



the end most of these exercises turn out to be sterile, when they don't degenerate into fratricidal conflicts.

Furthermore, I'd hazard it to say, that the entire history of Marxist Leninist social change has known few other methods, leading me to further say that a sober analysis of that history points to a struggle for supremacy – not only over the bourgeois ruling class, but also against the working class and all other oppressed people; against any and all formations either of the latter pull together that escape their control. Thus, their mantra of doing everything to seize power for the working class and oppressed is a farce.

If there has ever been a Marxist Leninist Vanguard party who has found itself in power and did not subsequently follow that script, I'm not aware of it. While arguments can always be found to rationalize why it was/is necessary to resort to such measures, and many such arguments do make sense – initially – a closer look always seems to force adherents to fall back on the mantra of the flawed individual(s) who did not hold true to Democratic Centralism's (DC) principles, which are themselves wide open to interpretation and manipulation, in order to seize the initiative in a struggle for domination – as opposed to trying to make a “concrete analysis of concrete conditions,” as V.I. Lenin instructed.

At the same time, history has shown that such ruthless methods are effective: if the objectives of those who used the DC methods were simply to seize power, then their record during the 20th century was impressive. It has proved itself as brutally efficient and capable of outdoing anything the bourgeois forces are capable of.

Nevertheless, in the end those who gained power using DC method have always ended up using it to defeat the aspirations of the workers and oppressed, and subsequently install the users of it as a new oppressive ruling class.

How could it be expected to produce any other outcome? DC concentrates more power in the hands of a relative few than any mechanisms the masses the former purport to be serving can muster: a recipe that's bound to conflict with the vagaries of flawed humans.

Stan Goff, in his masterful *Full Spectrum Disorder* (2004, Softskull Press), believes that DC as practiced by Lenin and his Bolsheviks did have a democratic basis, whereby an open and intense democratic struggle was carried out in order to arrive at positions and policies. Then all the party workers would move in a decentralized, free wheeling manner to make possible the implementation of those decisions (in the teeth of czarist repression), which ultimately had the effect of centralizing their

