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Leninism, The Beginning of Stalinism

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POLS 310-UC

Russian Politics

Exam #1

Essay #2

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Give subpoints  
Give as much details  
as possible. 1

In any political arena, anyone wanting to achieve good results for his country will look at all the other ways that the country was run in the past. If they just so happen to find a successful formula that has worked in the past, then more than likely they will use that same formula and even expand that formula to gain even better results for the country. Lenin was such a successful dictator that his successor, Stalin, built his political aspirations from Lenin's platform. A few of the examples that can be used to show that Stalin expanded the views of Lenin are the ban on factions within the Communist Party, the terror that was used, and "the radical methods of Stalin's modernization program" (Stalinism). The most notable area that was expanded on by Stalin was the way the government was run from the top-down.

The one area that helped Stalin gain power after Lenin's death was the idea that Lenin created a government that was run from the top-down. Many "proponents of this view argue that the top-down, dictatorial government established by Lenin lacked essential checks and balances, and that this left the system open to abuse by ruthless politicians such as Stalin" (Stalinism). Some examples of the way that Stalin used the idea of running everything from the top-down without a checks and balances system in place were the ban on factions within the Communist Party, the use of terror against people within the country, and the modernization program that Stalin put into place. Without the checks and balances in place, it pretty much allowed "the one-party government [Lenin] set up provided few restraints against Stalin's dictatorship" (Leninism versus Stalinism). So, basically, "single-party states incline towards personal rule" (Leninism versus Stalinism). So, "Lenin's death left a power vacuum which allowed the most brutal of his successors to successfully gain power through manipulation and intrigue" (Stalinism). Another policy that Lenin created but was expanded upon by Stalin after Lenin's death was the ban that was placed on factions within the Communist Party.

One political idea that Lenin created while in office was the ban that he placed on factions within the Communist Party. "At the 10th Party Congress that introduced NEP, Lenin introduce[d] a ban on factions, destroying the remaining democracy in democratic centralism, increasing the climate of repression" (Leninism versus Stalinism). With this in place, Lenin was able to create a one-party system for the Communist party. While Lenin was in power, he allowed his supporters that had differing views to voice their opinions. However, when Stalin gained power he saw how effective this measure was and decided to expand on the original thoughts

of Lenin. Stalin did not allow people within his own party to voice their opinions, mainly because he was paranoid that it would cause people to revolt against his leadership. Both Lenin and Stalin both used the method of terror to help run the country.

Another area that Lenin first used that was later expanded for better results when Stalin came to power was the use of terror that was used to help run the country. "Under Lenin's rule terror was used to suppress opposition" (Stalinism). In order for Lenin to use terror to keep his opponents from being heard, he created the "Cheka", [which] was set up in December [of] 1917. Basically "it was Lenin who laid the police state foundations which made Stalin's monstrous feats technically possible" (Leninism versus Stalinism). So, "the main instruments of terror, secret police, camps, show trials, [all] were in place before Lenin's death" (Leninism versus Stalinism). Like any smart politician, Stalin decided to expand on the previous good ideas of Lenin in order to try to make them even greater ideas. Since the instruments of terror like the secret police, Gulag camps, and show trials were already in place, it lead the way for Stalin to use a mass use of force for anyone that he thought would be of opposition to him. However, the reason it is considered an expansion on Lenin's original idea is because Lenin did not use the terror aspect nearly as much as Stalin did. Neither did Lenin use the terror against his own supporters. Lenin did not even purge his supporters that he did not like all that well. For example, "Of Stalin [Lenin] wrote, 'Stalin has amassed great power into his hands as Secretary and I am not sure whether he will always use it wisely'; he referred to Stalin's rudeness, [and] his lack of tact" (McAuley 35). Although, Lenin did not trust Stalin's use of power he never had him purged, because he was a supporter of Lenin. Another way that Stalin used the terror as a tool to help better off Russia was to unite the entire country, and for urgency to catch up to the rest of the world.

Other ways that Stalin expanded the terror programs to help Russia was to be able to unite the country and to help Russia catch up to the rest of the outside world. One way that Stalin saw to unite Russia was to create jobs and enough work for everyone that wanted a job. With that it would help Russia catch up with the outside world. However, there were the people that opposed the ideas of how Stalin wanted to catch up to the outside world. So, Stalin used his wave of terror on "anybody who opposed industrialization, and the kulaks who opposed collectivization" (Clare, John D). So, where Lenin mainly used terror was against his political

rivals. However, on the contrary, Stalin used terror on just about anyone that had a different opinion on anything or if he thought that they might go against him at a later date. <sup>Another idea that Lenin had that Stalin expanded</sup> was the economic policy that was in place.

In Stalin's time in power, he was well known for his five-year and ten-year plans. However, "the radical methods of Stalin's modernization program were also not entirely his invention, they were mainly the further development of Lenin's war communism" (Stalinism). "War communism was the economic policy adopted by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War with the aim of keeping towns and the Red Army supplied with weapons and food, in conditions when all normal economic mechanisms and relations were being destroyed by the war" (War Communism). Under war communism, it helped create the idea that "all industries [were to be] nationalized and [under] strict centralized management" (War Communism). War communism also helped create "state monopoly on foreign trade, discipline for workers were strict, military-like control of railroads, and private enterprise became illegal" (War Communism). Although, war communism was used during the civil war in Russia, many people could say that it lead the way for Stalin to expand upon the war communism idea that Lenin had been in charge of. Stalin thought that "Rapid industrialization was necessary for a number of reasons, both practical and ideological, the [main reason was] to make Russia a force to be reckoned with on the world stage" (Stalinism). The main reasons that Stalin wanted to expand on the thoughts of Lenin was to "increase military strength, to achieve self-sufficiency, to move towards a Socialist society, and personal motivation" (Stalinism). So, the major similarities between Lenin's war communism and Stalin's economic policy was that in both "they required its own industrial base to produce goods for its own people" (Stalinism). For example, during the war communism, the economic parties involved all were managed by the government in order to build supplies for the Red Army. So, the people in the country were all being forced to work for the government in order to be able to have enough supplies for the troops of the Red Army. The same can be said with Stalin's economic policies. The government managed everything that was made. So, it can be said that Stalin expanded onto the idea of Lenin's war communism. While Stalin was the leader of Russia and he was using his economic ideas, he made it where everything that was made in the country was rationed in the

country. Everything in the country had a purpose for something else in the country. Basically, the people in Russia were only making stuff that other people in Russia could use at their jobs or their homes. So, there was really no outside interference in the work force. It was only Russian people making stuff for other Russian people.

Regardless of who became the leader of Russia after Lenin's death is irrelevant. Mostly, because the only logical consequence of Leninism is Stalinism. Mainly, because it was the only way that a ruler like Stalin could lead Russia because any smart ruler would expand on the same ideas that worked in the past because the previous ideas had worked and they were successful. Any smart political leader will also decide to expand on previous ideas in order to make them even better ideas. So, the only way in this era for Leninism to go was to expand all of the ideas of Lenin into something even greater called Stalinism. No, matter who would of came in to power after Lenin. The only way for Russia to survive after the Tsar without Lenin, was to expand on the original ideas of Lenin which lead to nothing other then Stalinism.

No matter what country a new political leader is in, any political leader that is wanting to achieve some of the best results for his country will look at all the other ways that the country was run in the past. The leader will pick and choose from the ideas that worked and then try to expand onto them in order to make them their own ideas, but even better. Lenin was such a successful dictator that his successor, Stalin, built his political aspirations from Lenin's platform. So, if they just so happen to find a successful formula that has worked in the past, then more than likely they will use a similar formula and even expand that formula to gain even better results for the country.

V. Good job  
 Good approach, follow  
 a successful politician  
 Well-argued, well-written

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