high command. The new leadership, being critical of Khrushchev policies, decided to bring an end to this conflict. Their solution was to retreat from defence decision making and leave this position to the professional expertise of the soldiers. The first major sign of change was the restoration of Marshal Zharkov as the Chief of the General Staff. Three years later well- respected

---

[170] Jeremy Azrael, "The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command 1976-1986" (RAND, June 1987).

Marshal Andrei Grechko became the Minister of Defence, who then went ahead to oversee the modernisation and growth of the Red Army until his death in 1976. At the onset of the new administration, the political leadership gave an open cheque to the Soviet high command which they happily cashed for increasing mass production of conventional armaments. The political leadership stopped insisting on reduction of conventional forces; on the contrary, conventional force build up sharply increased. The Red Army became free to prepare for any contingency imaginable by the high command.[171]

The main contingency expectation of the Soviet military was a nuclear war in Europe, but the nuclear parity and the prospective destruction of such a conflict made conventional warfare a higher possibility for them.[172]

The Voroshilov Academy, where Khrushchev received most of the resistance to his reform policies during his leadership, became a conclave for anti-Khrushchev critics after his demise. The lectures designed by them, and given to the high command officers at the Academy in the late 70's, clearly exhibit this preference for conventional war.[173] The preferred method became a pre-emptive conventional strike that rapidly neutralises both the conventional and nuclear NATO forces in Europe.

---

[171] Thomas M. Nichols, *The Sacred Cause: Civil-Military Conflict Over Soviet National Security, 1917-1992* (Cornell University Press, 1993), 95.

[172] P.A. Peterson and J. G. Hines, "The Conventional Offensive in Soviet Theater Strategy," *Orbis* XXVII, no. Fall 1983 (1983): 695–705.

[173] *The Voroshilov Lectures: Issues of Soviet Military Strategy* (National Defense University Press, 1989).

Under such circumstances, reduction to conventional military or strategic nuclear forces was unimaginable, the only way forward for the military establishment was to expand its strength. Much like Frunze advocated, determining the military strategy became purely the duty and right of the General Staff. The military strategy that the General Staff was responsible for, was defined by Marshal Sokolovskii and Maj. Gen. Cherednichenko as:

> ...the general subject of military strategy as a science may be stated as: determination of the nature, character and condition of the outbreak of various types of wars; the theory of organization of the armed forces, of their structure, and development of a system of military equipment and armament; the theory of strategic planning; the theory of strategic deployment, establishment of strategic groupings, and the maintenance of the combat readiness of the armed forces; the theory of the preparation of the economy and the country as a whole for war in all respects, including preparation of the population in a moral sense, the creation of reserve supplies of arms, combat equipment and other material resources; the development of methods of conducting armed struggle, of types and forms of strategic operations; determination of forms and methods of strategic leadership of the armed forces; the development of command systems; the

study and evaluation of a probable enemy; the theory of strategic intelligence; and the theory on the possible results of a war.[174]

The definition clearly reflects a Frunzeian understanding of military strategy which is not only limited to the military organisation, but goes beyond it into the economic and social aspects of the nation. The institutional expert power of the military combined with the retreat of the civilian leadership allowed for the encroachment of the military over the military-political. The military and military industrial departments became a "state in a state" according to Georgy Arbatov, famous political scientist and advisor to all General Secretaries from Khrushchev to Gorbachev. During the Brezhnev era, these departments became untouchable and received pretty much anything they asked for.[175] In the late 70's, political leadership realised that military control over defence policy was overarching and that civilians had no power to resist their requests. The damage control efforts starting as early as 1974 and lasting through the leadership of Brezhnev later through the short lived Andropov and Chernenko periods, were too little too late. In one such effort to check the power of the military, Brezhnev appointed his close comrade Dmitrii Ustinov as Minister of Defence following the death of Grechko. However, the Ministry of Defence Ustinov took over, was mainly a uniformed department whose main duty was to approve General Staff directives and requests and did not have much agency.

---

[174] Quoted in Nichols, *The Sacred Cause*, 97; В. Соколовский and М Чередниченко, "Военная Стратегия и Ее Проблемы," *Военная Мысль*, no. 10 (1968).

[175] Г. А. Арбатов, *Затянувшееся выздоровление, 1953-1985 гг: свидетельство современника* (Международные отношения, 1991), 194.

Another attempt by the Party, reminiscent of the Khrushchev line, was to call for an international reduction of military spending during the détente years. Led by the Chief of General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov, the Red Army high command strongly argued against such reductions. The open resistance of Ogarkov won him the tile "enemy of détente". Even if there was any hope, the collapse of the détente in 1979 and the beginning of the Reagan years wiped out the possibility of convincing military leadership for reductions. This was the state of civil-military affairs Gorbachev inherited. The Red Army, especially the General Staff, was the de facto brain of the Soviet defence much like it was defined by Frunze almost 60 years earlier.

The Gorbachev era, starting in March 1985 with its reform priorities, had revitalising the economy as its main goal. Controlling the budget was vital to economic growth, and the way to control the budget was through controlling military spending.

Gorbachev, much like the rest of the civilian leadership, did not have any knowledge of military matters. The monopoly of General Staff over the expertise in this area was still unchallenged. Moreover, the state agencies that enabled civilian control over the military were mostly defunct. The Soviet Defence Council, nominally the main organ for the General Secretary to command defence policy, did not even meet anymore and was abandoned to obscurity.[176]

---

[176] Uri Ra'Anan, *Inside the Apparat: Perspectives on the Soviet System from Former Functionaries*, ed. Igor Lukes, First Edition (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1990), 85–88.

In his short term as General Secretary, Chernenko dismissed Ogarkov as the Chief of Staff, replacing him with Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev. That same year, Defence Minister Ustinov also died in office and Marshal Sergey Sokolov was appointed. These two figures were more accommodating towards the West. Furthermore, on multiple occasions, they openly declared that the Red Army was formidable enough to defend the Union which was unlike the institutionalised alarmism of the military. Gorbachev at first relied on these two key figures to push for his reform agenda and gain control over the military. This attempt failed as the two were sidelined by the rest of the Red Army, who pushed for further expansion.[177]

What was even more damaging for the civil-military relations during the Gorbachev era that even further extended the autonomy of the military over civilians was the Govbachev's invitation to the military to participate in politics. As part of his *glasnost* agenda, Gorbachev invited military officers and rank and file to raise their voices in the public arena and run for public office.[178] Combined with institutionalised military autonomy and control over defence matters, this step allowed the military to become an animal of its own. The coup attempt by the military in August 1991, which accelerated the decline of the USSR, was a consequence of this final development.[179] The coup attempt failed, but now the military was so autonomous, there were concerns about whether they would accept withdrawing from the old Soviet Republics and Eastern Europe.

When the Gorbachev era ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military had 3 million men in uniform. During the first years of Yeltsin, he managed to convince military

---

[177] Nichols, *The Sacred Cause*, 136–39.
[178] Barany, *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military*, 82.
[179] Gen. William E. Odom, *Collapse of the Soviet Military* (Yale University Press, 2000).

leadership to withdraw from the newly founded republics and Eastern Europe. With the repatriation of military personnel and demobilisation of the units serving in these new republics, the military shrank to 1.2 million.[180] The military high command showed strong resistance to further demobilisation. Several promises by the Ministers of Defence between 1999-2005 for shrinking military personnel further failed without impact.[181] The rationale argued by the high command was that they believed that they were entitled to design defence strategy. For a long time generals gave interviews and wrote articles suggesting that the size and the NATO threat required a military of one million men.[182]

The civilian oversight over the military remained limited long after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The institutional norm established during the Soviet era remained strong. The Russian legislature had no access to the defence budget, let alone control over it. The defence budget remained free of public scrutiny.[183] It was not only the legislature that lacked control over the military budget, as an insider suggests, even the executive branch had limited understanding of the budget proposals of the military and all the Ministry of Defence did was to approve of the budget requirements proposed by the Chief of Staff.[184]

Even though the Ministry of Defence now had a more civilian face compared to the Soviet Era, it still had more military personnel working for it compared to similar institutions in

---

[180] Barany, *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military*, 55.

[181] Barany, 113.

[182] Zoltan Barany, "The Politics of Russia's Elusive Defense Reform," *Political Science Quarterly* 121, no. 4 (Winter, /2007 2006): 597–627; Alexei G. Arbatov, "The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya," The Marshall Center Papers (George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies, July 2000); "ВОЕННЫЙ МИНИСТР ПОПАЛ В ОКРУЖЕНИЕ ГЕНЕРАЛОВ," *Новая Газета*, October 20, 2003, 78 edition.

[183] Isakova, "Russian Defense Reform: Current Trends," 221.

[184] David J. Betz, "No Place for a Civilian?: Russian Defense Management from Yeltsin to Putin," *Armed Forces & Society* 28, no. 3 (April 1, 2002): 481–504, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X0202800307.

the West. It still had a hierarchical command structure with "all lines of command going through the General Staff."[185]

The limited civilian control and oversight over the military was not only limited to budget allocation and doctrine issues. There was also no control over how the budget was spent. An investigation by the Audit Chamber in 2007 found that R165.1 billion out of the R537 billion budget allocated to defence was stolen from the Ministry of Defence. Another report suggested that 70 percent of the budget was used for purposes other than officially confirmed ones.[186]

Another incentive for the military to wish to keep its own matters unscrutinised was that the conscript system with over a million soldiers was providing the officers with side income. It was common for the officers of all ranks to use conscripts as free labour forces in their own private business deals.[187]

In order to protect its vast autonomy, the military leadership resisted to reduce troop numbers, reveal its spending, allow for a change in the force structure until 2007.

---

[185] Pavel Felgenhauer, "Russia's Imperial General Staff," *Perspective* 16, no. 1 (2005).

[186] Stephen K Wegren and Dale R Herspring, *After Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 266-69., http://www.dawsonera.com/depp/reader/protected/external/AbstractView/S9780742557864.

[187] Bryce-Rogers, "RUSSIAN MILITARY REFORM IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2008 RUSSIA-GEORGIA WAR."

Conclusion

When the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917, they only possessed ideals and esoteric theories. As professional revolutionaries, they had spent most of their adult lives in exile, in prison, or as fugitives. Even though they claimed to possess a special understanding of the proletariat and their world, most Bolsheviks did not even, for a day in their lives, work in an office or a factory. Furthermore, because political offices were off limits to them, they had no practical understanding of how to run a government.

In the early days of their revolution, the chaotic environment created the opportunity for them to be nominal rulers of the country. However, the realities of such a task did not take long to catch up with them. External and internal threats to their political authority made them reconsider their ideals. In the face of the danger of losing everything, they decided to postpone the achievement of their ideals.

The Civil War was the first awakening, but after the war the Bolsheviks were still at a loss. Debates ensued over whether it was time to work towards materialising their ideals. Under these permissive conditions, institutional confines were relaxed and it became possible for new institutions to develop.

Research has shown that at that moment of history, Marxism, especially in its Leninist interpretation, provided the Bolsheviks with an the first set of productive conditions of institutional development. The Leninist construction of reality suggested that conflict between capitalist and socialist countries was inevitable and that the Soviet Union, as a socialist country, was under constant threat of international imperialism.

During this permissive period two agencies simultaneously tried to shape the defence institutions, Trotsky and Frunze. Trotsky's ideas were closer to the older ideals of the Bolsheviks. Frunze, on the other hand, was acting within the boundaries of a Leninist interpretation of reality. Eventually, Frunze's approach managed to create the second set of productive conditions and appealing others who had identical threat perceptions, achieved the building of coalitions.

The institutional constraints set by Frunze divided strategic decision-making into two distinct spheres. Gradually, the military sphere, as a result of other institutional constraints set by Frunze, gained more autonomy and control over the civilian one.

This research has shown that these institutional constraints survived even after the collapse of the USSR. The military managed to protect its autonomy, and kept its daily matters away from the scrutiny of others. In order to continue to

have the same level of autonomy over budget, defence decisions, its internal

affairs, the Russian military showed resistance to reform proposals.

Bibliography

Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Vol. 327. 729.1. Little, Brown Boston, 1971.

Arbatov, Alexei G. "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects." *International Security* 22, no. 4 (April 1, 1998): 83–134. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.22.4.83.

———. "The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya." The Marshall Center Papers. George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies, July 2000.

Azrael, Jeremy. "The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command 1976-1986." RAND, June 1987.

Baev, PK. "Reforming the Russian Military: History and Trajectory." In *Russian Military Reform and Russia's New Security Environment*, edited by Y Fedorov and B Nygren. Swedish National Defence College, 2003.

———. *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles*. London: Sage, 1996.

Barany, Zoltan. *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military*. Princeton University Press, 2007.

———. "The Politics of Russia's Elusive Defense Reform." *Political Science Quarterly* 121, no. 4 (Winter, /2007 2006): 597–627.

Bartles, Charles K. "Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (2011): 55–80.

BenvenutiZ, Francesco. *The Bolsheviks and the Red Army, 1918-1922*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Berger, Martin. "Engels' Theory of the Vanishing Army: A Key to the Development of Marxist Revolutionary Tactics." *The Historian* 37, no. 3 (May 1, 1975): 421–35.

Betz, David J. "No Place for a Civilian?: Russian Defense Management from Yeltsin to Putin." *Armed Forces & Society* 28, no. 3 (April 1, 2002): 481–504. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X0202800307.

Bideleux, Robert, and Ian Jeffries. *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*. Routledge, 1998.

Blyth, Mark. *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Boyd, John R. "The Origins of Order No. 1." *Soviet Studies* 19, no. 3 (1968): 359–372.

———. "The Origins of Order No. 1." *Soviet Studies* 19, no. 3 (2007): 359–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136808410599.

Bryce-Rogers, Athena. "RUSSIAN MILITARY REFORM IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2008 RUSSIA-GEORGIA WAR." *Demokratizatsiya* 21, no. 3 (2013).

Capoccia, Giovanni, and R. Daniel Kelemen. "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism." *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (2007): 341–369.

Chuev, Felix. *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics*. Ivan R. Dee, 1993.

Colliers, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. *Shaping the Political Arena*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991.

Collins, D. N. "A Note on the Numerical Strength of the Russian Red Guard in October 1917." *Soviet Studies* 24, no. 2 (1972): 270–80.

Colton, Timothy J. *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics*. Harvard University Press, 1979.

Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti. T. I. 25 Oktabra 1917 g. – 16 Marta 1918 g. Vol. 1. Moscow: Politizdat, 1957.

Engels, Friedrich. "Anti Dühring." In *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Vol. 25. Moscow: Progress Publishing, 1975.

———. "The Armies of Europe." In *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 401–70. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975.

———. "The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution." In *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 147–239. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975.

———. "The Prussian Military Question and the (German Workers' Party)." In *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Vol. 20. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975.

Erickson, John. *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941*. Frank Cass Publishers, 2001.

Evangelista, Matthew. "'Why Keep Such An Army?' Khruschchev's Troop Reductions." In *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War*. Cornell University Press, 2002.

Felgenhauer, Pavel. "Russia's Imperial General Staff." *Perspective* 16, no. 1 (2005).

Fioretos, Orfeo, Tulia G. Falleti, and Adam Sheingate. "Historical Institutionalism in Political Science." *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*, 2016, 3–30.

Gayday, Aleksey. "Reform of the Russian Army." *Russia's New Army*, 2011, 9–32.

Godzimirski, Jakub M. "Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis." *European Security* 9, no. 4 (December 1, 2000): 73–91.

Golts, Alexander M., and Tonya L. Putnam. "State Militarism and Its Legacies: Why Military Reform Has Failed in Russia." *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 121–58.

Goodin, Robert E. "Institutions and Their Design." *The Theory of Institutional Design* 28 (1996).

Goodin, Robert E., and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. "Political Science: The Discipline." *A New Handbook of Political Science*, 1996, 3–49.

Grinevskiĭ, Oleg Alekseevich. *Тысяча и один день Никиты Сергеевича*. Вагриус, 1998.

Gusev, S. *Grazhdanskaya Voina i Krasnaya Armiya*. Moscow: State Publishing House, 1923.

Hall, Peter A. "Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France," 1986.

Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary CR Taylor. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 936–957.

HEGEL, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. MILLER. Oxford University Press, 1977.

Herspring, Dale. "Russia's Crumbling Military." *Current History* 97, no. 621 (1998): 325–328.

Herspring, Dale R., and Roger N. McDermott. "Serdyukov Promotes Systemic Russian Military Reform." *Orbis* 54, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 284–301. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2010.01.004.

Hilferding, Rudolf. *Finance Capital: A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

Hyppolite, Jean. *Studies on Marx and Hegel*. London: Heinemann., 1969.

Isakova, Irina. "Russian Defense Reform: Current Trends." Strategic Studies Institute, 2006.

J., Timothy, and Thane Gustafson. *Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev*. Princeton University Press, 1990.

Jaurès, Jean, and G. G. 1858-1947 Coulton. *Democracy and Military Service; an Abbreviated Translation of the "Armée Nouvelle."* Palala Press, 2015.

"Karl Kautsky: Ultra-Imperialism (1914)." Accessed October 7, 2020. https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1914/09/ultra-imp.htm.

Katzenbach Jr, Edward L. "The Horse Cavalry in the Twentieth Century." *Public Policy* 8 (1958): 120–149.

Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*. Deutsch, 1974.

Kipp, Jacob W. "Russian Military Reform: Status and Prospects (Views of a Western Military Historian)." Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign MIlitary Studies Office. Accessed September 12, 2020. https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/202362.

Klein, Margarete. "Towards a 'New Look'of the Russian Armed Forces? Organizational and Personnel Changes: Margarete Klein." In *The Russian Armed Forces in Transition*, 45–64. Routledge, 2012.

Knight, Frank Hyneman. *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*. Vol. 31. Houghton Mifflin, 1921.

Knoph, Jan. "Civilian Control of the Russian State Forces: A Challenge in Theory and Practice." Stockholm: FOI, 2004.

Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza v Rezolyutsiya Resheniya S'ezdov Konferentsii Plenumov TsK - 1917-1922. Vol. 2. Moscow: Politizdat, 1983.

Lannon, Gregory P. "Russia's New Look Army Reforms and Russian Foreign Policy." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (February 28, 2011): 26–54.

Lenin, V. I. "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism." In *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, 667–766. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

———. ""Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder." In *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, 17–118. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

———. "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe." In *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, 339–43. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

———. "Socialism and War." In *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, 295–338. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

———. "To the Rural Poor." In *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

Liebknecht, Karl. *Militarism And Anti-Militarism*. Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2011.

Locksley, Christopher. "Concept, Algorithm, Indecision: Why Military Reform Has Failed in Russia since 1992." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 14 (March 1, 2001): 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040108430467.

Lowndes, Vivien. "The Institutional Approach." In *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, edited by David Marsh and Gerry Stoker. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Lowndes, Vivien, and Mark Roberts. *Why Institutions Matter: The New Institutionalism in Political Science*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013.

March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *The American Political Science Review*, 1984, 734–749.

Marx, Karl. "The Civil War in France." In *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 22. Lawrence & Wishart, 2010.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Marx and Engels Collected Works*. Vol. 5. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975.

———. *Marx and Engels Collected Works*. Vol. 32. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975.

Mastny, Vojtech. *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Nichols, Thomas M. *The Sacred Cause: Civil-Military Conflict Over Soviet National Security, 1917-1992*. Cornell University Press, 1993.

Odom, Gen. William E. *Collapse of the Soviet Military*. Yale University Press, 2000.

Pallin, Carolina Vendil. *Russian Military Reform: A Failed Exercise in Defence Decision Making*. Routledge, 2008.

Peters, B. Guy. *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019.

Peterson, P.A., and J. G. Hines. "The Conventional Offensive in Soviet Theater Strategy." *Orbis* XXVII, no. Fall 1983 (1983): 695–739.

Pierson, Paul. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

Powell, Walter. "Expanding the Scope of Institutional Analysis." *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis, Chicago*, 1991, 183–203.

Ra'Anan, Uri. *Inside the Apparat: Perspectives on the Soviet System from Former Functionaries*. Edited by Igor Lukes. First Edition. Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1990.

Reese, Roger R. *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991*. Routledge, 2002.

Renz, Bettina. "Russian Military Capabilities after 20 Years of Reform." *Survival* 56, no. 3 (May 4, 2014): 61–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2014.920145.

———. *Russia's Military Revival*. Polity, 2018. https://www.amazon.sg/Russias-Military-Revival-Bettina-Renz/dp/1509516158.

Rice, Condoleezza. "The Making of Soviet Strategy." *Makers of Modern Strategy* 657 (1986).

Samuelson, Lennart. *Plans for Stalin's War Machine, Tukhachevskii and Military-Economic Planning, 1925–1941*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

Sapolsky, Harvey, Benjamin Friedman, and Brendan Green. *US Military Innovation since the Cold War: Creation without Destruction*. Routledge, 2009.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. London: Routledge, 1958.

Seaton, Albert. *Stalin as Warlord*. 1st Edition. London: Batsford, 1976.

Sjöstrand, Sven-Erik. "Institutions as Infrastructures of Human Interaction." *Institutional Change: Theory and Empirical Findings*, 1993, 61–74.

Skocpol, Theda. "State Formation and Social Policy in the United States." *American Behavioral Scientist* 35, no. 4–5 (1992): 559–584.

Soifer, Hillel David. "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures." *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 12 (2012): 1572–1597.

Stalin, J. V. *On the Opposition, 1921-27*. Foreign Languages Press, 1974.

Stone, David R. *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006.

———. *Hammer and Rifle*. University Press of Kansas, 2000.

———. "Industry and the Soviet Army, 1928–1941." In *The Military History of the Soviet Union*, edited by Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan, 65–78. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2002.

The Voroshilov Lectures: Issues of Soviet Military Strategy. National Defense University Press, 1989.

Trotsky, Leon. *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1923.

———. *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1923.

———. *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*. Vol. 3. Moscow, 1923.

———. "Nasha Politika v Dele Sozdania Armii." In *Kak Voorazhalas Revoliutsiia*, by Leon Trotsky, 186–98. Moscow, 1923.

Vigor, Peter. *The Soviet View of War, Peace and Neutrality*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

Wade, Rex A. *Red Guards and Workers' Militias in the Russian Revolution*. Stanford University, 1984.

Wegren, Stephen K, and Dale R Herspring. *After Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010. http://www.dawsonera.com/depp/reader/protected/external/AbstractView/S97807425578 64.

Wildman, Allan. "The February Revolution in the Russian Army." *Soviet Studies* 22, no. 1 (1970): 2–23.

Zharkov, Vitaly, and Dimitry Malakhov. "Struktura Vooruzhennyh Sil v 1920-e Gg." *Jaroslavskii Pedagogicheskii Vestnik* 1, no. 2 (2014).

Zisk, Kimberly Marten. *Engaging the Enemy: Organisation Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

Абрамова, Ю.А. "Незавершенная Реформа Н.С. Хрущёва: Преобразования Вооруженных Сил СССР в 1953-1964 Гг." *Вестник Московского Государственного Областного Университета*, no. 4 (2011): 16–33.

Арбатов, Г. А. *Затянувшееся выздоровление, 1953-1985 гг: свидетельство современника*. Международные отношения, 1991.

Арсланович, С. Р. "РЕФОРМА ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР 1953–1964 ГГ.: ОСНОВНЫЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ И ПРОТИВОРЕЧИЯ РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ." БРЯНСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ИМЕНИ АКАДЕМИКА И.Г. ПЕТРОВСКОГО, 2018.

Берхин, Илья Борисович. *Военная реформа в СССР: 1924-1925 гг*. Военное Изд-во М-ва Обороны Союза ССР, 1958.

"ВОЕННЫЙ МИНИСТР ПОПАЛ В ОКРУЖЕНИЕ ГЕНЕРАЛОВ." *Новая Газета*, October 20, 2003, 78 edition.

Дороничев, В.А. "Становление и Развитие Института Единоначалия в Красной Армии в 1920-е Годы." *Вестник Балтийского Федерального Университета Им. И. Канта.*, Гуманитарные и общественные науки, 2007.

Жарков, В. В. "Военная Реформа (1924-1928 Гг.) и Политическая Работа в Красной Армии." *Ярославский Педагогический Вестник*, 2004.

———. "Реформирование Красной Армии в 1920-е Гг." *Ярославский Педагогический Вестник*, 2009.

Жилин, П.А. "Полководческая Деятельность М.И.Кутузова в Отечественной Войне 1812 Года." *Военно-Исторический Журнал*, no. 7 (1962): 29–41.

Жуков, Георгий. "№ 21 ЗАПИСКА Г.К. ЖУКОВА И В.Д. СОКОЛОВСКОГО В ЦК КПСС О ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ СОКРАЩЕНИИ ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР." In *Стенограмма Октябрьского (1957 г.) Пленума ЦК КПСС и Другие Документы*, n.d.

Захаров, Матвей Васильевич. *Генеральный штаб в предвоенные годы*. Аст, 2005.

"Красная Звезда," February 4, 1965.

Наумов, Владимир Павлович. "№ 21 ЗАПИСКА Г.К. ЖУКОВА И В.Д. СОКОЛОВСКОГО В ЦК КПСС О ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ СОКРАЩЕНИИ ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР." In *Георгий Жуков: стенограмма октябрьского (1957 г.) пленума ЦК КПСС и другие документы*. Международный фонд "Демократия," 2001.

Симонов, Николай Сергеевич. *Военно-промышленный комплекс СССР в 1920-1950-е годы: темпы экономического роста, структура, организация производства и управление*. РОССПЭН, 1996.

Соколовский, В., and М Чередниченко. "Военная Стратегия и Ее Проблемы." *Военная Мысль*, no. 10 (1968).

Троцкий, Л. *Военная Доктрина Или Мнимо-Военное Доктринерство*. ПЕТРОГРАД: Политическое Управление Петроградского Военного Округа., 1922.

Фрунзе, М. В. *Фрунзе М.В. "Избранные Произведения."* Москва: Воениздат, 1951.

Ягловский, Б. Т. "Военная Реформа 1924 — 1925 Годов и Современность." *Ярославский Педагогический Вестник* 1, no. 19 (1999).

Pravda, January 15, 1960.

Pravda, January 16, 1960.

Pravda, October 21, 1961.